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Xiaohong Chen

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## **Managing Changes in Collection Development**

**Xiaohong Chen**  
**Indiana University**

### **Abstract**

This article explores issues and strategies in collection management through the landscape of change in the academic library setting from the aspects of technology, the nature of the collection, the role of the librarian, and user services, with an emphasis on East Asian collection development and management. To cope with the new challenges East Asian librarians must develop collection tools, undergo training, collaborate, and learn how to communicate effectively.

### **Introduction**

Change is the theme of the 21st century. New technology has widely changed the pattern of economic activities, social communications, and human daily life. Library services are not an exception. While academic libraries still uphold the fundamental mission to provide best information services for teaching, learning, research and community support, changes in many aspects of the academic library have challenged library professionals to cope with the new issues that have risen with changes. Moran and Brightman (2001, p.11) defined managing changes as “the process of continually renewing the organization’s direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers.” Collection management, the core component and the foundation of library information services, particularly requires attention as new challenges and issues arise. Managing changes means working with changing issues of technology, material and people to set up appropriate strategies, structures, and solutions to cope with changes. Borin and Yi indicates that the changing landscape of collections makes it even more important to understand our work (2011, p.120). By identifying new issues and finding solutions, collection managers can strategically handle collection activities and services in current library circumstances.

Change can bring to organizations and customers profound benefits. Change also often conflicts with organizational traditions and poses challenges to organizations and customers. In this article, the observation and analysis of changes will base on general phenomena in the academic library, with a particular emphasis on East Asian library collection management. In the field of East Asian collection management, like the mainstream library collections, the change can be mainly seen from these aspects: 1) the change of the nature of collections, from past physical only collections to present hybrid print and digital collections. For instance, in recent years, the components of the East Asian

Collection at Indiana University Libraries have expanded from the traditional physical items, such as monographs, periodicals, and microfilms to a hybrid print and electronic collection, including e-books, e-journals, electronic databases, audio-visual media, open access network and links. According to the 2016 statistical data, up to June 30, 2016, there were 2205 e-books, 8276 e-serials and 30 e-databases included in the total 338,345 CJK material held by the IU East Asian Collection (CEALS, 2016). Due to the change, collection librarians face more challenges in managing collection development, and users also face technology challenges for access and use of collection.

2) The change of the role of collection librarians. In the hybrid collection environment, a collection manager not only needs to manage a local in-house collection, but also needs to manage remote web collections through networks. The role of collection managers shifts from being a local collection builder to being a knowledge manager, an aggregator who works with a broad range of cooperators in and out of the library (Branin, Groen, & Thorin, 1999). The changing role requires collection librarians to enhance their capabilities, update knowledge and work skills, and use new strategies to accomplish collection management duties and be successful in playing the new role. East Asian librarians must work with local library administrators, patrons, and oversea vendors that require them to be familiar with both local policies and international operations, and to have multiple language skills.

3) The change of increasingly diverse user populations. In the past three decades, along with the change of the global landscape in political, economic and education policies, especially with the radical changes that have occurred in China, the community using the East Asian collections has undergone significant demographic changes. For Chinese collections, while they continue to be a resource center for the traditional East Asian studies programs at their campuses, the user population has greatly changed due to the increase in number of foreign Chinese undergraduate students and Chinese immigrants, the increase in number of Chinese language programs, and the increase in broad interest in China studies among American scholars (Zhou 2006, Shen 2009). The diverse user groups include faculty members and students who have Chinese language skills to use Chinese material for teaching, learning and research, American Chinese Scholars, American Chinese students, overseas Chinese students, local Chinese residents, Chinese family visitors, and local cultural organizations.

4) The change in acquisitions activities. On the one hand, new technology changes the methods of publication, communication, and acquisitions. Global network acquisitions and email orders shorten time and distance between North America and East Asian countries for oversea purchases. On the other hand, overload of information and publications from various sources come into conflict with tighter library budgets. According to a comparison of official statistics between 1988 and 2007 in Chinese publications, the 2007 total number of publications in China was 3.76 times of that in 1988. Meanwhile, the price of Chinese publications has increased from 20 times to 200 times. Despite the publication explosion and rising prices, the budget for Chinese collections in most American libraries has not increased

(Shen 2009, p.7). The situation has challenged East Asian collection librarians to work with vendors and consortiums in the business world and to make the best decisions for selection and collection, based on the organization's mission, value, and users' needs.

