Against the Grain

Volume 22 | Issue 2 Article 19

April 2010

Focus versus Breadth in Special Collections Acquisitions

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Recommended Citation

Scott, Patrick (2010) "Focus versus Breadth in Special Collections Acquisitions," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 22: Iss. 2, Article 19.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.5508

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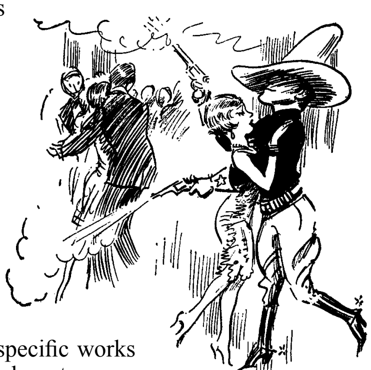
Milady, and so the number of current works in the field is limited. Many of the non-**Milady** works are out of print, but there are many high-quality works that are still available. I have decided to make it a priority to acquire those works, new or old, that will lend more depth and/or a different point of view.

Collecting for our allied health programs presents a different set of challenges. The public and private sectors are invested heavily in improving access to medical knowledge. However, there are challenges in that medical texts can be expensive, frequently become out-dated, and often be quite dense. It is also challenging to cover all of the topics in the field because medical science is a vast subject.



I have opted to focus on breadth first, in preference to depth. For instance, I selected texts that offer information on a range of diseases, rather than information on a single disease. Focusing on general works first allows us to offer relevant information in the short term, and lets us collect specific works for specific needs over the long term.

Our curriculum includes a pharmacology component, and one recent project I undertook was to collect a number of *Physician's Desk References*. Having enough volumes for our students to check out was the main goal. I asked the librarians at other **Remington** campuses what their experience had been with collecting *PDRs*. I received many responses suggesting that electronic resources, such as **PDR.net**, **FDA.gov**, and **MedlinePlus.gov**, were effective sources for up-to-date information.

I talked with the instructor who made the request, and asked whether it was more important to have the newest edition or to have a larger number of volumes. He explained to me that the main goal was not so much for the students to have access to the latest information, which could be found elsewhere, but rather for them to know the nuances of how to use a *PDR*. I also conversed with several other instructors who would be using the books, and we reached a consensus that acquiring editions from the same year was important so that they could be uniform in their teaching.

I decided to look into purchasing a number of slightly older *PDRs*. I found that many used volumes were available on *Alibris.com*. The best balance of price, publication date, and availability was for the 2007 edition. The 2006 edition was not significantly cheaper, and the 2008 edition was not yet available in a sufficient quantity. Two weeks after recognizing our need, we were able to put these rather large reference books into circulation.

A faculty member mentioned to me that she had once seen a book that linked bizarre images to medical facts. I delved into *Alibris.com* and *Amazon.com* and found a number of books on medical mnemonics that matched the description. I decided to acquire several of them, and we have found them worthwhile because they address medical knowledge from an unconventional angle.

Our situation allows collection development activities and reference services to be easily integrated because they are conducted by one librarian. My decisions on what to select are often the result of specific questions that patrons ask. I do not have all of the answers, and I certainly do not have all of the questions. Our patrons provide a great service by identifying topics that we should be able to address within our collection. I also like adding works in response to patrons' questions because it demonstrates that they have a say in our decisions.

Probably the most important decision I have made is in how to approach education. It is a common insight that teaching someone how to fish is better than giving someone a fish, and I believe it is even better to expect students to become teachers themselves. I want to inspire students to inspire each other. A quotation by Plutarch captures this view: "the mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled."

A library might also be viewed in terms of fire. A fire is built upon combustible material, just as a library is built upon information. A fire needs oxygen, and a library needs patrons. A fire needs ventilation to burn cleanly, and a patron needs convenient access to relevant resources. A fire needs a spark, and a library needs curiosity. A fire needs to be stirred up every once in a while, and a collection needs to be evaluated and weeded regularly. And both a fire and a library should be accountable to their purpose. A campfire built to provide warmth should be monitored for signs of both conflagration and asphyxiation; a library built to support education should be monitored for signs of both overextension and irrelevance.

The knowledge we are building in this library will grow beyond the halls of **Remington**. Our students are doing their best to develop themselves, and so I do my best to develop our collection. The days when I see students working and studying beyond the requirements are the days when smiles come easily. I believe that we are doing more than providing an education. We are, I hope, lighting torches that will be passed on to future generations.

Author's Note:** The views expressed in this article are my own, and not necessarily those of **Remington College**. — **ML

Focus versus Breadth in Special Collections Acquisitions

by **Patrick Scott** (Director of Special Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries, and Distinguished Professor of English) <scottp@mailbox.sc.edu>

Everyone knows that Special Collections are (a) expensive and (b) different. Those two "facts" have largely determined the conventional wisdom about how to plan (and justify) expenditure for Special Collections acquisitions. Because the materials are (or can be) expensive, it is easier to accept that a library cannot buy everything. Because each library's Special Collections are, by definition, different, other libraries cannot be used as benchmarks in selecting what materials to buy.

