

June 2006

A Leisure Cinema Collection

Julie Flanders

College of Mount Saint Joseph Library, Julie_Flanders@mail.msj.edu

Cynthia Gregory

College of Mount Saint Joseph Library, Cynthia_Gregory@mail.msj.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Flanders, Julie and Gregory, Cynthia (2006) "A Leisure Cinema Collection," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 18: Iss. 3, Article 13.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4961>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

A Leisure Cinema Collection

by **Julie Flanders** (Head of Technical Services, College of Mount Saint Joseph Library, 5701 Delhi Road, Cincinnati, OH 45233; Phone: 513-244-4798; Fax: 513-244-4355) <Julie_Flanders@mail.msjeu>

and **Cynthia Gregory** (Head of Electronic Resources, College of Mount Saint Joseph Library, 5701 Delhi Road, Cincinnati, OH 45233; Phone: 513-244-4762; Fax: 513-244-4355) <Cynthia_Gregory@mail.msjeu>

Introduction

Traditionally, the role of an academic library is to fulfill the research and curricular needs of its parent institution. While supporting educational needs remains the primary mission of the **Archbishop Alter Library at the College of Mount St. Joseph**, we implemented a leisure video collection in the summer of 2002. Although this new leisure cinema collection fell outside the traditional educational role of our library, it enabled us to meet the recreational needs of the College's students — especially those who live on campus. The **College of Mount St. Joseph** is a small liberal arts college (with approximately 2100 students) located in a suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio. The campus' location is not within easy walking distance of a shopping center, video store, or public library. Therefore, we identified a need to provide a small recreational video collection for the school's dorm students — especially those who do not have cars.

The idea for a leisure cinema collection first came to us after working at our library's reference desk. A frequent question from dormitory students was did the library carry any movies? We do have a strong film collection that supports our film studies courses, but it was clear these students were not looking for *Citizen Kane* or *Schindler's List* as entertainment on a Friday evening. Therefore, we decided to investigate the feasibility of developing and maintaining a student-focused popular video collection. First, we discussed this new collection idea with the library's collection development librarian. He encouraged us to pursue implementing this collection since the idea originated with us and we were both enthusiastic about working on it. Then once we established the collection, the collection development librarian would take on the collection's maintenance.

Preliminary Information Gathering

Prior to developing this collection, we asked ourselves several questions "any librarian should ask before developing any collection"¹ For example:

- What specific patron base will this collection serve?
- What is the goal of the collection?
- What formats will we collect?
- Is our aim long-term circulation or short-term?
- What mix of genres will be successful in this collection?

- How do we decide which titles to purchase?
- What kind of processing will the collection require?
- Will the collection be fully cataloged?
- Will the collection use the library's classification scheme?²

Budget & Vendors

The collection development librarian set our initial budget at \$200. For cost effectiveness, we made the decision to not spend more than ten dollars per title and we easily were able to stay with this policy since we obtained our



initial collection through previously viewed videos at local rental stores as well as new titles from discount stores. Many of the used titles ranged in price from \$4-10. Often, video rental stores had "buy two get one free" promotions, and we took advantage of that.

Additionally, we accepted donations of used videos from willing members of the campus community, and the collection development librarian made decisions about what donations entered our popular video collection.

Developing the Collection

When developing any type of collection, keeping your target audience's interests in mind is one of the most important points to remember. After all, we were establishing a collection for the students and not ourselves. Although we did not administer a formal survey to solicit client-centered data, we did solicit from our library's student assistants a list of recommendations for purchasing.³ "What," we asked them, "would interest students?" We followed their suggestions as much as possible. However, we were limited to the titles available in the discount and rental stores' inventory. Additionally, we made a conscious effort to balance the collection with different types of genres — for example, x number of horror, drama, comedy, action, etc.

In addition to a community's interest, surveying the demographics of your target audience is also an important piece of information when developing a video collection.⁴ We wanted the leisure film collection to reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of our student body, and we focused on acquiring popular movies with diverse characters and backgrounds. For instance, we sought popular titles that focused on African-American, Latino, Asian, or Indian (India) characters. Additionally, we took into consideration the age diversity of our student

body. While there are more traditional aged students on our campus, we did include titles that would appeal to our non-traditional students.

Donations

Keeping in mind our collection's target audience became especially important when considering the donated video titles we received. A patron gave us approximately 20 *Star Trek* TV episode donations. Initially, we did not think these would be popular with our undergraduate populations, but the collection development librarian wanted to try them in the collection as well as other donated classic films such as *Come Back Little Sheba* and *Compulsion*. After a semester of sitting untouched on the shelves, we inquired about weeding them from the leisure cinema collection. The classic films were moved to the library's core film collection to support the college's film studies courses. Other donated titles, such as *Good Will Hunting*, *Jerry McGuire*, and *Sleepless in Seattle* — albeit "older" titles — interested students, and with continued circulation they remained in the collection.

Cataloging and Classification of the Collection

In the interest of time and staff resources, we decided not to fully catalog the video collection. Our technical services department is very small, and we did not feel we had the time to fully catalog the incoming collection. We wanted the videos to be available to the students as soon as possible, so we decided to make quick and basic records so the videos could be checked out and searched in our catalog, but they would not be part of our OCLC holdings and the cataloging would not follow AACR II standards.

Since we were keeping the videos in their own rack and not on our shelves with our regular circulating collection, we decided not to use our standard classification scheme, which is the **Dewey Decimal System**. We affixed blue "V" labels on to the videos, and all were given a PV call number in the catalog. The videos were not arranged in any particular order on the video rack, but patrons could browse through the rack and easily see what titles were available. We also created a location code specifically for the videos, simply called Popular Videos, so that our patrons could limit to this location in our catalog and obtain a list of all of the titles available to be borrowed.

Checkout Policies

Our collection development librarian decided to restrict video circulation to college students. The rationale was that professors are more likely to have the resources (automobile, money) to rent a video. This circulation restriction worked well for the most part. However, often professors would see the movies and want

continued on page 42

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.⁵ 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 cinema 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 videocassettes within the popular collec-

tion — 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

1. **James C. Scholtz**, "Developing Video Collection Development Policies to Accommodate Existing and New Technologies," in *Video Collection Development in Multi-type Libraries* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), p 248.
2. *ibid.*, and **Lois K. Merry**, "The Devil in the Details: An Academic Library Acquires a Video Collection," *Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services* 28 (2004): 298-311.
3. **James C. Scholtz**, "Developing Video Collection Development Policies to Accommodate Existing and New Technologies," in *Video Collection Development in Multi-type Libraries* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), p 252.
4. **Sally Mason-Robinson**, *Developing and Managing Video Collections* (New York: Neal Schuman Publishers, Inc., 1996), p 47.
5. *ibid.*, p 85.
6. *ibid.*, p 55.

Homespun Cultural Artifacts: Collecting Quilts for Fun and Babies

by **Kirstin Steele** (Collection Management Librarian, 171 Moultrie Street, Charleston, SC 29409; Phone: 843-953-5837; Fax: 843-953-5190) <kirstin.steele@gmail.com>



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? Déjà vu? 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

continued on page 44