Based on the changes described above, the following research questions arise: What are the issues under the surface of changes in collection management, and what is the most effective way for collection managers to handle the issues? What does managing changes mean? Focusing on these questions, this paper will present three major issues that have been discussed by management professionals: 1) pressures caused by the change of the nature of collection; 2) the new roles of collection librarians; and 3) academic engagement in a business world.

### **Issue #1: Pressures Caused by the Change of the Nature of Collection**

New technology has changed the traditional methods of publication and scholarly communication. As a result, library collections have changed from traditional physical collections to print and digital hybrid collections. In a broad discussion on managing the change, researchers mostly focus on how to manage hybrid collections, and how to make the new digital collections accessible (Gessesse 2000; Horava 2010; Branin et al.1999; Tam & Robertson, 2002). Gessesse (2000) notes that traditionally, library materials were identified by reviewing sources, publishers' advertisements, and approval plans. Now identifying internet resources presents more challenges because of rapid changes in web resources and lack of bibliographic control. There are also many new types of materials that are acquired in addition to traditional publications that are mainly electronic resources. Gessesse points out one of the major problems in the structural change for the collection is that collection librarians need to have an appropriate choice of what will be the chief characteristic for the information object, print or digital or both. Electronic resources are easy and fast to access, but they are at the same time tied to the compatibility of hardware and software, stability of resources and web services, and user instruction for e-access. Branin et al. (1999, p. 26) also points out that the introduction of digital resources in research libraries led to a good deal of conflict between the old and new formats.

The East Asian collection has encountered similar challenges with the increase of e-resources and significant changes in the nature of collections. For example, the Library of Congress has developed e-resources including Chinese maps, Chinese Rare Book Repository, digitized manuscripts, and online finding aids. Since 2004, the LC Asian Division has acquired 27 online databases on Chinese studies, most of which are subscription based, such as Duxiu, China Academic Journal, Century Journals Social Sciences, China Reference Works Online, Chinese newspaper databases, and Chinese Classics Databases. (Song 2011). In the new circumstances, East Asian Librarians need to adopt new ways of thinking in acquisitions and making decisions. As is true in collecting films, East Asian librarians should ask themselves if they should purchase a physical item DVD or if they should purchase an online streaming

film. Many librarians may still doubt if a virtual library can be reliable in terms of sustainability and accessibility.

Beyond the surface changes in the material formats in the collection, a further concern has to do with the people affected by the change of collection. Whittington (1992) indicates that the crucial issue is the way managers learn to balance the often-contradictory implications of change. Bamford & Forrester (2003, p. 557) interprets such a perspective to mean that "all of this is to be balanced within the ever-increasing pressures put on all levels within organizations." In the context of library collections, changes in structure and format have caused a more complex workload for collection librarians (Branin, 1999; Tam, 2002; Horava, 2010). Another concern discussed by Demas & Miller (2012) is that in the new age of diverse collections supported by the growing corpus of digital surrogates, academic libraries will join networks of shared responsibility for storage and access to print and digital content. However, many library staff have a strong emotional investment in the physical collections and may be reluctant to participate in shared print programs. Change in the nature of collections has also caused user stress for access and use of collection. Traditional users and older users may have mental resistance to adapting to new use patterns and might feel anxious or upset when they encounter difficulty in discovering online information and using unfamiliar and continuously updated technology and application programs to access e-resources in the collection. These phenomena, which may also exist in other types of library environment, such as the public library, reveal the symptom of "personal immunity to change," as described by Kegan and Lahey (2001, p. 51). Kegan and Lahey explain that many people are unwittingly applying productive energy toward a hidden competing commitment. A manager, like a psychologist, must go through the process of helping their employees overcome their immunity to change, to guide people to understand the necessity of change (2001, p. 52). Thus, adopting appropriate strategies to release the pressures deriving from such a change is equally important for both collection librarians and collection users. For library collection management, managing change means not only dealing with the change of the nature of collections but also dealing with how to work with people in a changing environment.

Strategies for reducing psychological techno-stress among librarians and users have been summarized by library collection professionals in the following ways: 1) adopting updated management tools for helping collection librarians effectively manage complex print and digital collections. Wilson advocates using an integrated management system consisting of several subsystems to manage in-house collections, electronic collections, and user support (Wilson, p. 1998). For developing and selecting useful electronic resources, Gessesse advises using appropriate internet resource tools such as Internet Compendium and WWW virtual Library to identify internet resources (Gessesse, 2000). Using appropriate strategies can help to reduce mental resistance caused by changing collection content, format and use patterns, as well as to make the full collection effectively used. The American-based OCLC bibliographic information services include over four thousand OCLC member

institutions in the Asia Pacific region. In East Asian collection practices, the OCLC electronic database provides great convenience for CJK collection acquisitions in terms of online bibliographic control to obtain title information, format, and title holding status. In addition, the integrated library system allows library collection acquisitions to share order information with oversea vendors.

