[Assignment 2: case studies - collection and ethical issues](http://www.canberra.edu.au/coursesandunits/uo-view/_nocache?uoo_id=154418)

* **Due Date:** 22 April 2016
* **Weighting Percentage:** 50%
* **Addresses learning outcome(s):** 
  + On successful completion of this unit, students will be able to: 1. undertake an analysis of the information needs of an organisation or other client base;
  + 2. develop and maintain resources and services that support client needs;
  + 6. understand the implications of identified issues in information provision;
  + 7. recognise and address barriers to and inequalities in information flow;
  + 10. evaluate information resources and services.
* **Related graduate attribute(s):** 
  + 1. UC graduates are professional - communicate effectively
  + 1. UC graduates are professional - employ up-to-date and relevant knowledge and skills
  + 1. UC graduates are professional - use creativity, critical thinking, analysis and research skills to solve theoretical and real-world problems
  + 2. UC graduates are global citizens - behave ethically and sustainably in their professional and personal lives
  + 2. UC graduates are global citizens - think globally about issues in their profession
  + 3. UC graduates are lifelong learners - adapt to complexity, ambiguity and change by being flexible and keen to engage with new ideas

**Instructions**  
There are two parts to this assignment. The first part of the assignment builds on the case study developed in Assignment 1. Suggested length: 1500 words  
  
**Part 1**  
You are instructed by (News For You) NFY’s Chief Information Officer to develop a policy for the development and management of a largely digital collection, a plan for evaluating the collection in future years and an outline of the main budgetary issues. Note:

(1) You need to outline a collection policy appropriate to the organisation, information services and collection that formed the subject of the NFY case study in Assignment 1. Note that the collection will consist of more than the 20-30 indicative resources outlined in Assignment 1. Be sure to include strategies for the preservation of information resources, where appropriate (this obviously does not apply to resources such as subscription databases).

(2) Your plan for evaluation should address how you would go about evaluation and which methods you think appropriate (collection- versus user-orientated approaches).

(3) Your discussion of budgetary issues should factor in issues specific to the digital information environment.

Where elements of any existing collection development/management policies have been incorporated or adapted be sure to reference them, just as you would any other resource that has specifically informed your thinking.  
  
**Part 2**  
Select a different type of organisation from the one used in Assignment 1, such as a different type of company, a government department, educational institution or archive.

(1) Outline one significant ethical dilemma that its information manager might face and explain briefly why it is significant. Note that this must represent a dilemma, in other words, there must be a clearly identifiable conflict of obligations and/or ethical principles.

(2) Explain clearly what criteria you would use to resolve the dilemma or at least find a way forward for the information manager.

(3) Explain briefly why you think or don’t think that codes of ethics have any significant value in the workplace.

There is no set word limit for this part but it should clearly be significantly briefer than your response to Part 1.  
  
**Marking criteria for Assignment 2**  
The following criteria will be used in marking this assignment:

(1) demonstrated linkage of your case studies to the theory covered in Modules 3 and 4

(2) evidence of analytical skills

(3) evidence of communication

(4) evidence of ethical awareness

(5) awareness of user needs

(6) quality and relevance of literature you draw on to support your decisions

(7) presentation, structure, expression, citation and referencing.

**Teacher’s hint**

Hi everyone,

I am going to help you with Assignment 2.

Assignment 2 has 3 parts.

Let’s think about the first part.

Task 1. Read Module 3 Information Needs. Below is a hint on how to get started for part 1.

Developing a collection policy.

Firstly, establish the clients’ information needs. Policies are not the beginning of collection development, rather a set of flexible and revisited guidelines that are developed after the collecting agency has established its clients’ information needs. Also, it is important that we align to our department’s business aims and objectives.

So finding out what the client needs is done through marketing which means getting to know your clients’ needs. In my library this means talking to our users, working on curriculum with lecturers and finding out their subject areas. We look through our subscriptions and collections and send them information about what we already have, make suggestions about new titles, and ask if they have any items they would like us to purchase. We use usage statistics from our catalogue software (what people are borrowing or linking to online) to evaluate our service and to see what is being used and think about how we can market our material better or better refine the collection to suit our clients’ information needs.

Peggy Johnson (2004) gives a good explanation. The aim of marketing is to satisfy the library user… For collection development, marketing means understanding the library’s public (users, potential users, funding and administrative bodies) in order to develop a product (the collection). The success of that product is then measured or evaluated to ensure the performance is responsive to the public and gains support. Library marketing always occurs within the context of the library’s mission, goals, and objectives. Successful marketing helps position the library to plan for that future (2004, p.173).

Task 2. Read Zhu, Q. & Guevara, S. (2009). A practical guide for building a user-focused digital library collection.

Task 3. Have a look at a few collection development policies online. e.g. National Library of Australia (I just searched in google  'national library australia collection policy'), notice they have a few policies. And maybe some news library sites for their collection policies if you can find them.

Hi everyone,

Let's think about selection. Please do the following activity.

In passing the responsibility for item-by-item selection to the supplier, a library will receive what is convenient or available, and not necessarily what its users require.

**Activity**

What checks and balances can a library put in place to guard against this potential problem?

Will developing and monitoring these procedures reduce the time saving benefit to the library of having outsourced item-by-item selection in the first place?

**Topics covered in this module**

1. Information needs
2. Information provision
3. Preservation of information resources
4. Management issues

**Approximate duration of this module**

Four weeks

This module introduces you to information provision at the collection level and covers activities such as collection development, collection management (the two are closely associated and considered by some writers as quasi-synonymous) and preservation of information resources. Although some of it is transferable, much of the material discussed here is the stuff of library and information service; indeed, it is worth considering whether a library would be a library without a collection, whether it be completely virtual, physical or - more typically - a hybrid of the two. As before, there is some reference to the archival environment.

**Topic 1: information needs**

The information agencies outlined in the previous module generally have a clearly defined clientele – a term used here in preference to ‘user communities’ because the communities they serve (geographical, organisational, academic and so on) are always going to include users and non-users or perhaps potential users. In the case of archive-type agencies, such as archives (obviously) and national and state libraries, these potential users may be future researchers who have not yet been born. All of these collecting agencies aim to satisfy their clients’ information needs.

In the following topics you will read about how these agencies develop and maintain their collections, whether these be physical collections, digital ones or both. You will find that in the field of library collection development and management studies some textbooks by reputable authors take as their starting point something called a collection development policy. This may seem like a logical approach, in the sense that it starts out from a strategic sounding position, but policies are not the beginning of collection development, rather a set of flexible and revisited guidelines that are developed after the collecting agency has established its clients’ information needs.

This module examines the analysis of information needs before it moves on to consider issues to do with information provision and its preservation (continued provision). Once you are familiar with these aspects of collection management, you will read about some of the management issues, including development of collection policies..

**Information needs and marketing**

It may seem odd to highlight marketing concepts, given that so many of the information agencies discussed in this unit are not-for-profit organisations. For many people marketing is largely synonymous with promotions but promotions are only part of the marketing story, which is largely about client needs.

This is one of the central themes of Lee Welch’s book, *The Other 51 Weeks*. The title of the book reflects her view that library marketing is not confined one week in the year when libraries in Australia have a week of intensive promotions, led by the professional association, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Marketing is not confined to promotions, Welch suggests; rather, it is ‘the process of identifying and meeting client needs’ and ‘a building block … in the process of managing and fostering our libraries’ (2006, p.1).

In a key passage, she claims that ‘librarians should have a head start in understanding the application of marketing practices because they are based simply on understanding clients and putting them first’ (2006, p.2). Notice the use of the word ‘should’. This is a normative statement and not a descriptive one. With such a large investment in legacy systems, sources, standards and services, it is sometimes all too easy for those working in this sector to lose sight of the clients – the people for whom the sources and services are provided.

It seems self-evident, Welch suggests, that librarians need to embrace marketing and cannot sit back as gatekeepers to the world of knowledge, but, she goes on,

there are those who continue to deal in the ‘mystique’ of their skills to retrieve, organise and disseminate information. It seems to need to be said that this is an outdated attitude and a dangerous one in terms of our survival. As we will explore further, clients do have alternatives and they will not hesitate to shift their allegiance to competitors in the marketplace if we librarians take a high moral ground and dictate what we think the clients should have instead of letting the clients tell us what they want (2006, p.3).

Peggy Johnson (2004) gives marketing a significant amount of attention in her book about collection development and management, discussing marketing in these terms:

In a library context, the aim of marketing is to satisfy the library user and achieve a set of articulated goals, which may be increased use, community support, more patrons, a larger budget, or increased donations. For the collection development librarian, marketing means understanding the library’s public (users, potential users, funding and administrative bodies) in order to develop a product (the collection). The success of that product is then measured or evaluated to ensure the performance is responsive to the public and gains support. Library marketing always occurs within the context of the library’s mission, goals, and objectives. Successful marketing helps position the library to plan for that future (2004, p.173).

Note the inclusion of activities such as ‘outreach’, characteristic of public and school libraries (reaching out to their respective communities), and 'liaison', which is more characteristic of academic libraries (Johnson, 2004, p.173). This is often seen in terms of their promotional value but note too their use as a means of getting to know the library’s clients and their information needs. Indeed, in the university sector, with which Johnson deals, there is an increasingly strong view that the library/faculty relationship needs to be a partnership, in which the library is represented (at, say faculty board level) when decisions relating to areas such as curriculum development are made. Contrast this with a reactive approach in which a library discovers retrospectively that a development is taking place (in the area of teaching or research) and suddenly needs to shift financial resources in order to support that development.

