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THE GIST GIFT & DESELECTION MANAGER: REDESIGNING GIFT AND WEEDING WORKFLOW IN THE LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

Gifts and weeding are two of the hardest jobs librarians face in an academic library. Trying to decide what is worth keeping versus what should be weeded is made especially difficult when you face major constraints: space, time, labor, and costs. Current workflows may or may not work and are dependent on your staffing, library priorities and the goals of your collection development policy. SUNY Geneseo's Milne Library created a free open-source and innovative tool called the GIST Gift & Deselection Manager, designed to manage a new workflow for the time-consuming gifts and weeding process. For gift workflows, the GDM uses several APIs (Application Programming Interface) to return a list of local and consortia holdings; creates automated "Keep" or "Do not keep" recommendations based on a customizable subject conspectus; imports library-enriched data such as award-winners or core title lists for effective decision-making; allows staff to route gift items to reviewers for analysis; provides a customizable donor acknowledgment letter and even more. For weeding & deselection workflows, the GDM uses the same APIs to return a list of consortia holdings and full-text availability from HathiTrust and Google Books; makes "Keep" or "Do not keep" recommendations based on holdings and full-text availability, conspectus data and weight of item; and allows for major weeding projects using a batch import process with OCLC or ISBN numbers.

INTRODUCTION

Gift processing and weeding workflows have been the subject of many conference presentations, papers and journal articles. Online tutorials have been developed to assist libraries with the arduous process of educating staff about why it is important to weed their collections on a regular basis. The acronym "CREW" stands for one such method for developing a systematic approach to the weeding process. CREW stands for "Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding" – a method developed by the Texas State Library & Archives Commission nearly 30 years ago (Larson, p. 6). Developed for small and medium-sized public libraries on a budget, the CREW method used a handy acronym to make the weeding process easy for librarians to conduct on a small budget. Similar programs have developed all over the country (<http://www.wmrls.org/services/colldev/weeding.html>) to assist librarians with a subjective, time-consuming and labor-intensive process. What makes the Gift and Deselection Manager different is the design of a tool where much of the subjective and time-consuming decision-making process is automated and customizable for their workflows.

The GIST Gift and Deselection Manager is part of the Getting It System Toolkit project and is focused on optimizing workflow by automating most of the work. It leverages systems to provide data for quickly making decisions and shortens the time you have to deal with processing. GIST GDM does this as free, standalone software which is easy to customize and

use. You can automate the evaluation process, cataloging options and streamline decision-making and gifts & deselection workflow.

Because GDM automates the gathering of data for evaluating donations including holdings, comparison of editions you hold, full-text, and other data, it helps you to streamline workflow by

- recommending *Keep* or *Do not keep* according to your collection building conspectus file;
- cataloging the item from GDM by opening and retrieving the record in OCLC Connexion as you process gifts, attaching holdings and begin the process to import into your LMS;
- automating the printing of donor letters with lists of donated items – no more keying in title information for acknowledgments as the data is now stored in GDM's database

THE GIFT & DESELECTION MANAGER (GDM) INTERFACE – USING AND NAVIGATING GDM

GIST Gift Manager

Select Donor

Wand in ISBN, or OCLC#, or do a Title Search for donation

Item Information:
Author, title, series title, imprint, LC Call no. Dewey, & awards.

Item Information:
Amazon Price; Full-text: Google & Hathi Trust; Better World Books acceptance of Library discard

Holdings Information:

- Held Locally – do you hold work (FRBR-ized)
- “IDS” or Group 2 is a configurable set of OCLC symbols like consortia or local area. (not FRBR-ized)
- “NY OCLC ILL Libraries” or Group 3 is a configurable set of OCLC symbols like a state. (not FRBR-ized)
- Local Catalog link and imprint to compare editions of gift & holdings.
- Worldcat Link to the right

Recommendation based on Conspectus

- Do not keep
- Keep
- Options: Override and Review

Item Views:

- Conspectus (subject analysis)
- Collection (donation collection)
- MaRC record

Conspectus View: is your subject and configurable decision weighting tool

- Subject analysis matches on LC and Dewey, best matching conspectus values utilized.
- Collecting level evaluates item against configurable level of interest in growing the collection in this subject area.
- Uniqueness evaluates item against configurable level of interest in how widely held is this item based on your group 2 and 3 holdings.
- “If Newer Than” limits, by a factor or strictly, by the publication dates of donated works.
- “If Older Than” limits, by a factor or strictly, by the publication dates of donated works.
- As you process gifts, you can adjust factors and re-calculate the weighting to see the effect on the recommendation.
- The navigation bar at the footer allows you to view multiple conspectus values, if applicable.

The GDM interface is designed to make decision making as easy as typing or wandering in an ISBN and letting the system recommend the next step based on your collection building profile.

1. You start by selecting a donor – anonymous may be the most common, if you have a donation box or bin set up in your library which accepts gifts.
2. Select a donation date. You can even select a previous date if you are processing a prior day or days’ donations.