2) For convenient access to the digital and print collection, it is necessary to improve the design of the collection webpages in terms of clearance and convergence, to compile a subject guide of electronic resources, and to select, organize, and clearly display useful information resources and make them accessible to the user (Tam et al. 2002). Georgas (2014, p. 528) studies the information-seeking behavior of undergraduate students within a research context and concludes that libraries must continue to work with vendors to improve electronic search tool resources with the user in mind and with a goal of providing increased findability of contents, flexibility, search algorithms, relevance of results and ease of use. For the East Asian Studies collection, the OCLC Connexion module integrated CJK cataloging and CJK scripts (Shen, 2009, p.7) into catalog records. This development is good for East Asian librarians, acquisitions specialists, catalogers and library CJK material users faster and more accurate grasp bibliographic information, since reading native language scripts is much easier, faster and more understandable than reading Romanized characters for either East Asian library staff or library patrons. The Indiana University Libraries, where I have been working for several years as East Asian Acquisitions Specialist, recently completed the project of adding Chinese scripts to all Chinese material bibliographic records in our workflow MARC database, including older Chinese material in the collection.

3) Provide training and support services. To assist users in accessing and using electronic resources, collection librarians need to provide proactive support, technical training, and information literacy instruction to users (Tam et al., 2002, p. 371). Collection librarians may need to set up user groups with goals geared to the particular needs of different users. For undergraduate students, sessions may focus on information literacy and a research tool guide. A study on citations from papers written by first year undergraduates revealed that the students used more books, more types of sources, and more overall sources when a librarian provided instruction (Cooke & Rosenthal, 2011). For faculty, instruction sessions may need to present new media and database services with the goal of increasing awareness of the e-collection. For instance, the IU Libraries East Asian Collection website provides users online Lib-guide, resources suggestions, and bibliography tools. The East Asian librarian periodically announces newly acquired e-resources, e-databases for trial via the mail-list distribution to the East Asian users group. We also have workshops during academic year for campus-wide faculty and students to guide them in searching and using both physical and electronic resources in the collection. In March 2017, the East Asian Librarian at IU-Bloomington campus held a workshop with two sessions on the topic "Researching China: Electronic Access to Primary Sources and More," introducing to IU users many unfamiliar Chinese electronic databases, including electronic journals, dissertations,

newspapers, China digital library, Chinese Ancient Text (CHANT), and Adam Matthew Digital Collection of China studies, etc. Users can easily access to these full text databases via the aggregated web links on the IU library website for the East Asian Studies.



Figure: A web image of the East Asian Studies Collection, Indiana University Libraries

## Issue # 2: New Roles of Collection Librarians

Technology changes the nature of a library collection, the use pattern of the collection, and the service components of the collection. As a result, it also changes the role of collection managers. A survey conducted by Dorner Daniel (2004) aimed at examining quantified changes of the role of collection managers in the overall structure of information services arising from the arrival of digital information. The findings showed that over the five years preceding his survey, collection managers' roles had been evolving, and the levels of responsibility and the time spent on activities related to digital resources had increased for most collection managers. The roles of collection managers have blurred, in that they continue to perform functions related to traditional print-based resources while performing new functions related to digital resources and spending more time on consortia work.

Once collection managers begin to participate in the collection of digital materials, their working scope expands greatly in terms of environment, relationships, and duties. Beyond the traditional roles of controlling bibliography, selecting and deselecting items, providing subject reference assistance, and collecting and organizing materials inside the library, collection managers now need to play multiple roles. They may work as a

coordinator to collaborate with technology departments to maintain webpages and digital collections. They may also work as an aggregator to network the information in the subject area and exchange collection information with other institutions, through participating in the centralized online database and cooperative collection programs, as an instructor to participate in library online learning and workshops for both local and remote users. They also play a role as a trader negotiating bargain prices with vendors worldwide by emails and via buying trips. Thus, today, collection managers must juggle multiple tasks and become proficient at many skills. They not only manage the information knowledge through physical and digital collections, but also manage the environment of the collection with multiple work units and organizations, local and global, on-site and outside. As Branin et al. (1999) describes the present situation, a traditional collection development perspective, which emphasized only acquisitions, selections, and building collections, has moved toward a new vision of collection management and a much broader range of collection performance including collection policy development, material budget allocation, selection, collection analysis, collection use and user studies, preservation, and cooperative collection development.