The analysis described in Welch's book covers a wide range, including environmental analysis, a customer needs analysis and what she calls a gap analysis. You may never be called upon to conduct such a wide-ranging analysis. Developments to an information service for which you are responsible may be incremental and may not require anything quite as fundamental; however, note that:

1. As a newcomer to an organisation, you may want to conduct a back-to-basics review that looks closely at the organisation’s main business and how well the information service meets its needs.
2. We are continually being reminded that we live in a society in which the only constant is change, so a far-reaching review may be the order of the day.
3. It is important to take a strategic approach to information service provision and ask what new services should be introduced, as well as posing hard questions such as ‘which offerings should be discontinued?’ (Welch, 2006, p.37): for instance, if we are focussing on developing e-reference services should we be staffing a physical information desk (a thing of the past in many libraries)?
4. You may find yourself with the opportunity to develop a brand new information unit in an organisation or re-engineer an existing one (say, as a result of a merger or de-merger).
5. You may have a specific information service to redevelop: for instance, a public library manager completely revamping a poor youth services section and attempting to replace it with one that is relevant to the local youth community.

Note too the description of a ‘gap analysis’. This is an approach taken in the wider information management sector. Consider the following information management tasks, outlined in a short and invaluable book that was produced by the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency in Britain away back in 1990.

1. What are the organisation’s business aims and objectives?
2. What information is needed to support those aims?
3. What information is available in the organisation?
4. Are there differences between needs and provision?
5. What has to be done to match needs and provision?
6. How is information best delivered to users?
7. Is further exploitation of information viable? (1990, pp. 15–30).

It is an ageing statement but it is also a clearly articulated statement of gap analysis and is included for that reason. The set of questions is taken from a guide prepared for the British Civil Service for application in government departments. It has wider application to both public and private enterprises and provides a model that information managers may find useful. To what extent is it applicable in the context of a collecting agency such as a library? What about an archive?

Note that the starting point for information management, according to the CCTA, is ‘an understanding of the department’s business, its aims and objectives’ (1990, p.17), which is in keeping with the strategic approach mentioned earlier in the module. Once the aims are established, one can ask what information is needed to support them. The third question focuses on what information is already available. In the organisational context, this typically involves conducting an information audit, which will produce an information inventory (for instance, details of information held in the department and details of its information systems) and a description of the information held.

Are there differences between needs and provision? In other words, do the information resources identified in the third question actually meet the organisation's information requirements? If not, what does one need to do to correct this mismatch? These questions are beyond the scope of this module but bear them in mind because these are the kinds of question you would be asking, should you undertake a gap analysis.

Note that the information audit goes beyond an inventory of information resources, such as a library collection, and includes a wide range of sources, services and systems, as well as an analysis of how information is used, exchanged and so on. Do you see this kind of gap analysis as being of value in a collecting agency such as a library? Is it relevant to an archive and the information needs of its potential community?

**Information needs analysis**

This section focuses on the process of determining information needs, whether these be organisational needs – the field of information managers, knowledge managers, records managers and special librarians – or the needs of less corporate communities such as academic ones or the disparate geographical communities served by agencies such as state libraries and/or public libraries.

You may have come across needs analysis already in your reading, in the form of the information enquiry, in which the information professional attempts to establish the information need(s) of an individual client. Here you are considering the process of establishing the information needs of an organisation or a community of some kind, with a view to developing a user-orientated information service.

Note Michael Middleton’s point (2007, p.194) that this represents a key area of responsibility for information managers, who study ‘the information-seeking behaviour of groups in order to provide services for a particular set of users’, or the system analyst, who is more interested in ‘the process by which information is sought’ than in ‘the particular sources that might be appropriate’. Note too that in the latter field the term ‘information requirements analysis’ is more common.

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| **e-Reserve**  Zhu, Q. & Guevara, S. (2009), A practical guide for building a user-focused digital library collection.  **Further reading**  Silipigni Connaway, L., Lanclos, D., White, D. & Cornu, A. (2013), User-centred decision making: a new model for developing academic library services and systems, IFLA Journal vol. 39 no. 120-29. |

This reading is well worth studying because it provides some practical insights into digital library collection development, ones that you are unlikely to find in any of the standard texts on collection development and management. It goes beyond information need to consider issues associated with information provision (so you may want to return to it later in the unit).

Note Zhu’s injunction to build library collections on a sound understanding of ‘your users' information needs, information-seeking behavior, information preferences, and information consumption capabilities’ (2009, p.6) using these steps:

1. Connecting to users (note the various methods, ranging from face-to-face conversations to use of social sites)
2. Scanning the environment (including finding out what is happening in the community and checking out organisational websites)
3. Mining usage logs, which means reviewing information inquiries and mining library circulation and document delivery logs (Zhu, 2009, p.8)

Note too the reference to a specific research technique (as distinct from a research method), namely, studies of usage logs. In information retrieval this generally involves Transaction Log Analysis (TLA), which is the study of the computer logs of people’s searches – a source not just of what clients want but also how they go about searching (hence its use in system development and evaluation).

**Topic 2: information provision**

The previous topic focussed on information needs analysis, which considers organisational business aims and objectives; the information required to support those aims; the information available in the organisation; the differences between needs and provision; and what needs to be done to match needs and provision (Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency, 1990). This topic examines how libraries and similar information agencies provide the information required to support business aims and objectives, whether these be commercial, educational, cultural or embrace the wide range of objectives associated with, say, a public library.

The field of study (or sub-field, perhaps) is often called collection development or collection management. Some of the textbooks you might come across start of trying to define and differentiate these terms. That can wait until later in the module; however, it is worth recalling the definition of *library* proposed in the previous module: ‘a collection of information sources arranged in a systematic way for specified users, and managed by qualified personnel’. Leaving aside the fact that this statement contains an element of value judgement (notably, the qualified personnel), it highlights an organised collection as a *defining* feature of libraries. How librarians develop these collections is very much the focus of this topic, as too are aspects of the management of such collections.

The first sub-topic examines some of the common strategies and tools used in selection of information resources and at variations between types of libraries in selection practice.

**Selection of information resources**

**Key point**

Responsibility for selection is the key professional component of work in collection development. The processes of turning selections into acquisitions, budget management and so on mostly require professional supervision of administrative functions, but the decision about what should be selected in the first place is crucial.

That decision may be made on a case-by-case basis, especially in a smaller library. In larger libraries it is usually delegated in some way – to staff, to expert library users (such as teachers or professors in an educational institution) or to publishers and vendors, if some variation on blanket ordering is used. If the decision is delegated in some way then it will need continuing oversight.

**Common strategies in selection**

Consider the following key issues:

1. Do we select what our users say they want, or what we believe they need – what is regarded as ‘good for them’?
2. Should we select what we think will be heavily used, or what is perceived as high quality material? Is there a difference?
3. Who should have the final say in selection – the information professional? The user? The person or body who funds the library?

Not every library has published its selection procedures since such a document is typically addressed more to an internal than to an external audience.

*Should libraries publish their selection procedures? Are there any arguments against publication?*

Note the suggestion that the principal disadvantage of approval plans, blanket and standing orders is that these strategies abrogate the professional responsibility of the librarian for selection. Further, in passing the responsibility for item-by-item selection to the supplier, a library will receive what is convenient or available, and not necessarily what its users require.

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| **Activity**  What checks and balances can a library put in place to guard against this potential problem?  Will developing and monitoring these procedures reduce the time saving benefit to the library of having outsourced item-by-item selection in the first place? |

**Selection tools**

If the internet has changed most people’s information searching habits – several recent international surveys have suggested almost everyone with access to the internet starts with Google – then the selection tools available to the collection manager have also changed dramatically. After working through this part of the Module, you should have a better appreciation of some of the tools now available, and how these compare with those used and recommended in the past.

Selection tools fall largely into three broad categories:

1. Bibliographies of various kinds (not always labelled as such) which establish the existence, availability, correct details and price of a resource
2. Reviews
3. Publishers and booksellers’ catalogues and listings

The general questions to be asked of any selection tool are:

1. Why does this exist at all? What can it do that is not already done elsewhere?
2. How well does it perform in its coverage of current publishing?
3. What types of material are intentionally included and excluded?
4. What types of material are likely to be excluded because of their very nature, not because of deliberate choice?
5. What subject areas are included and excluded?
6. What kind of information is offered about the works mentioned, and how much of it is offered?
7. For whom is the tool intended – librarians, general readers, subject specialists?
8. What is the tool’s physical format, and is it available in a number of different formats? How frequently does it appear? The format of the selection tool may bear no relationship at all to the formats of the works it covers.
9. How current is it?
10. If it cumulates in some way, what is the pattern of the cumulations? Does each cumulation supersede the earlier cumulations, or must some be kept for specified periods, for instance, pending the arrival of an annual cumulation?
11. What is the form of the classification scheme used? If it differs from the customary Dewey Decimal Classification or Library of Congress Classification, what are the details of the differences?
12. What are the rules for filing, and which subject headings are used?
13. Is there any special methodology or approach which should be employed in order to make best use of it? (chapter 6 of Clayton & Gorman, 2001).

These questions apply equally to print and online tools, or any other, for that matter.

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| **Activity**  Assume you have been asked to buy something for your library – say a documentary which has recently been shown on TV (something about which school, university and public librarians are frequently asked).  Where would you look to establish its correct name, producers, availability and price?  If you were unsure about the accuracy of the information included in it and needed to see an independent review of it, where would you go?  How many different sources of information can you find about it? |

You may want to compare notes with others on the LearnOnline site.

Having identified some selection and verification tools, you might also consider the following questions:

1. Were they freely available or charged for? If all were free, did you unconsciously limit your searching to freely available tools and – given that alternatives were probably available either through the University Library or perhaps your workplace – why?
2. How satisfied were you with their quality? Compare them against the criteria for selection tools suggested above.
3. Did you believe you had the information needed to make an informed purchase decision about the documentary?

**Selection in different types of library**

Based on your reading so far, you should have some appreciation already of the differences in selection concerns between different types of library.