3. Wand in a book's ISBN, type in the OCLC# or do a title search and press *Process*. GDM calls out to the WorldCat API and other APIs to gather all the data for evaluation.
4. The item information is returned, which shows the author, title, series information, imprint, LC and Dewey call numbers. Also included is the price of the book in Amazon (if available), with a link to view more, and full-text indicators at Google Books and Hathi Trust, with a link to view more directly. It also checks Better World Books to see if they will accept this title if you are not keeping. Lastly, the OCLC # and related ISBNs appear.
5. Below the bibliographic information is the holdings data. The first information set is returned from OCLC and allows you a FRBR-ized lookup of your holdings and two other customizable groups. The next information set is returned from a lookup of your local catalog, showing a link to your item information and imprint data (for edition comparison check). It also indicates which ISBN you own.
6. The conspectus view is a collection building profile matching the best LC call number or Dewey classification using the OCLC conspectus which you customize. A weighting formula is calculated to make *Keep* or *Do not keep* recommendations based on simple values; how much do duplication, publication date, and growth in this subject area matter? The conspectus also provides you with the ability to add reviewers if you want to get input from other librarians.
7. The GDM results and conspectus provide a recommendation; however, the *Request Review* process allows the staff to send items for review (to a reviewer previously assigned in that subject area) through email or a print slip with the book. Although GDM will recommend an action based on your collection building conspectus, you can override the recommendation at any time.
8. As you view information about the item, four tabs on the right side of the GDM interface provide even more information. First, the *Conspectus* tab lists the customized conspectus information for this item; the *Collection* tab lists items you have been processing for this donor; the *MARC record* tab gives a detailed view of the record; and *Book Lists* tab will flag items with a red tab when an item appears on a designated award winner book list you have previously uploaded. Currently, GDM is configured with the Caldecott and Newbery Awards & Honor book lists. If libraries are interested, you can upload your own customized book lists for flagging when processing gifts. For example, create a book list of wish list items for your library, high demand or high circulating items that you may not want to purchase, but would eagerly accept a duplicate, etc. You can download a template for creating lists on our toolkit website.
9. After processing all the donated items for a particular donor, just click on *Print Template* and select *Thank you Letter* – GDM does the rest, adding all the titles and donor information to a word template – ready to print. The template is found within the GDM software and is customizable by your library staff.

All documentation and installation instructions are found at <http://gist.idsproject.org>

CUSTOMIZING THE CONSPECTUS AND AUTOMATE YOUR COLLECTION BUILDING PROFILE

The GIST GDM uses the OCLC Conspectus, a subject hierarchy consisting of divisions, categories, and subjects. The conspectus provides a framework to describe library collections, and is mapped to Dewey Decimal, Library of Congress and National Library of Medicine classification schemes. The conspectus is structured in hierarchical order, from broad divisions to very specific subjects and each level is increasingly more detailed. Setting up the conspectus in GDM allows for libraries to customize and automate the gift management workflow. Libraries may determine which areas of the conspectus they might want to collect and other subject areas that are out of scope. Making these decisions ahead of time and customizing GDM will automate much of the evaluation workflow. Libraries can decide what divisions and categories they wish to grow and then set up collecting levels and uniqueness factors to automate those decisions. Libraries can also set up strict guidelines for keeping or not keeping publications dependent on date limits. For example, if you wanted to collect comprehensively in Geography and Earth Sciences – Meteorology, but only within the last 5 years of publication, you would want to set your collecting level to “5”, a uniqueness factor of “1” (to avoid duplication in your collection), and set your “If Newer than” settings to 5 and click in the box for Strict.

Publishers

Use this text area to define publishers that you target for a specific category. While reviewing an item in the GDM, this will allow staff to easily know whether or not it is worth keeping based upon whether that publisher is preferred or not.

Collecting Level

This indicates the depth of collecting, with 0 indicating no growth and 5 indicating a comprehensive collection, with maximum growth:

0 = OUT OF SCOPE – Library does not collect in this subject.

1 = MINIMAL INFORMATION LEVEL – Collections that support minimal inquiries about this subject and include a very limited collection of general resources, including monographs and reference works.

2 = BASIC INFORMATION LEVEL – Collections that introduce and define a subject, indicate the varieties of information available elsewhere, and support the needs of general library users through the first two years of college instruction.

3 = STUDY OR INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT LEVEL – Collections that provide information about a subject in a systematic way, but at a level of less than research intensity and support the needs of general library users through college and beginning graduate instruction.

4 = RESEARCH LEVEL – Collections that contain the major published source materials required for doctoral study and independent research.

5 = COMPREHENSIVE LEVEL – Collections in a specifically defined field of knowledge that strive to be exhaustive as far as is reasonably possible (i.e., “special collections”).