The fascinating new roles for collection managers bring with them the issue of how these new roles can fulfill successfully considering the new duties and demands on the time of collection managers. Some suggestions for how to deal with this issue have been put forth. Learning new knowledge and taking training programs for new technology are one way to transfer from traditional roles to the new roles. Forte et al. (2002, p. 305), in a case study examining collection manager training at UC-Santa Barbara, indicate certain ways to refresh collection managers, such as creating a standing committee to supervise training, updating the collection managers' manual, and repeating the orientation program for all collection managers on a recurring schedule. Coe & Consoli (1994) address how to train collection librarians in an environment that is transitioning from the bibliographer model, where selection and collection management is the sole responsibility, to an environment where librarians from other library departments, and with other responsibilities. East Asian Library organizations have taken actions to help East Asian librarians cope with the challenges of change in technology and collections through training programs. East Asian library committees have held a few training workshops for librarians. The events include 2001 Korean Materials workshop, 2002 Junior Japanese Studies Librarian Professional Training Seminar sponsored by the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources (NCC). In 2004, sponsored by the Henry Luce Foundation and in cooperation with the committee on Chinese Materials of the Council for East Asian Libraries, the University Library System at the University of Pittsburgh organized the Luce Summer Institute for East Asian Librarianship: China Focus. The three-week summer program provided training for Chinese studies librarians and library managers focused on the latest developments in Chinese language software and application of Unicode, digitization of Chinese language materials and technical processing of Chinese language material, and



current awareness of access to electronic resources for East Asian studies in general and Chinese studies in particular. Topics also included book trade and vendor relationships, acquisitions, astute management of limited budgets, faculty liaison, research methodology and use of East Asian studies resources (Shen & Wei, 2003). The goal was to update librarians to help them manage their many roles, particularly collection development, in the changing world.

Another valuable idea offered by management expertise that may help librarians cope with the issues facing them is to accomplish goals through collaboration. Bamford et al. (2003, p. 557) indicate that the role of managers is not to plan or implement change, but to create an organizational climate that encourages experimentation and risk-taking, and to develop a workforce that will take responsibility for identifying the need for change and implementing change. With this principle, collection managers should direct and structure the work of employees under their supervision to work together to get things done, rather than doing everything themselves. Gosling and Mintzberg (2003, p. 56) suggest that “one obvious answer is: about collaboration, about getting things done cooperatively with other people-in negotiations, for example, where a manger cannot act alone.” They elaborate that to have a collaborative mind-set means getting away from the currently popular heroic style of managing and moving toward a more engaging style. They foster collaboration among others, and get things done, but they do not do things alone. “They are on the top of a network, looking down on it, to be in a collaborative mind-set, to be inside, involved, to manage throughout, and to get management beyond managers, to distribute it so that responsibility flows naturally to whoever can take the initiative and pull things together” (Gosling & Mintzberg, 2003, p. 60).

In such a collaboratively oriented management style, collection managers can work with the IT and technical services departments in the library to manage online collection activities. They can also work with other library institutions and consortia to share information resources and build collaborative collections. Dorner’s survey findings show that the vast majority of collection managers are liaising with computing staff to resolve technology issues related to digital resources, rather than doing this work on their own (2004, p. 267). Gessesse suggests that collection librarians may seek to develop e-resources through resource sharing and cooperative collection in a networked e-environment (Gessesse, 2000). Shen points out that many national and regional consortia have been formed to facilitate resource sharing. Chinese collections usually join their home institutions in regional library consortia. The consortia promote scholarly communication, interlibrary loan, shared electronic resources, cooperative collection development, digital libraries, and help for librarians to optimize budgetary and space constrains. An example is a collaborative collection development arranged between the University of North Carolina and Duke University for Chinese and Japanese materials (Shen, 2009). Troost shares an idea for learning from others when East Asian librarians, posted queries to the listserv, Eastlib, or email other librarians with a difficult reference question. “I routinely pick up other people’s

brains because they will say something I have not thought about and I will also gain from their reactions when I share my ideas.” (Troost, 2009, p.2). In an incident in my recent experience, the East Asian librarian at my home institution, when deciding whether to purchase a sixty volume Japanese book series, considering the cost, chose to purchase only the index volume, on the rationale that users with a research need, by looking at the index, can request a specific volume they need via interlibrary loan. In the digital age, sharing resources globally through the institutional collaboration has become feasible and significant. From the IU Libraries website for East Asian Studies, users are able to explore numerous open access digital resources that are created and maintained by other institutions for their teaching, learning and research needs.