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| **e-Reserve**  Shearer B.S., Klatt, C. & Nagy, S.P. (2009), ‘Development of a new academic digital library: A study of usage data of a core medical electronic journal collection’. |

As a case study, this may not have general application but it is worth reading in order to gain some idea of the complex decision-making that accompanies collection development in a specific type of library and subject field. Note especially the approach taken to evaluation, the tools used and the specific issues in the selection of ongoing publications such as serials, including the fact that libraries and information and research agencies are typically required to choose amongst publication sets and cannot pick and choose specific journal titles.

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| **Further reading**  Kohl, D.F. (2010), Collection Development in the ARL Library.  Orr, C. (2010), Collection Development in Public Libraries.  Both of these are in [*Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*](http://learnonline.canberra.edu.au/mod/url/view.php?id=967416) (Library's e-collection). Note the view expressed in the second article (not endorsed here, however true it may be in practice) that marketing is something that libraries do when they’re in trouble!  **Activity**  Choose one of these types of library or one in which you work or hope to work. For that type of library:  What selection criteria are likely to be of special significance?  How important will be the criteria suggested for electronic formats? Do those listed need to be updated, and if so how?  What is different about who is responsible for selection in the type of library you have selected, compared with other types of library?  Imagine you are setting up a digital library in your area of expertise. What selection criteria would be appropriate for this? |

Again, you might want to share your thoughts with others in the class.

**Issues in selection**

One of the issues that you will be asked to consider is censorship, which you will study in the next module, along with other ethical issues. Other issues to consider include (but are not limited to):

1. Limitations indigenous groups might place on the availability of their material
2. The substitution of digital for print resources as the point of first contact for many users (consider your first point of contact as a university student)
3. Digitisation of older materials (covered below).

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| **Further reading**  Cox, R.J. (2009). Archivists and Collecting. In *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences* (Library's e-collection).  This has a strong North American bias (as do a number of *ELIS* articles) but this is explained in terms of the strong focus on active collection exhibited by North American archival institutions, which is precisely why it is included here. |

**Acquisition of information resources**

This topic examines some of the common strategies used to acquire different types of material for libraries and some of the typical problems encountered when acquiring electronic resources. You may also come back to ethical issues, namely, those which may arise when one is responsible for spending large amounts of public money.

**Key point**

As noted earlier, the processes of turning selections into acquisitions, budget management and so on mostly require professional supervision of administrative functions. In the end, however, the aim of all these is simply to ensure that a library has the most appropriate resources to meet its clients’ needs.

Acquisitions, then, is the process of getting the right resources, at the right time, at the right price.

Note Helen Welch’s view that 'acquisitions is the general term applied to the function of obtaining for the library materials that make up a library’s collection’ (2003, p.76). This is a very traditional view of acquisitions that sees the function in terms of buying and owning a largely physical collection but, as you would know by now, libraries provide their clients with access to major parts of their collections (including books) through subscription. In this topic, acquisitions is treated as the function of providing client access whether through subscription or outright purchase. While each of these has its own processes and issues and may be handled by separate sections in large libraries, they are clearly interrelated and better treated together.

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| **Activity**  If you work in a library or enjoy friendly relations with a library in which you study or with your local public library, you could try finding out:  Which suppliers it uses. Are any of these suppliers of digital or non-digital content?  Why did it choose these suppliers?  Does it use different suppliers for different types of resource?  Has it done any evaluation of its suppliers? |

The following reading explicitly addresses the acquisition of electronic information resources.

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| **Further reading**  Joshipura, S. (2008). S*electing, Acquiring, and Renewing Electronic Resources*, in H. Yu & S. Breivold (eds.). Electronic resource management in libraries. Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference. This is one of the Library's collection of e-books and can be accessed directly via the Library catalogue.  Timothy D. Jewell, T.J. (2009). Electronic Resource Management. In *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences* (Library's e-collection). |

Note some of the differences between the print and online environments: for instance, the fact that cancellation of an ongoing e-resource, such as a journal (or more typically a suite of journals) generally means loss of all content and not just future issues.

**Collection management procedures and Web and other technologies**

The Web and more recently social and mobile technologies have provided significant opportunities for collection managers. These include:

1. Vendor address details
2. Reviews
3. Awards
4. Best-seller lists
5. Other library catalogues
6. Stock availability
7. Exchange rates
8. Database access
9. Email and other communication media
10. Publisher catalogues
11. Vendor policies
12. Postal Information
13. Shipping Information
14. Online delivery

It is worth considering some of the problems and issues posed. These include:

1. Technical issues
2. Continual change
3. Incomplete coverage
4. Poor bibliographic control
5. Unstable availability: here today, gone tomorrow
6. Dated and inaccurate material

**Cooperative collection development**

Here, you should consider some of the benefits of library cooperation in terms of pooling collections and sharing the costs of collection management.

**Key point**   
Librarians are cooperative people. Much informal cooperation exists, even between colleagues who have never met. It is in part because of this strongly collaborative professional ethos that librarians have sought ways to cooperate, not simply to benefit the individual institutions that they serve but ultimately to advance the common good. This altruistic approach frequently underlies the mechanisms adopted, even when the publicly advanced reasons for cooperation are described in terms of effective use of limited resources and so forth.

If agreements are designed to facilitate collaborative agreements already decided upon, they are much more likely to be effective than ones relying solely on perceptions of individual institutional benefit.

**Types of library cooperation**

There are several types of library cooperation:

1. Informal networks
2. Interlibrary loan
3. Cooperative ventures outside networks (e.g., joint storage facilities operated by neighbouring libraries)
4. Networks based on shared systems (such as Libraries Australia)
5. Networks based on shared goals (e.g., CAUL or NSLA in Australia).

The term network is used here but note that you will come across references to consortia (plural of consortium). The boundary between network and consortium is blurred but the latter term is generally used to refer to a less formal association than a network, one in which members work together on a number of projects. It could be suggested, for instance, that CAUL and NSLA are consortia, as distinct from networks.

**Advantages of cooperation**

Networks:

1. Reduce costs through copy cataloguing
2. Enable better use of resources through inter library loan, reciprocal access etc
3. Provide economies of scale in purchasing, including purchasing of online datasets
4. Offer training
5. Can give flexibility regarding staffing and operations.

Note the vision of library futures outlined in the document, 'Re-imagining Libraries 2012–2016', developed and published by NSLA, National & State Libraries Australasia. NSLA is a leading example in this region of a strong and practical collaborative partnership that has an ongoing program of work and acts as a leading advocate to governments and others on behalf of libraries: <http://www.nsla.org.au/reimagining-libraries>.

Managers are always aware of course that there is sometimes a downside.

Potential disadvantages of networks

1. Loss of control
2. Centrally incurred costs
3. Interface between the local and the shared system
4. Authority control, if cataloguing is shared.

(Note: Authority control is the other face of operating a controlled vocabulary system. These topics are covered elsewhere in your course but in case you have not encountered them here is a simple (and much used) example: do you want the library’s books catalogued under ‘Clemens, Samuel’ (his real name) or ‘Twain, Mark’ (the name he published them under – and the correct one, according to the cataloguing standard, AACR2)? The one thing you really do not want is some books under one name and some under the other. Checking that this does not happen is called authority control, and takes time and expertise and so is expensive to have done.)

Issues networks need to address:

1. Communication
2. Risk management
3. The complexity that comes with increasing size
4. The belief that technology will necessarily deliver what it promises.

**Network governance**

Governance needs to:

1. Provide legitimacy
2. Allow the network to draw upon the expertise of its members
3. Provide feedback
4. Provide a legal structure for stability, and to specify rights and responsibilities
5. Provide financial security
6. Enable rapid response to changes.

These are often addressed through legal agreements signed by members, and by a network of committees: elected, based on expertise and designed to provide user feedback.

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| **Further reading**  Breeding, M. (2014). *Resource Sharing in Libraries: Concepts, Products, Technologies, and Trends*. Chicago: American Library Association.  This is another of the Library's e-books, which you can access via its catalogue. No, I'm not suggesting you read the whole book for this unit but it would be worth reading the introductory chapter.  **Activity**  Go to the Web and find examples of collaborative partnerships. Choose from within your region or from a type of library with which you are familiar – and see if you can find an example in which the same library belongs to multiple consortia or cooperative agreements. |

1. Do these appear to complement each other or are there areas of overlap or competition?
2. Does the collaborative activity appear to have some or all of the elements suggested as desirable in a successful cooperative venture?
3. How has the library attempted to deal with any areas of potential overlap?
4. Can you find out if the consortia themselves have sought ways in which to minimise the potential impact of having members with such multiple memberships?

Again, you could use the unit’s Moodle site to compare notes.

**Audits**

An audit is an independent annual examination of the financial affairs of an organisation to ensure that accounting practices have been followed and that statutory requirements have been met. Critical factors include:

1. Limitations of fraud
2. Delegation of financial authority
3. Records of ‘accountable’ items
4. Stocktaking

Few large libraries undertake full stock-takes due to excessive costs. Sample stock-takes generally satisfy most auditors. Most libraries simply add new items, delete ‘deselected’ items (discussed below) then estimate a monetary value. Comprehensive stock-takes are more common in small libraries and collections. Note, however, that technology developments can make comprehensive stock-takes more feasible: for instance, the use of Radio Frequency Identification tags (RFIDs) of the kind used for years in the retail and other industries and increasingly in libraries streamline stocktaking considerably (although you should be aware of strong privacy concerns and measures in the retail and library sectors).

**Technical issues**

Data processing of the kind conducted in acquisitions departments is well suited to computerisation. Many of the procedures involved are routine, predictable, time-consuming and labour-intensive, and accounting procedures are relatively complex.