Uniqueness

This indicates your willingness to have duplicate copies of materials within this category or division, with 0 indicating no duplication and 5 indicating liberal duplication. This will have a lot to do with the average usage of items in a given subject area at your institution. Take into consideration whether a subject has commonly assigned textbooks, is a specialization of your institution, or has high circulation volume. Remember that this value is distinct from your group holdings and is specifically referring to duplicate copies within your own local collection, so weight accordingly.

Publication Dates

You can specify collection limits for a subject based upon the age (in years) of an item. Select the “*If Newer Than*” preference for items that are published in the past x years; the “*If Older Than*” preference for items that were published over x years ago; and by checking “*Strict*”, this means that no items can exceed the values you entered. For example: you prefer items published within the past 5 years, but will still consider items older than that. Set “*If Newer Than*” to 5. The result would be a higher weighting of items published within the past five years, with older items receiving a diminished weighting. But, if you wanted only items published within the past 5 years, you would check the *Strict* box for the “*If Newer Than*” value.

Reviewers

For each division and category, you can specify a reviewer. This is useful if you want to defer a decision to a subject specialist or department liaison. This person will receive an email notification sent from within the GDM software, notifying the person that an item requires review. To create a new reviewer, return to the GDM window and click on the *View* menu. Select *Reviewer*. To view in the *Reviewer* window, press the + button to add. Remember to click the save button when you’re finished. To add a *Reviewer*, you may assign particular reviewers to an overall division level or specifically to categories within that division. A reviewer can be added as the reviewer for the conspectus category by clicking on “*Update Category*” within the category’s record.

Weighting

A number of factors make up the *Weight* score which effectively determines whether or not GDM returns a “*Keep*” or “*Do Not Keep*” recommendation. Holdings, publication dates, uniqueness and collecting level are factors that affect the final weighting of an item. The higher the weight score, the recommendation will be to *Keep* an item, due to these factors. A lower weight indicates an item of less desirability than the higher weighted item.

See for further information: <http://gettingitsystemtoolkit.wordpress.com/gift-deselection-manager/customizing-the-conspectus/>

USING THE GIST GDM FOR DESELECTION PROCESSING

When you change the GIST Gift Manager to Deselection Manager, the interface looks the same, although because you already own the item, the weighting is adjusted. Just wand in the ISBN, type in the OCLC#, or look up by title. Again, GDM returns a *Keep* or *Do not keep* recommendation based on your local and group holdings and collection building profile

parameters. Next, if deciding to weed, you have immediate access to OCLC Connexion for removing your holdings from WorldCat.

Because this method of evaluating is item by item, for bigger weeding projects, GIST GDM also includes a batch analysis tool for providing useful evaluation information in a downloaded spreadsheet. First, library staff creates a report of OCLC or ISBN #s from their ILS (for example, a zero use report of items never circulated) which then may be run through the Batch Deselection tool for batch analysis.

In the Batch Deselection tool, select your .txt file you wish to run. Next, select variables for your report (*Use Strict Dates for Conspectus*, *Ignore Uniqueness*, and/or *Extreme Weeding*). There are limits to the number of records that can be processed by GDM in one day. The Google Books API has a

1,000 per day hit limit on its API, and the WorldCat API depends on what record limit you have asked for and received. Click on *Begin Batch Process* and watch as the records are processed. When it is done processing, an Excel spreadsheet will open and can be saved to your computer. Subject librarians and collection development staff can review a report which includes the following data:

- Title, Author, Publication Date
- OCLC Call Number (050 or 090 field)
- # holdings in your groups
- Full Text in Hathi Trust and Google Books,
- Better World Books Library discard acceptance
- Weighting and conspectus recommendation for keeping or deselecting

GDM batch analysis has been used for JSTOR analysis, and may be used to identify items to move from open stacks to special collections, or targeting local holdings which have not been digitized. At Geneseo, GDM helped us weed a large unused print monograph collection in storage (31,000+ items). Using this batch analysis, we found 13% of the collection was

available full-text from the Hathi Trust repository of digitized books. GDM batch analysis can also be used on journals; one test of the Batch Deselection tool was done using JSTOR OCLC#s provided by an Ohio library interested in the results across Ohio Link. As libraries streamline processing gifts, and develop marketing techniques, they can develop beneficial strategies at a time when monograph budgets are declining, while also promoting literacy campaigns and by partnering with Better World Books. From July 1st – November 1, 2010, Geneseo processed 3,000 total items using GIST GDM, added 360 items to the collection (12%) and sent 2,640 items (88%) to Better World Books. Of the 3,000 items donated, 590 of these items (20%) were published between 2000 and 2010, a much higher figure than initially forecasted when predicting what types of gifts we would receive. With GIST GDM, libraries can build current, topical and relevant collections, streamline their operations, and help literacy campaigns – all at the same time.

CONCLUSION

The GIST GDM is an open-source tool designed to automate the gift processing and weeding workflow in libraries by streamlining decision-making and giving staff the data to make effective evaluations of their collections. For more information, please visit the GIST documentation website at: <http://gist.idsproject.org> or please contact the author at pitcher@geneseo.edu.

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