Classics in Library and Information Science Series

David Spiller.
Book Selection : Principles and Practice.
5th Edition. Library Association Publishing,
1991 (Clive Bingley Books)

David Spiller's book covers the main aspects of book evaluation. In other words, it identifies various criteria or the factors that governs book selection. These criteria depend on the purpose of book selection and the organization for which books are selected.

Spiller argues that book selection is the reverse process of book rejection. According to Spiller, books have to be selected by default, but rejecting has to be done critically after closely examining the book on hand. It may be difficult to choose two books from a bunch of ten. But rejecting eight from the same bunch is comparatively easy. Criteria evolved in this book helps in rejecting, which in turn amounts to selection.

These ideas of evaluation help in stock revision, weeding and withdrawal of stock. It also covers many factors involved in collection development, book-selection policy formulation, budgeting, collection management, aligning book collection to mission of the organization and user studies. There are sections relating to special materials such as periodicals and audio-visual learning resources. As technology is changing and space available for housing the new books is reducing, a robust weeding policy has to be evolved.



David Spiller addresses to a typical problem faced by all librarians. The budget allocated for book procurement is not received regularly, on time. As a result when good books are available in market, money is not available, and when there is a windfall or allocated funds are made available good titles are not available.

David Spiller advises to split the budget into 60:40 ratio. According to him, spend 60% money on new, relevant and useful titles. The balance 40% amount to be sparingly spent before the end of financial year to purchase good books **you may have missed during the year**. For this purpose maintain a list of related titles in reserve, which you may have missed as money was not available during the previous years. Such a useful list can be compiled using publishers' catalogues, announcements and book reviews in journals. This will ensure good collection development.

Today the nature of book selection has changed. Digital libraries have changed complexion of collection development concept. Many E-books have to be accommodated. The emphasis is more on journals and less on books in special libraries. Accessing has become more important than possessing. With all these technological and managerial changes in libraries, the concept of book selection has undergone sea-change. However, David Spiller's book is still a guiding torch. It gives deeper insight in collection development in a library.

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