Like circulation systems (which you have probably encountered as a library user), acquisition systems are transaction-based information systems, concerned with the everyday operational aspects of the library, such as the ordering of library resources, their receipt and the management of financial data. An acquisition system (or sub-system, since it is normally part of an integrated library management system) is an example of a data processing system. Data processing systems transform well-defined data, according to well-defined rules, to some ‘normal form’. In this case, an acquisition system transforms data on an order (such as order date, supplier, number of items ordered and receipt) into a completed order transaction – the ‘normal form’ of the transaction.

The information resources on order are represented in the acquisition system as ‘on order’, while the funds necessary to cover the purchase are committed, in the system, to be ‘moved’ from a library fund to the supplier. Once the information resources have been moved from the supplier to the library, they are receipted, their status changes to ‘in stock’ or ‘in process’ (which would indicate that the item has arrived and in all likelihood is being catalogued) and the funds committed for their purchase are ‘moved’ into expenditure.

The basic features of an acquisition system are:

1. creation and dispatch of orders
2. receipt of orders and fund accounting
3. claiming for or cancellation of outstanding orders.

Note that the initial record includes the bibliographic information that will form the basis of a catalogue record. Indeed, integrated library management systems allow that information to be shared with the cataloguing function so that data are not input twice. Moreover, clients can actually see in the catalogue that an item is on order. Other information required includes supplier and fund information, and typically files can be set up in advance: for instance, a supplier file, separate from the order file, will contain data such as names and addresses of suppliers and supplier codes. For those who are interested in such things, the supplier code becomes the link between the order file and the supplier file.

The library will generally also have the option of setting up separate fund files, in the event of each branch library or department having a budget of its own. A separate file would be established in advance, so that operators creating an order need enter only the appropriate fund codes against particular items (and not details of the branch/department).

When items are received, operators need to be able to retrieve the order record through a choice of bibliographic fields, order number or supplier code (in the case of a batch order). The acquisitions system will also be expected to update fund details from money committed to money expended and to provide financial reports summarising fund allocations, commitments, expenditures and balances. Once material is receipted, the operator should be able to process invoices and payments.

Finally, systems should be able to generate claims for items not received within the specified periods. Acquisitions staff should be able to define acceptable delivery periods for specific orders or for batches of orders dispatched to specific vendors. In the case of non-receipt of items within specified periods, options include automatic generation of claims notices or the generation of an overdue report.

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| **Further reading**  Smith, P.A. & Sasse, M. (2009), Automated Acquisitions. In *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences* (Library's e-collection).  Bilal, D. (2014). *Library Automation*. Santa Barbara : ABC-CLIO. 3rd ed.  This is currently available in the Library's collection as an e-book. Chapter 1 covers Integrated Library Systems (ILS), otherwise known as Library Management Systems, and includes sections on acquisitions and serials modules. |

It is interesting to note that in the 2003 edition of *ELIS*, a paper on acquisitions should suggest that uptake of computer-based acquisitions systems/sub-systems should be so slow in the USA (whether that was the case is debatable). Such is the growth in the availability of electronic resources, especially ongoing resources such as serials, that the ‘legacy’ integrated library management systems, with their acquisitions and serials modules (sub-systems), are not necessarily the most effective means of managing e-content, hence the development of electronic resource management systems (ERMS), which supplement existing systems.

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| **Further reading**  Yu, H. & S. Breivold, S. (eds.), (2008). *Electronic resource management in libraries*. Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.  Note that ERMS is the focus of the last few chapters in this collection in the Library's e-collection. Although the collection is 'ageing', some of the chapters are nonetheless a good introduction to the field. See also:  Jewell, T.D. (2009). Electronic Resource Management. In *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences* (Library's e-collection). |

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The technical standards that underlie electronic resource management are covered elsewhere in your course (Information Organisation and Description) but they are worth reviewing here in context. You may have come across the OpenURL Framework, which is a key standard and represents an attempt by the National Information Standards Organization in the USA (NISO) to develop a common syntax for transporting metadata in a URL. The OpenURL includes metadata (such as Dublin Core) and/or identifiers (such as ISBN) about an information object, which provide an OpenURL server with standardised text with which to search. Examples you have probably encountered already as a library user take the form of links from citations to full text, using the ‘SFX’ product developed by ex-Libris (an integrated library management system vendor).

The other main standard in this context is Digital Object Identifiers (DOI). The early part of the chapter, ‘Beyond OpenURL’ by Boston and Gedeon, in the in Yu & Breivold collection, contains a good overview of the standards supporting the linking of metadata and e-content in the library environment.

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| **e-Reserve reading**  Evans, G. Edward, 2012, E-resources and technology issues. |

**Deselection of information resources**

In the digital information environment, which is central to this course, deselection may not be an issue because access to e-content is largely provided by external vendors, which typically have huge archived files, with client access lasting only for as long as the information agency pays its subscription fees. As you will have read, libraries generally find themselves subscribing to a raft of resources such as journals and, more recently, book are in no position to deselect those resources they do not want or no longer want in the ‘collection’. Nonetheless there are resources, especially non-digital resources that can be deselected (removed from the collection) or, to use a quaint term often used in the library environment, ‘weeded’.

Deselection, as the name suggests, comes at the end of the information lifecycle, along with preservation (see the next topic). In the records management environment this might be called **‘disposal’**, which refers to the transfer of records from ‘active’ storage either to an archive (for preservation and inactive storage) or to complete ‘inactivity’ – destruction of some kind.

**Why spend time and energy on deselection?**

Unlike preservation, which is at present very much a hot topic, physical deselection or ‘weeding’ suffers from several problems:

1. It can be dirty, boring, time-consuming work, and often physically demanding if one is dealing with large, old, underused items inconveniently housed
2. At the end of the job, in a world where often it is thought ‘bigger = better’, one has fewer items in a smaller collection
3. Our professional ethos is to keep, to preserve – not to throw away
4. Mistakes may be permanent.

Why bother? Possible reasons for bothering include:

1. The material and the information is out of date
2. The material is physically damaged or worn out
3. Better editions are available
4. Duplicate copies are no longer required
5. Community/organisational needs have changed
6. Institutional objectives have changed so that library objectives must change also
7. The item should not have been bought in the first place
8. Unwanted material can get in the way: it has a ‘hindrance effect’
9. Open access storage is more expensive and cannot be justified for low use items
10. The overall costs of collection storage and maintenance are ongoing.

A survey of US and Canadian public libraries some years ago found that the three most common criteria for weeding were circulation figures, physical condition and accuracy of information (Dilevko & Gottlieb, 2003).

If you do read about library deselection, you will probably come across references to a book by Stanley Slote called *Weeding Library Collections:* *Library Weeding Methods,* which made it into four editions. Slote has sometimes been called the guru of library weeding – an interesting epithet and claim to fame.

Believe it or not, there are websites that can provide you with information and guidance on deselection. At the time of writing, for instance, there is a webography, *Weeding in Libraries, a partial index to what’s out there*: accessed at <http://www.havana.lib.il.us/weeding/> (one or two dead links but that's to be expected).

As in the case of collection evaluation (covered below), with which deselection is closely connected, integrated library management systems can aid the decision-making process through reports produced by their management information systems (MIS). Reports generated to assist deselection are generally on-demand reports (as distinct from routine summary reports), consisting of lists or analysed statistics. These include:

* lists of items never issued on the automated system or not circulating in a specified period (‘dusty book’ lists)
* lists of items loaned less than a specified number of times in a specified period
* lists of items by date of publication (or those items with publication dates earlier than a specified year)
* lists of items by call number range and by date of publication, and
* loans figures by date of publication or by call number range and by date of publication.

Note that having a quantitative method for assessing collection activity can assist collection managers not just to weed collections, but also to evaluate policies and procedures (also discussed below).

It should by now be apparent that weeding is not simply something a collections manager does, based on his or her knowledge and experience: it has to be a formal process, determined by agreed policy, which is in turn informed by relevant research (some local, some sector-wide) about usage patterns.

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| **Web resource**  Federal Library and Information Network (FEDLINK), Education Working Group. (2014). *Handbook of Federal Librarianship*. Library of Congress/FEDLINK. Accessed at <http://www.loc.gov/flicc/publications/LibHandbook2014/HandbookforFedLib2014final2.pdf>.  This brief handbook obviously has a US focus but you may find it a useful overview of the field. Chapter 3, pp.18-25, is about resources and collections and includes sections on deselection and on collection development policy (discussed later in this module). |

**Topic 3: preservation of information resources**

This topic covers the preservation of information resources, which could form a unit in its own right. While trying to give you an overview of the field, it will focus on specific areas, namely, how to store and handle paper-based materials in order to extend their lives as long as possible; the importance of disaster preparedness; and some of the issues involved in both digitisation of material and the preservation of digital objects.

**Key point**

One of the core values of agencies such as libraries and archives throughout human history has been their role in the preservation of human knowledge. While information and the agencies themselves are increasingly digital, this role continues.

**Definitions**

Just to make sure that everyone is speaking the same language, these are the generally accepted meanings of the terms used, not just in this topic but in professional practice:

Preservation is the generic term, and includes all activities associated with the maintenance of resources and the preservation of information content.

Conservation refers to the treatment of the physical items themselves in order to extend their useable life.

Restoration involves treating damaged material to return it as close as possible to its original state. You will not be considering restoration in this topic – it’s an academic discipline in itself, and large libraries and archives employ conservators to undertake restoration (and advise on preservation and conservation more generally).

**Preservation of paper-based materials**

You will find an article called ‘Conservation and preservation of library and archival materials’ (Cloonan, 2010) in the *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science* in the Library's e-collection, if you want to read a good introduction to the preservation of information resources in the ‘traditional’ library environment. Much of the older literature on preservation in libraries focusses, for obvious reasons, on paper. Other than digital resources, this obviously comprises the principal storage medium for many libraries and archives, so it is important, in this sector, to understand the main problems and solutions.

