A Leisure Cinema Collection

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Recommended Citation  
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4961
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to use them for their classes or to check out for their own entertainment. The collection development librarian decided that if instructors wanted a title to support their classes the library then would purchase a new copy for the regular academic collection. Other policies set by the collection development librarian included a one week loan period, no fines if overdue, and a nominal fee of $10 for lost videos.

Marketing the Collection

The marketing of any library service can greatly aid in its success. This held true for our leisure video collection, and we took several efforts to inform our campus community. We advertised the video collection on the news section of our library’s Website, and we also created an information Web page. Our library director marketed the new collection by sending an email to all students. In addition to these efforts, signage proved to be a simple, effective marketing tool. Our library purchased a large sign that read “Popular Video Collection for MSJ Students,” and we placed this in a prominent place with the collections. We also initially housed the video rack near the circulation desk so students would easily see the collection when entering or leaving the library.

Student Reaction

Our modest original VHS collection of 67 titles implemented in August of 2002 was an immediate success. Between August and December of 2002, the videos circulated 660 times. Although we did not formally survey students for feedback, numerous students verbalized to library faculty and staff satisfaction with the collection and asked for more titles. Over the next year, 2003, 30 additional popular titles were added, and circulation counts increased. The videos circulated 694 times in the 2003 calendar year. Informal student feedback remained positive, and in fact, students began requesting titles on DVD video-disc rather than VHS cassettes.

Format Considerations

We implemented our leisure cinema collection in 2002, which is around the time that the DVD format began to dominate the industry. By 2004 we encouraged the collection development librarian to consider collecting in DVD format, and he concurred. The library continued to accept VHS tapes if donated, but acquisitions for the leisure collection would be strictly DVD format. The DVD portion of the popular video collection began at a modest 26 titles. Circulation for both VHS and DVD formats increased dramatically with 906 checkouts in 2004. In early 2005 the library added 25 more DVD titles, and circulation remains steady at this time.

Since adding the DVDs, the circulation of the VHS titles has substantially decreased. For now, the library is keeping the video-cassettes within the popular collection — as they are in their own display case but our collection development librarian might consider developing a retention policy for these VHS cassettes in the future.

Summary & Conclusion

By all accounts, our leisure movie collection has been a resounding success. Through it we have generated good will among our students, and we have been able to use the collection to aid in our marketing efforts of the library and its other services. The library staff recently re-organized the student lounge/group study area. This allowed us to group the movie collection with our existing paperback exchange collection of popular fiction. Due to the success of our video collection, we have considered adding popular music CDs, therefore providing a complete “recreation collection” for our students, but this has not gone beyond the planning stages. For now we will be continuing to add DVDs to the collection provided that funds remain available.

We would recommend a popular video collection to academic libraries interested in a marketing opportunity or as a chance to generate goodwill between the student population and the library. Our collection has helped our library to be seen as a student-friendly environment, as it has generated positive publicity for the library on our campus. The only suggestions we have would be to specify strict collection and discard policies from the start, as we are now faced with the decision on what to do with videocassettes, which are becoming an outdated format. Also, other collection development issues surrounding format includes how long to keep “older” titles (five-years-old or older) once they have decreased in popularity. This is an ongoing issue for any library with a video collection, as interest in even the most popular titles will inevitably decrease with time.6 We have been able to transfer some titles to our regular film collection as appropriate, but decisions will need to be made on titles that are clearly only appropriate for a leisure collection. Despite these issues, our leisure video collection has been an unqualified success and we would not hesitate to recommend a similar collection for any academic library.

Suggestions for a Successful Leisure Cinema Collection

- Establish concrete collection and discard policies
- Establish reasonable circulation policies
- Know your patrons — keep their interests and diversity in mind
- Collect for the patrons, not yourself
- Balance the collection so a range of genres is represented

Endnotes

5. ibid, p. 85.
6. ibid, p. 55.

Homespun Cultural Artifacts: Collecting Quilts for Fun and Babies

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Since I’ve begun assembling stories about people’s collections, I’ve noticed other people have been too. What’s the word for that? Coincidence, serendipity? Děj ví? Anyway, NPR’s To the Best of Our Knowledge did a show on “Collecting” during February, and the Charleston Post & Courier recently put out a call for cookbook collectors. Point being, apparently it’s a topic of at least some interest.

Peg Bradshaw <pbradsha@wrl.org>, Circulation Services Director at the Williamsburg (Va.) Regional Library, has collected quilts for over 30 years. She began when her first son, Matt, was born, and has continued to collect through three more children and two grandchildren.

“My collection is mostly of baby quilts and I prefer the traditional patterns. I also love the Amish quilt patterns and colors. I have made several trips to different Amish areas in Pennsylvania for purchases. I also make it a point to visit any antique stores where I vacation or visit. I try to treat myself to a quilt purchase every year… it usually

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