The collaborative model is a way for collection managers to lessen the number of necessary tasks through collaborating with best partners to achieve effective collection development. In sum, dealing with the issue of new functions and new roles in collection practice, collection managers may overcome the challenges through seeking training and collaborative engagement.

### **Issue #3: An Academic Engagement in a Business World**

Technology is changing the material world. Technology is also changing time spent on processing and collection activities through speedy communication and speedy delivery with high productivity. Today, collection librarians and acquisitions staff use the Internet to connect and contact worldwide vendors and publishers to acquire collection materials in a direct and fast way. Thus, the quantity of collection can be increased faster than ever. For instance, in the East Asian acquisitions processes, from placing orders with vendors in China, Japan and Korea to receiving ordered items, the time period has been generally shortened from over six months in the past to nowadays around two months. However, the increased prices of publications, especially for journals, have “literally eaten up limited collection budgets” (Branin, 1999, p. 26). One consequence is that monograph purchases have decreased (1999). Librarians must carefully manage funds in order to meet the demand for both print materials and digital materials (Gessesse, 2000).

Conflicts between budgetary constraints and economy in acquiring materials lead collection librarians to seek cost-effectiveness and efficiency in acquisitions. To deal with the issue, Tam et al. (2002) suggest that librarians can use consortial power to obtain better prices for information resources, apply the principles of e-commerce to the library work process, and adapt business system design methods to library management. In addition, they can find less expensive e-publishing alternatives to print resources, sharing resources through open access, organizing co-operative acquisitions of scholarly publications, and closely working with faculty to ensure best resources collected. Demas and Miller (2012) argue for cost-effective stewardship through collaborative collection management by which libraries will share responsibility for storage and access to print and digital content through the corpus of digital surrogates, rather than independently-owned collections. These

suggestions sound like smart business strategies. To engage in these activities in collection management, a key issue is how to strengthen communications between collection managers and other parties to get good deal in the business.

Clearly, effective communication is vital in managing change. Kotter (2007, p. 8) points out, "Without credible communication, and a lot of it, the hearts and minds of the troops are never captured." Agee (2007) writes that collection librarians can find ways to obtain funds and negotiate prices through effective communicative engagements, stating that writing a successful grant application to purchase additional materials for the collection is an art. Building a good relationship with successful business organizations and wealthy individuals might lead to financial sponsorship or donation for the purchase of library materials. Negotiating with sellers is often necessary and usually worthwhile because the vendor often allows a discount for all orders and may also pay shipping costs for the materials. Establishing book exchange program through liaison with other libraries may also be financially feasible. Demas and Miller (2012) suggest that to manage collections collectively, a collection management plan should be written to articulate for both internal and external audiences policies, criteria, and guidelines, to secure support from library staff, administration, faculty, and outside stakeholders. A carefully managed plan and effective communication can increase cost-effectiveness and prevent complaints and criticisms. Thus, to seek successful cost-effective collections, collection librarians need to act as a middleman to articulately communicate and negotiate with vendors, publishers, consortiums, donors and collection users to obtain the best price and build the best-valued collection. These business measures have noticeably played in East Asian collection activities in recent years. We chose book vendors to work with for the reasons of material they can obtain for us, fast and quality services they can provide, and the discounts they can offer. We negotiate with them and build good relationships with them through understanding their cultures and through effective communication. As a result, we have obtained more valuable, less expensive material to add to the East Asian Studies Collection.

## **Conclusion**

In general, in the changing world of collection management, the structure of collection and access to collections are changing, the roles of collection managers are changing, and acquisitions activities are changing. Thus, new issues arise associated with these changes, such as the nature of collection, techno-stress among collection librarians and users, the complex duties and overwhelming workload of collection librarians, and budget constraints in acquisitions. These issues challenge collection management. To deal with the challenge and to achieve effective collection development, we need to adopt effective strategies to manage changes, such as developing useful tools, holding appropriate training programs, engaging collaborations and effective communications. Managing change in collection development means to us not only managing changes in technology, budget and material, but also managing changes of people, book vendors, collaborative partners, team members,

and the users of collection. This ideal is applicable for any types of library environments, including East Asian Libraries, because they face similar changes and issues.

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