Note, however, that some of the solutions carry their own problems, including digital solutions (which are discussed later in the topic) and the audio-visual solutions that preceded them. While microfilming of fragile and low-quality newspapers (‘low-quality’ in terms of paper quality, which decreased over the years for reasons of cost) may have provided a short- to medium-term solution, audio-visual media themselves have a surprisingly short life expectancy. Both audio-visual and digital solutions come with costs (not necessarily financial costs) and risks. Sometimes the strategies adopted to overcome one problem simply lead to new ones.

For a useful listing of some of the most common preservation problems and suggested strategies to address them, you could look at a section of the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records site (http://www.lib.az.us/). At the time of writing (!), the section for librarians included ‘Collection Development Training’ modules, including Preservation (and Weeding).

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| **Activity**  Think of the library you know best – perhaps one you work in or use on a regular basis.  Are the environmental conditions apparently designed to suit the collection or to suit its readers? Is there any sign of environmental monitoring of rare or valuable items? Can sunlight fall on material?  Examine the book return arrangements. Are these designed to minimise handling damage? Is any guidance routinely provided to readers on looking after library materials? |

**Disaster preparedness**

This section stresses the importance of disaster preparedness and introduces you to the idea of a disaster plan and what it might include. You may recall that the *ELIS* article to which you were referred earlier contained a section on disaster planning. You may not have thought of disaster planning as a significant library concern but consider the investment tied up in many of our libraries – not simply the financial investment (important as that may be) but also the societal and organisational value invested in many of the leading collecting institutions you studied earlier in the unit.

You will find leading libraries, archives and records offices a good source of information, advice and resources on preservation issues. See, for instance, the National Library of Australia’s publishes a Collection Disaster Plan, currently accessed at http://www.nla.gov.au/policy-and-planning/collection-disaster-plan, and the National Archives of Australia has useful information under Preserving Digital Records, currently at <http://naa.gov.au/collection/preserving/digital-records/index.aspx>.

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| **Further reading**  Davis, S., Smith-Hunt, A.P. & Kern, K. (2009). Disaster Planning and Recovery for Cultural Institutions. In *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences* (Library e-collection). |

If you have ever been involved in a library disaster of some kind or know of one, you may be prepared to share your experiences with the rest of the class.

**Digital preservation**

This subtopic deals with some of the issues involved in both digitisation of material and the preservation of digital objects – in other words:

* digitisation of items already held by an information agency, both published and unpublished works (such as manuscripts)
* preservation of items ‘born digital’: i.e., those first created as digital items (websites are just one example).

This is the really interesting part of the topic. The whole area has been something of a ‘hot topic’ in library and archive worlds for several years and there is an enormous amount of material available both in print (no irony intended) and online that discusses some of the issues.

Note that there are different reasons for a library or an archive to undertake a digitisation project. Preservation may be a major factor, especially in the case of fragile material that does not bear frequent handling, but another major one is that of widening access to resources to which clients would otherwise have to travel.

Archives have frequently been ahead of libraries in considering the issues associated with digitisation programs, no doubt because their collections consist primarily of unique and frequently fragile items, subject to possible damage if heavily or even carelessly used. Note the whole issue of access, however, and what digitisation can achieve for scholarship and research.

It is worth mentioning that over the years there have been a few cautionary noises on the subject of digitisation. Note, for instance, that:

1. the time and resources required to digitise non-digital material
2. the danger that an increasing part of our ‘cultural heritage’ fall into the hands of commercial providers that have no interest in or understanding of preservation needs
3. digitisation conducted with a view to preserving fragile material is not a substitute for conservation of the original material because of its potential value as 'artefact' in its original format.

Regardless of such issues, we have a considerable investment in digital collection and of course ‘born digital’ items will have to be preserved digitally and, as already noted, digital data are ‘fragile’ for a number of reasons.

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| **e-Reserve reading**  Gregory, V.L. (2011), ‘Preservation’. |

Gregory’s chapter covers a range of resources, physical and digital, and includes disaster preparation, which was mentioned earlier. Note especially the types of digital resource that require preservation, listed p.191. There are clearly significant costs associated with a preservation program that includes a range of media on this scale, not least the costs of human time.

You should also consider the question of ownership. There will inevitably be unique digital objects that belong to a specific library and which may therefore be the responsibility of the library to preserve, if they are regarded as being of sufficient long-term value. There are also a large number of digital objects to which the library subscribes under licence, most of them in journal subscriptions but increasingly also e-books. Who is responsible for their preservation?

Note also Gregory’s reference (pp.193-194) to ‘dim archives’ and ‘dark archives’. The collaborative ventures she describes – nothing new about collaborative and consortial arrangements - have considerable potential in terms of back-up and disaster preparation but consider also the fact that libraries and archives, which have traditionally taken responsibility for preservation of collections (note the earlier reference to moral obligation) are outsourcing that responsibility. In the case of archives stored using cloud computing. In such cases, the preservation function is outsourced to private companies so libraries, archives and other collecting institutions need to consider legal protection, in the event of companies or other organisations becoming defunct.

For an example of a digital preservation policy, see the National Library of Australia’s website: <http://www.nla.gov.au/policy/digpres.html>.

Note the issues associated with long-term preservation of web resources. How much of our cultural heritage can we expect to survive, especially records and so on from the commercial sector, which has understandably left it to collecting institutions to take responsibility – if, indeed, the sector has given them a second thought. One cannot assume that all these resources will be preserved for posterity – indeed, it seems far safer to assume that they will not, without the intervention of leading collecting institutions and support for their interventions.

You should check out the National Library of Australia’s website (if you have not already done so) and the lengths to which the NLA has gone to preserve national heritage.Note, for instance, **Pandora**, ‘Preserving and Accessing Networked Documentary Resources of Australia’ (<http://pandora.nla.gov.au>), which was an attempt - well, the title is self-explanatory - using web harvesting techniques. There are resources there that no longer exist on the ‘open’ Web (you may find this useful on occasion).

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| **e-Reserve reading**  Skinner, K. & Halbert, M. ‘The MetaArchive Cooperative: A collaborative approach to distributed digital preservation’. |

Just as libraries and other collecting institutions collaborate in areas such as resource discovery and resource sharing, so in the area of preservation. This reading outlines an attempt in the USA to develop a structure for a collaborative approach to digital preservation. Note the reference to 'Conspectus', which was a collaborative venture and a means of indicating individual collection strengths and collecting intentions to collaborating institutions.

**Topic 4: management issues**

**Legal and ethical issues**

Before moving on to consider some specific aspects of acquisitions, it is worth pondering the fact that, as in so many other areas of information work, there are ethical issues that can be raised. Have a look at the American Library Association‘s (ALA’s) Statement on Principles and Standards of Acquisitions Practice, currently at:

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/explanatory/acquisitions>.

Beware ‘sharp practice’! Can you find any other, similar statements on ethics and collection management?

Many of the legal issues confronting information professionals in the field of acquisitions and access revolve around copyright and intellectual property. Copyright could constitute an academic unit in its own right and in any case the legal details change regularly and vary from country to country, so in this module you will study only the basic principles.

Note, if you have not already, that copyright is a major issue for the information professions and, indeed, many large libraries (especially academic and research ones) have gone to the lengths of employing specialist copyright officers. In some cases, they offer advice to the whole organisation and not just the library.

**Licensing**

You have already come across some references to licensing. Licenses are the agreements whereby vendors grant libraries and their clients access rights to the e-resources to which libraries subscribe. It is worth noting Kennedy’s point (2006, p.76) that ‘Licensors commonly do not permit a library to do with licensed material everything that copyright law might permit, much less everything that is technically feasible. They are very likely to impose restrictions on who can use the material and where they can use it.’

In large libraries, considerable staff time goes into the development of licenses. It is an area that requires special skills, not least the art of negotiation (where suppliers permit negotiation of course!). Note, too, the common view that licences are difficult to develop the first time a library or consortium approaches a specific supplier (distributor or publisher) but, once that first licence has been agreed, subsequent ones are a lot more straightforward.

As noted already, these issues are covered well in the Yu & Breivold collection.

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| **Further reading**  Callister, P.D. & Hall, K. (2009). Digital Content Licensing. In *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences* (Library e-collection).  **Activity**  Consider whether acquisition of electronic resources could be regarded as simply acquisition in a non-print format or if the two are quite distinct functions.  See if you can find some online material that discusses this. |

**Collection policies**

You will have read references to collection development policies and collection management policies. Now that you have studied some of the main processes of collection management (preservation is an obvious exception because it is dealt with, next, as a separate topic), it would be worthwhile considering how and why collection policies are developed. Many libraries have put formal policies in place and in some cases publish their policies for clients and any other interested parties (such as library and information studies students) to access. Indeed, other information agencies, such as archives, museums and galleries, also place similar importance on defining their collection mission clearly through written collection management policies.

Two specific kinds of collection policy have been mentioned: collection development policies and collection management policies. Some of the literature treats the two as largely synonymous. This unit takes the view that collection development is a part of the broader set of processes that constitute collection management. In this it follows Peter Clayton (an ex-Professor at University of Canberra) and Gary Gorman, who provide the following definitions:

A collection management policy is the systematic management of the planning, composition, funding, evaluation and use of library collections over extended periods of time, in order to meet specific institutional objectives. It is thus a global statement about a library’s collections, of which the collection development aspect is but a single component.

A collection development policy, on the other hand, is a statement of general collection building principles which delineates the purpose and content of a collection in terms relevant to both external and internal audiences (Clayton, P. & Gorman, G.E., 2001).

In other words, collection development is seen as part of a broader collection management policy. A collection management policy will usually include a collection development policy outline. That having been said, most of the policies you come across are likely to be collection development policies.

