# Memo

**To:** Commission Members

**From:** James Kammerer, Information Services Manager, Montana State Digital Library (MSDL)

**Date:** March 24, 2008

**Re:** MSDL Collection Development Policy Revision Memo

The MSDL collection development policy is reviewed annually by the management of the digital library division and the state librarian to insure that it continues to meet the evolving information needs of library users. Significant revision to the collection development policy requires approval by the state library commission.

Here is the rationale for proposed changes to the existing collection development policy:

The biggest driver for proposed changes to the collection development policy is the library's continuing transition from providing print materials to digital content.  Much of the present policy is based on print format. The library is responding to how users currently seek information.  Users want the information quickly.  They are less concerned about the type of container for the information.  Increasingly users expect that government information be available online especially since current information is born digital.  Furthermore, distances in Montana make it difficult for most residents and state workers to visit the library Monday to Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.  Return on investment associated with digital library content versus print materials is significant.  Declining circulation statistics for print state publications compared to rising access of the same information via the digital archive also support continued development of online library services.

The 2006-2011 Strategic Plan says that MSL will focus on collections in three areas: Montana state publications, professional development materials for librarians and information about the natural resources of Montana.  The existing collection development policy contains statements about materials found outside these collection boundaries, e.g. books on personnel management, organizational change, history texts, computer science manuals, etc.  These sections have been removed from the revised policy.  Information requests from state agency workers in these

subject areas will be filled through expanded use of statewide databases contracts like InfoTrac and through interlibrary loan

The proposed revised collection development policy is defined by MSL's three collections rather than specific formats, e.g. DVDs, maps, journals, multi-media, dissertations, etc.  Since the proposed collection development policy focuses on three collection areas there is no need to define the collection levels as minimal, basic, support, and research.  All collection areas will be managed on a research level.

Change to the collection development policy is also needed because MSL is doing considerably less back up reference for public libraries.  The decline in reference service shows in the number of entries in our reference question log and the removal some years ago of the reference desk.  Declining number of reference questions has coincided with increased use of InfoTrac and other online resources.. Though MSL will continue to provide reference service via walk-in visits, phone, email, and regular post we are less reliant on print reference resources that quickly become outdated.

The existing collection development policy also warrants revision because much of the existing print journals were acquired because of direct state employee requests and subscriptions were maintained without any set minimum usage levels. MSL developed and adopted in 2007 a formula for acquiring and retaining journals and databases that weighs the use levels against the cost of the journals or databases.  . Additionally, some of these titles are widely available elsewhere or the same information can be found within a licensed database.  Many of these print titles residing on MSL shelves constitute "dead runs."  We no longer subscribe to these titles because they are outside the three collections areas.  These dead runs are now being weeded.  All current and future journals must now be within the three collection areas and in a digital format.  Subscriptions to professional library development materials available only in a print format, however, will be maintained.

Finally, the revised collection development policy addresses the software and partnerships necessary to manage digital content.  The existing collection development policy did not anticipate the need nor the means to archive state agency websites.

The editors of the revised collection development policy are available to answer any questions not answered by this memo.