Collection management is generally taken to include the following processes:

* Collection development
* Selection
* Acquisitions
* Provision of access
* Maintenance
* Evaluation
* Preservation
* Deselection

You may like to note, therefore, what does not follow under the heading, collection management. The literature does not include processes such as cataloguing, classification and the provision of links to Web resources (all helping to provide clients with access to collections) although, interestingly, many large libraries now include these functions within their collection management departments.

**Collection management policies**

The principal components of a collection management policy are:

1. Relationship to mission statement
2. Statement of purpose
3. Clientele
4. Access
5. Background to collection
6. Budget
7. Selection principles and practices.
8. Special collections
9. Limitations
10. Co-operative relations with other providers
11. Collection evaluation
12. Preservation activity
13. De-selection policies

Collection development, by contrast, involves the articulation of general collection building principles, outlining the purpose and content of a collection in terms of intended audience and usually expressed as a formal policy document. The procedures necessary for the implementation of these policies are generally excluded.

The following are standard collection management policy formulation procedures:

1. Set the guidelines;
2. Analyse user needs;
3. Prepare the draft document;
4. Circulate the draft document;
5. Adopt the revised document;
6. Provide for ongoing review.

At this stage of the unit it is probably superfluous to point out that collection management must be an integral part, not just of the library as a whole, but of the wider organisation that a library serves. Libraries exist to serve the needs of their clients – self evidently, library collections also exist to serve the needs of their clients. However, these clients are not just present library users and their needs are ever changing. Just as with information services, sometimes clients are unable or unwilling to articulate their needs, and sometimes they are simply unaware of resources that would be of value to them.

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| **e-Reserve reading**  Shaw, W. (2012), 'Collection development policies for the digital age'. |

Shaw defines a collection development policy (CDP) as ‘a formal policy document or statement which maintains a commitment to systematic collection building and development’ (2012, p.165). note the view that a library without a CDP is like a business without a business plan – although the management literature will tell you that many small businesses get by without formal strategic plans. Note the various reasons for developing a CDP, as listed by Shaw (2012, p.166).

Some writers see CDPs as a hang-over from the physical, predominantly print library (note Shaw’s use of the term ‘weeding’, for instance, which doesn’t sound like the kind of process associated with the digital library). What is your view as a librarianship student/library user? Would you write a CDP if you were developing a digital library?

If you can track down some examples of CDPs, try comparing them with the ALA (American Library Association) inspired model (see Shaw, 2012, p.168).

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| **Activity**  Search for a variety of collection management/development policies, identify the key features and consider the main benefits and drawbacks. How up to date is the policy? |

Here is a small sample that would be worth examining:

* <http://www.natlib.govt.nz/about-us/policies-strategy/our-policy-about-collections>
* <https://www.bpl.org/general/policies/collectiondev_policy.pdf>
* <http://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/library/collmgt_policy.pdf>
* <http://libraries.msl.mt.gov/Home/library_development/consulting/collection_management/Collection-Management-Policy>

If you do not know what to do if a URL has changed and you find a broken link then ask.

Do you know of a major library, well known for its strong collections, that does not have a written collection management or collection development policy? Perhaps you could share this information with the rest of the class. Consider:

1. What might be some of the reasons it has been successful despite this lack?
2. Can you think of any ways in which the adoption of a written policy might assist it further?

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| **Further reflection**  Every so often one comes across a library director or other senior manager who, while very committed to collection development, do not want to have a documented policy and prefers the freedom to do as he/she thinks best.  Do you think this attitude could cause any problems? |

Several Australian libraries, such as the National Library of Australia, have put their collection development policies online: see www.nla.gov.au/policy/cdp/.

**One size fits all?**

Some years ago, school libraries in an Australian state were advised to adopt a common collection development policy – it was not thought necessary that each should have its own, distinctive policy.

Since not only school libraries, but also many public libraries and indeed even university libraries have many common features, should libraries spend time developing their own policies, or should they simply find an appropriate one and adopt it?

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| **Activity**  What are the arguments in favour of adopting ready-made collection management and collection development policies?  What are the arguments against? |

A principal concern about many policies is that they have not been updated as regularly as they need to be. Have a look at the policies you have found and see when they were last updated.

1. Is the date given?
2. What does the policy say about how frequently it is supposed to be updated, and who should undertake this?
3. Have all the appropriate stakeholders been considered?

Finally, how does a collection development policy of the kind outlined here compare with an organisational information policy? One approach is to consider collection policies in libraries and similar institutions as being concerned primarily with inputs: for instance, policy about the acquisition of or subscription to information sources. An information policy may well differ from this in including throughputs or even outputs: in other words, how the information is to be used/shared or what content is to disseminated via the organisation's website.

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| **e-Reserve reading**  Vasiliou, M., Rowley, J. & Hartley, R. (2012), ‘The e-book management framework: The management of e-books in academic libraries and its challenges’. |

This reading focuses on academic library practice and may therefore lack interest for the whole class but it is included for a number of reasons. E-books have had a substantial impact on academic library collections and have the potential to affect other sectors too. It is also of interest because it covers the various processes of collection management, summarised in the authors’ overview of the stages of e-book management:

* Collection Development Policy
* Budget
* Discovery (review what the authors mean by discovery in this context)
* Evaluation and selection
* Licence negotiations
* Cataloguing and delivery
* Marketing/promotion and user education
* Monitoring and reviewing
* Renewals and cancellations (2012, p.289).

The article is also interesting as a piece of information research, starting with a problem, reviewing the literature to establish what is known, deciding on means to gather relevant data, data analysis, the drawing of findings and the development of recommendations.

Note the limited negotiation over licences and the comment (p.286) that most suppliers do not allow price negotiation! Librarians are used to considering the restrictions put in place by copyright law but when it comes to e-books it is contract law that is the key. Another issue mentioned (one that comes up in user studies too) is DRM (p.286) or Digital Rights Management, which publishers put in place to protect their products but which can be seen as barriers by librarians and the user communities.

Finally, it is worth noting that the increasing reliance on e-books in the academic sector has changed attitudes towards selection and acquisition, with many university libraries setting aside funds to 'buy' e-books only when staff and students want to access them. This is often described as Patron Driven Acquisitions or PDA. The model is not entirely new, being applied to some extent to e-journal subscriptions, however, the growth of e-book collections has prompted a growth in this type of acquisition. Note the shift in approach from 'traditional' collection development, in which librarians tried to anticipate client need to one in which acquisition is at the point of client need. Consider:

* the benefits and disadvantages of the PDA model
* the impact on library budgeting.

**Collection evaluation**

In some respects, collection evaluation should come at the end of the module since logically one develops a collection then thinks about evaluating it, in order to assess how successfully it meets – and continues to meet – the information needs of the user community or organisation for which it is intended. Evaluation, in this respect, is part of the ‘control’ function in any form of management, in which outcomes are compared to the objectives with which an organisation or section set out and corrective actions are taken, where there is a gap between the objectives and what has actually been achieved, with a view to ensuring future achievement of objectives.

At the same time, it is worth considering the way in which evaluation can provide information that feeds into collection development, including major shifts in collection development strategies, in the manner of a feedback loop. Evaluation may therefore precede a collection development initiative. Note too the need for periodic evaluations, if collections are going to continue meeting the information needs of the clients.

**Key point**

No-one sets out to complete a major project such as a collection evaluation simply because it would be a ‘good thing’ to do. Instead, evaluation is invariably carried out to serve some compelling reason: to justify a funding request, support a case for increased library space, gain accreditation for the institution from an outside body or demonstrate accountability in some other way.

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| **Activity**  Has the library with which you are most familiar undertaken a collection evaluation recently? If so why, or if not, should it have?  What type of type of evaluation did it undertake, or might have considered, and why?  Were digital materials included in this evaluation? How? |

Traditionally, there have been two principal approaches to collection evaluation: user-orientated evaluation and collection-orientated evaluation. These are self-explanatory: the one focuses on the clients’ perspective and outcomes such as user satisfaction; the other on issues of collection quality such as size of collection – in other words, inputs.

John Kennedy (2006, pp.96-98) summarised collection-orientated methods as follows:

1. List checking, which may involve checking shelf lists for subject coverage or comparing holdings with those of similar libraries
2. Citation analysis or establishing to what extent resources cited most often by scholars are represented in the collection (clearly a process better suited to academic and research libraries than others)
3. Application of collection standards, issued by accreditation agencies or professional associations
4. Expert opinion.

User-orientated methods include:

1. Circulation studies, which can show, for instance, areas in which borrowing is heavy (although, as Kennedy points out, heavy borrowing in a specific area can also suggest a gap)
2. In-house use studies, which can uncover usage patterns in the case of non-digital resources
3. Studies of availability and accessibility
4. User surveys (Kennedy, 2006, pp.98-101).

Current information practice tends to stress user-orientated approaches and collection evaluation is no different. Collection-orientated collection evaluation methods are somewhat out of favour. These approaches are also limited in the sense that the library ‘collection’ is somewhat more diffuse than in the days of print collections and (relatively) slow, labour-intensive inter-library loans systems. Note, however, an obvious weakness of the user-centred approaches, namely, that they tend to ignore both present non-users and future users.

In addition, every single method of user-orientated collection evaluation comes with its own particular set of advantages and disadvantages. In this, they are typical of all social science research methods (and arguably all human research). This is the reason most social science research texts recommend triangulation: the combination of several different methods, to improve both reliability and validity. Many of the collection development and management texts you come across will recommend a mixed-methods approach.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the ‘management information systems’ (MIS) provided by integrated library management systems can, if deployed well, be a good source of collection management information, especially the circulation control sub-system. As with the reference management system discussed earlier in the unit, the library manager has access to a range of statistics, which can help measure performance or at least provide indicative information, especially when the data can be analysed in some way and not presented as raw data: for instance,

* loans figures for new stock, which may indicate problems in recent purchasing policies
* loans figures by call number ranges or by user’s main field of study/research
* loans figures by borrower category
* loans figures by material types (here time series comparisons would be instructive)
* loans figures as a ratio of stock figures (as above)
* loans figures by call number ranges as a ratio of stock figures for the same call number ranges
* reservations and inter-library loans requests figures (high figures implying inadequate acquisitions)
* reservations and inter-library loans requests figures by call number or by user’s main field of study/research (subject areas with high requests would seem to require special development)
* lists of reservations queues that are longer than a specified figure (may suggest that not enough copies have been purchased), and
* items issued more than a specified number of times in a specified period (again, this may imply inadequate acquisition of these titles).

Consider the point that ‘healthy’ (high) inter-library loans requests may suggest a failure in terms of collection development. Note, too, the use of the word ‘suggest’ the previous sentence. Many of this management information is indicative. It does not represent a ‘measure’ and needs to be interpreted by the collection manager.

Another point worth noting is that, while collection evaluation is aimed primarily at ensuring that the investment in collections pays off for a library and its clients, there are also benefits in the broader marketing sense that one can gain friends for the library and influence people in its favour (Intner, 2003).

Borin and Yi (2008) provide a set of guidelines for a new model for collection evaluation, one that takes a holistic approach to the predominantly hybrid collection. It outlines how libraries have approached collection evaluation but, more important, provides a relatively pragmatic and flexible approach to evaluation.

Skaggs (2008) provides a case study of sorts, in which the author describes the process of evaluating a special collection, in this case in the government sector. He mentions the use of the 'Conspectus' method, which involves the use of a standard set of descriptors to identify the subject strengths of a collection. Note that Conspectus was seen by several countries, not least Australia, as a means of enhancing resource sharing, through providing a standardised instrument for measuring collection strengths and demonstrating collecting intentions. In Australia, it was seen, along with the National Bibliographic Database, as the means of developing a ‘distributed national collection’.

When you study a collection evaluation exercise, you might ask the following questions:

1. Does the study describe the planning process? Can you determine that the collection managers set its purpose and objectives, reviewed previous research, selected data and methodology and a population sample and so on? In other words, was this a rigorously executed study, which would stand up as a good example of applied social science research? (Unfortunately, many don’t!)
2. Are there any particular aspects of the evaluation which were unusual or interesting?

**Bibliometrics**

Much of the literature in collection evaluation assumes the reader has some basic degree of mathematical literacy. Even more mathematical sophistication is assumed in the cognate area of bibliometrics, which uses quantitative analysis and statistics to describe patterns of publication within a given field or body of literature – something of obvious relevance to collection managers.

**Evaluating digital collections**

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| **e-Reserve reading**  Prescott, A. (2012), The digital library. |

Prescott provides a good overview of the field, placing digital libraries within the broader context of library development. In the process, he raises some of the issues that have been thrown up, including the dangers of what an earlier writer, Robin Alston, called the ‘hypermarket model’, one that Prescott suggests applies to various mass digitisation projects, including the well-known Google Books one. Note in particular Alston’s plea for ‘a strategic approach to digitization, informed by awareness of the structure, history and physical characteristics of the collections being digitized’ (Prescott, 2012, p.17).

Prescott’s chapter is also valuable in containing a case study, which highlights some of the opportunities (overcoming of physical barriers and the preservation  of and greatly enhanced access to cultural heritage that falls outside the radar of companies such as Google) and challenges (such as preservation of born-digital resources that are in unreadable formats, the digitisation of large and unique non-digital  collections and, in the case of twentieth and twenty-first century resources, copyright issues (2012, pp.22-33).

In an interesting parallel to the Welsh experience Prescott describes, the National Library of Scotland regards it as a moral imperative to digitise its Gaelic language collection and had digitised around 4,000 books in 2012. Note the enhanced access to the collection – books that get limited use in the Library’s reading rooms have thousands of downloads (Mead, 2012). It is also worth noting the strategy of introducing digitisation on demand.

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**Module 4 notes**

**Topics covered in this module**

1. Why information ethics?
2. Codes of ethics
3. Is the aim 'ethical neutrality'?
4. Access versus censorship
5. Ethical dilemmas and case studies

**Approximate duration of module**

One week

**Why information ethics?**

In some fields of knowledge, ethical issues appear to be an add-on to a unit of study or a training program – something the authors think they should cover but do not regard as a critical sub-field. Ethical issues are central, however, to much of what information professionals do. This is reflected in the fact that they have cropped up in the course of this unit: for instance, issues affecting collection development (the censorship debate). Unfortunately this focus on ethical issues is the final topic in a busy unit but please don't regard it as an 'add-on' topic. A lot of ethical decisions are embedded in information practice and standards. Further, this focus on ethics can be regarded as a form of 'wrap-up' session because you've been studying a range of information practices and can now step back and consider the broad picture of the principles shaping those practices.

When it comes to management of information services, ethical issues inform or should inform areas of decision making. To take an example that aroused considerable interest in the information environment in recent years, the implementation of Radio Frequency Identification tags or RFIDs in libraries (following their widespread implementation in the commercial sector) raised privacy concerns in the library sector, as elsewhere. The use of tags and the ability to detect them using an appropriate tag reader, it was felt, might increase the risk that people’s reading habits could be monitored more easily. In the commercial sector, which, it must be said, uses a different, more 'active' type of tag from those generally used in the library sector, there were serious, well-publicized privacy breaches.

There are clear benefits in the use of RFIDs in libraries (for instance, reduced time spent on circulation tasks or improved shelf collection management) but Garofoli and Podger (2007) highlighted public concerns over the San Francisco Public Library’s proposal to tag its book stock in order to deter theft, track materials and check out books more quickly. Concerns were expressed by the public, primarily around the potential for inferences to be made about people’s life-style, sexual orientation, politics and so on, based on their reading habits.

A report from the San Francisco Public Library Technology and Privacy Advisory Committee (2006) demonstrates the Library’s proactive approach to the issue. While recognising key benefits, it drew attention to the potential threat to privacy. There were concerns that RFIDs might contravene the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights (based on First Amendment rights), which states that ‘the right to privacy is the right to open enquiry without having the subject of one’s interest examined or scrutinized by others.’

Indeed, the ALA adopted a resolution regarding RFIDs and privacy in 2005, since then the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) developed a standard, *RFID in U.S. libraries (2008),* which provides a useful set of guidelines for library managers seeking to implement RFID technologies. This covers technical issues such as the fairly obvious need to ensure that tags carry a minimum of data (preferably only a identification code) and the need to train staff not to divulge information that would assist the linking of a tag’s code to bibliographic information.

Having established (one hopes) the link between ethics and management decision-making in the information sector …

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| **Core reading**  Rubin, R. & Froehlich, T.J. (2010). Ethical Aspects of library and information science. In *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science* (Library's e-collection).  This is a broad review of the field of library ethics by two authors well known for their contribution to library ethics and the related field of information ethics. |

**Topic 2: codes of ethics**

Many professional bodies publish codes of ethics for the guidance of their members. In some cases, the codes are more than guidelines - they document required forms of behavior for members of the specific association.

If you plan to follow a career in a specific information profession then you need to familiarise yourself with the values and/or codes of ethics espoused by the relevant professional association(s). The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), for instance, publishes a range of policy statements (<https://www.alia.org.au/open-access-resources/policies-standards-and-guidelines>) under the headings ‘Professional issues’ and ‘Values and ethics’. Key documents include ‘Core values’ (2002; reviewed 2007), ‘Professional conduct’ (amended 2007) and 'Endorsement of the IFLA code of ethics' (adopted 2012). RIM Professionals Australasia has a 'Statement of Ethical Practice', accessed at <http://rimpa.com.au/membership/statement-of-ethical-practice/>.

Study these documents or those of other professional associations relevant to your specific career needs and consider how they relate to and perhaps even help inform some of the activities, processes and decision making you have encountered in this unit. Consider whether they are helpful; whether you agree with them.

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| **e-Reserve readings**  International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) (2012). [*IFLA code of ethics for librarians and other information workers*](http://learnonline.canberra.edu.au/mod/equella/view.php?id=964598) (full version).  Society of American Archivists (2012). SAA ‘Core Values Statement’ and ‘Code of Ethics’.  These statements have been especially recommended because they are so influential in their sectors. Note how broad-ranging they are. The IFLA code, for instance, goes beyond ethical issues that are specific to the information and library sectors, to include ethical issues that can crop up in the workplace and therefore of more general application. To varying degrees, both make very clear statements, not just about core values, but also about core areas of practice and therefore what each profession is 'about'.  **Activity**  Consider the main ethical issues covered in each code. Are any of them contentious? Can you see any potential conflict between principles espoused there?  **Further reading**  Brown, C. (ed.) (2014), *Archives and recordkeeping : theory into practice*, one of the Library's e-books, contains a chapter, 'Ethics for archivists and records managers'. |

One of the points to note about professional codes of ethics is that they tend to be one-dimensional, in the sense that they usually constitute bald statements of principle, divorced from the context of a specific information or knowledge environment. Sometimes this can engender an almost single-minded devotion to specific principles, such as defence of client confidentiality, which, since it is shared with professional groups such as those in the health, legal and financial sectors, has almost become a badge of professionalism.

**Topic 3: is the aim ethical neutrality?**

Note that part of the context in which ethical dilemmas are analysed and in which ethical principles are developed and applied is the socio-political context. In the case of the privacy issue, discussed above, the response to the issue of RFIDs has varied from country to country. Many European countries, Britain included, have strong privacy legislation, which coloured reactions to the challenges provided by the introduction of RFIDs.

In the USA, however, where the American Library Association (ALA) had always given the law precedence over issues of client confidentiality, the passing of the USA PATRIOT legislation, seen by some as an unjust law, led to some ‘radicalisation’ of the library profession and a willingness on the part of some librarians to thwart the legislation. Jean Prior, in her fascinating book on library ethics, lists responses by some librarians to the Act, including these:

Signs posted prominently in public libraries informed patrons about the law and what it required of libraries.

Library record-keeping policies were streamlined, eliminating the collection of unnecessary patron information and deleting other data from library systems as quickly as possible.

Some libraries, barred from reporting that they had received a request for information under the USA PATRIOT Act, posted a sign that they had NOT received such a request (Prior, 2008, p.202).

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| **e-Reserve reading**  McMenemy, D. (2007), Librarians and ethical neutrality: revisiting *The Creed of a Librarian.* |

This discusses the long-standing idea that the librarian needs to be ‘neutral’ – a seemingly worthwhile aim, except that one needs to be clear what one means by ethical neutrality. Again note the impact of context; in this case, the issues raised for the author and his students by the expansion of commercialism through adoption of social networking media.

It is worth noting that the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) retains a reference to ethical neutrality in its 2012 code of ethics: 'Librarians and other information workers are strictly committed to neutrality and an unbiased stance regarding collection, access and service. Neutrality results in the most balanced collection and the most balanced access to information achievable' (IFLA 2012). Is this compatible with the willingness of librarians to thwart what they see as unjust legislation?

**Topic 4: access versus censorship**

Refer back to the codes of ethics provided earlier and note the importance of the issue of access. In terms of the major theme of this unit, connecting people and information, this represents a core value and area of ethical concern. If information professionals are not providing their clients with access to information, they're not doing their jobs. At the same time, there may be other ethical principles at stake, as this topic should demonstrate.

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| **Suggested reading**  Turock, B.J. & Friedrich, G.W. (2009). Access in a Digital Age. In[*Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*](http://learnonline.canberra.edu.au/mod/url/view.php?id=967416) (Library's e-collection).  Note reference made to 'the five fundamental principles that underpin the professions’ commitment to providing information access: equity, intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights, privacy and, in more recent years, awareness, and advocacy'. |

Note that a whole section of the IFLA Code, the very first section, is about access to information and includes these statements:

 'The core mission of librarians and other information workers is to ensure access to information for all for personal development, education, cultural enrichment, leisure, economic activity and informed participation in and enhancement of democracy.'

'Librarians and other information workers reject the denial and restriction of access to information and ideas most particularly through censorship whether by states, governments, or religious or civil society institutions.' (IFLA, 2012)

This seems entirely clear but under section 2, 'Responsibilities Towards Individuals and Society', the Code also states:

'Librarians and other information workers respect the protection of minors while ensuring this does not impact on the information rights of adults.' (2012)

This has the seeds of a potential conflict because, in protecting minors, one could resort to practices that could easily be interpreted as barriers to access: for instance, the well-publicized issue of imposing internet filters on library computers that could be accessed by minors.

Note the reference to censorship in the previous module. Censorship is the most notorious issue in resource selection, much discussed in the literature. Many librarians with selection responsibilities have to exercise extreme care in dealing with 'controversial' materials.

Consider the role of a specific library or information agency. It may be that a public library stocks resources that espouse 'extremist' views in the interests of a ‘balanced’ collection but such literature would arguably have no place in a school library, unless it has clear relevance to curriculum or other important selection factors. If a school or teacher librarian refuses to stock such material, does that constitute 'censorship'? When is censorship censorship and when is it legitimate collection management and service to users? What could be the role of a collection development policy in defusing the heat usually associated with such a controversy? Indeed, has it any such role?

The case against censorship has strong appeal to the library and information profession, with its commitment to access,, and revolves around:

1. Freedom of expression (consider statements made by various professional associations in this field, such as ALIA, concerning the freedom to read)
2. Useful information not being made available.

The case *for* censorship has always been harder to argue, but generally revolves around issues such as:

1. Incorrect information
2. Pornography
3. Socially undesirable information (for instance, on bomb making).

The library and information profession typically errs on the side of providing clients with the information they seek but note the last issue listed above. Many years ago, the well-known writer on information ethics, Robert Hauptman (then a student of LIS) approached a number of reference librarians for information on constructing small explosive devices (enough, he explained in the so-called 'reference interview', to blow up a small suburban house!). In most cases he got the information he sought.

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| **Activity**  Consider cases in which you might censor a collection. Would you stock material on suicide if you thought that someone with a mental illness might use it? |

Consider some of the practical problems associated with attempts or proposals to censor the Internet:

1. Internet control programs work badly
2. Most sites are out of any national jurisdiction
3. Legislation has often proved ineffective.

Possible solutions include:

1. Recommending worthwhile sites (rather than banning unsuitable ones)
2. Putting public access terminals in visible areas
3. Training clients in critical assessment of information.

Have any national library associations (for instance, ALIA) issued statements regarding censorship? Are these consistent with the IFLA statement?

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| **Activity**  Can you find a school or public library where there has been a recent dispute about censorship?  What were the issues involved?  What could the librarian have done differently?  **e-Reserve reading**  McMenemy, D., Selection and censorship: Librarians and their collections. |

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Once you get into case studies like this one, you get into the complexities of professional ethics (covered in a bit more detail in the next module). Note that some of the professional codes of ethics sound fairly black and white and indeed you will find information professionals, particularly in the library sector, who hold fiercely to certain ethical values, such as the right to read and the right to free speech. Note too the wider socio-political context. This article is written against the backdrop of a particular set of events in Britain.

As noted previously, there has been a degree of radicalisation of US library professionals, in the wake, for instance, of the USA PATRIOT Act (‘Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism’ – if you decide against a career in the information professions, you could always try acronym creation). This Act explicitly refers to libraries.

Note too the general point that client needs are paramount. In the public library context, a ‘balanced’ collection is important, so one might want extremist views to be represented although not over-represented – a danger if one accepts donations from community groups without having policies and assessment in place. As suggested earlier, such literature would have no place in a school library, however, unless it has clear relevance to curriculum or other important selection factors. A university library might stock a collection of extreme right-wing publications, for academic purposes, but **might** ignore the IFLA injunction: 'Librarians and other information workers promote and publicise their collection and services so that users and prospective users are aware of their existence and availability' (2012), in case the collection receives unwanted attention from extreme right-wing groups that have no interest in its academic value. Would you agree with such a course of action (or inaction)?

**Topic 5: use of case studies**

Note the points made earlier about professional codes of ethics being bald statements of principle, divorced from the context of a specific information or knowledge environment, and sounding fairly black and white. There is a danger that they can be adopted uncritically by some information professionals. Rather than simply accept these broad statements, however, information professionals need to evaluate them. In order to do that properly, they really need to embrace the complexity of real-life situations, in which information professionals, like anyone else, face different and sometimes competing obligations.

In some cases, the information professional can face completing principles, as in the case suggested earlier, in which they may need to balance their commitment to the access principle against that of protecting minors. You also need to consider the possibility that information professionals might face competing obligations, such as obligation to the library user versus wider social obligations: for example, in the case mentioned earlier, the US librarians who refuse to comply with the PATRIOT ACT and cooperate with security forces in a breach of client privacy could be accused of putting their user communities ahead of the wider community. If they flout security laws, of course, they could also be accused of putting their interpretation of the social good ahead of obligation to employer, which might take a dim view of its employees opposing laws that have been framed by an elected government.

How does one choose between competing obligations? Are there ethical principles one could consult, such as a deontological position in which actions are morally right or wrong in themselves (see the philosopher Kant): for instance, one might argue that it is right to oppose an unjust law and that that should guide one's actions in the case just mentioned. On the other hand, one's actions might be guided by a 'consequentialist' position, according to which one might try to work out which of the actions will have the better, or less bad, consequences: for instance, breaching a breaching clients' privacy versus hindering the security forces in their prevention of a terrorist act. In the Robert Hauptmann case, mentioned earlier, a consequentialist might point to the potentially disastrous consequences if one helps someone look for information on blowing up a suburban house.

Sadly, there is no opportunity in this short module to explore professional ethics and applied philosophy but you might like to add it to your personal learning plan!

You are also referred to the use of case studies, which have been used over the years by a number of professional associations to tease out the ethical issues within specific contexts, assist in teaching people about the ethical principles and their application and, in some cases, advance thinking on how professional bodies should be responding to specific ethical dilemmas. The SAA Code of Ethics, to which you were referred earlier, includes a link to a few relevant case studies. In the UK, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) provided links to a few sets of case studies from across the information sector and, in Australia, the Australian Computer Society commissioned the development some years ago of an impressive set of case studies that relate both to its specific sector but also to issues that can crop up in the workplace.

In a study of the ethical and privacy issues associated with RFID implementation, the authors proposed that professional associations, educators and trainers develop case studies, not only in order to capture the complexities of ethical dilemmas and decision making, but also to 'factor in the extent to which scenarios change as the technologies develop' (Ferguson et al., 2014). In this case, it was argued that managers need to understand the technical potential of the new technologies and not simply base their risk assessments (assuming they do undertake formal risk assessments) on the current state of the technology - 'if librarians are central to the provision of information to their clients they also need to be central to the careful consideration of any ethical issues that may arise when new technologies provide new ways of storing and managing that information' (2012, p.. These would not only assist librarians and library managers in the decision-making process but would raise ethical awareness.

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| **e-Reserve reading**  Buchanan, E. & Henderson, K.A. (2009).  Intellectual property.  This is from a book by Buchanan and Henderson, *Case studies in library and information science ethics*, which is well worth reading if you are interested in following up this topic.  **Further reading**  I am conscious that the focus in this unit has been the library sector. If you are especially interested in the archives sector, you should note the following article in the *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, in the Library's e-collection:   Hodson, S.S. (2009), Ethical and Legal Aspects of Archival Services. |

Not only do the case studies discussed here provide context for and, to some extent, capture the complexity of ethical issues in the information environment but they also represent a useful account of a diverse set of information practices, which you may find useful at this stage of your studies.

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