Focus and Flexibility for Special Collections

In the conventional wisdom of Special Collections development policies, effort and money should be focused on "building to strength," identifying a few distinctive areas for saturation acquisition.[1] Much can be accomplished by following this conventional wisdom, yet it reflects too narrow, too inflexible, and perhaps too dated, a view of what Special Collections are for. Moreover, both the context and the market have changed since the mid-twentieth century, when the approach became conventional. Special Collections are sometimes not unjustly stigmatized as smugly isolated from their home libraries and universities. Where this is the case, it is often not so much from inactivity or lack of outreach effort but from sticking to an irrelevant collection development policy. In the memorable phrase of one ex-library director, from an **ARL** conference blandly titled "Building to Strength," research libraries "have not sufficiently justified our investments in these offshore wells of oil and sludge."[2] If a Special Collections unit is to remain active and effective, having a range and variety of teaching-related materials may be more important than distinctiveness. Purchases for range may, even in the long run, prove a better use of money.

Older Ambitions: Checking off the Great Books

It is, in fact, only forty or fifty years ago that "building to strength" became the conventional wisdom. Before then, aspirant libraries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries vied less for distinctiveness than for recognition.

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They aimed to be equal to the best libraries elsewhere, and they sought this goal in the same way that well-heeled contemporary bibliophile collectors sought social recognition, by acquiring the same great books ("highpoints") that other people owned. There was a canon of great books to be pursued by libraries that aspired to greatness, from the **Gutenberg** *Bible* and the **Shakespeare** *First Folio* onwards to **Isaac Newton**, the Romantic poets, and **John James Audubon**. You could test the strength of a university's literary collections, for instance, by the percentage of titles it held from the **Grolier Club's** influential *One Hundred Books Famous in English Literature* (1893). In due course, libraries might boast more generally of number of titles held that were listed in the great **Gutenberg** quincentenary catalogue *Printing and the Mind of Man* (1967). It was found that undergraduates exposed to such treasures would later become, in disproportionate numbers, scholars and collectors themselves.[3] In the 1930s and 1940s, in the post-1929 trough for rare book prices, at least some of the great books were not necessarily very expensive, and donors and administrators knew they were getting for their money items of recognized significance.

The Downside of "Highpoint" Collecting

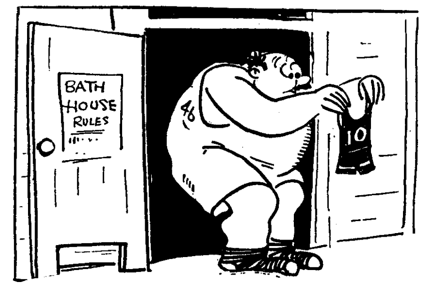
Where highpoints are symptomatic of real depth in more ordinary collection-building, their owners are indeed to be envied. That however was not always the case, especially in smaller libraries.[4] Moreover, the prices for sought-after titles went up steadily from the 1950s onwards. The traditional listings began to look out-of-date. Even in the core arts and sciences, the rapid expansion of universities brought hungry researchers working new non-canonical topics. Often even the greatest books began to seem simply museum items, trophies for occasional display, offering too little potential for fresh publishable research, and the tide turned against the purchase of isolated highpoints.

The Emergence of a New Mantra

What replaced that older strategy was a new mantra, asserting that expenditure should be focused on some distinctive area or areas of strength, not spread across periods and disciplines, and this new approach accompanied an almost-exclusive interest in the use of the collections for research rather than teaching. From the mid-twentieth century onwards, the relevant library unit morphed from Treasure Room to Rare Books to Special Collections to Research Collections. A new emphasis on archives, including modern archives, signaled the belief that primary documents offer greater research potential than traditional rare printed items. Both libraries and the dealers who did business with them sought out collections that could be acquired en bloc, promising instant research strength. Where individual items were acquired, the boast was less about those included in major general collecting-lists and more about those, however insignificant in themselves, that had been omitted by the relevant specialist bibliography. Sometimes the new approach was codified in a formal Collection Development Policy, but in any case it would be routinely invoked, both to justify major expenditures and to refuse further collecting initiatives, modest faculty purchase-requests, or even gift-items that were deemed out of scope.[5] For most newer special collections units, this change from range to focus heralded a period of rapid expansion, some real achievements, increased professionalism, and growing institutional self-confidence.

Special Collections and Institutional Ambition

The argument for "building to strength," that is, acquiring whatever becomes available for one or more major collection or collecting area, was often based less on the actual needs of actual researchers than on the quest for institutional status. Only so, it was asserted, would an otherwise generic library and university become internationally renowned, a source of pride to students and faculty, a source of envy to its wannabe rivals, and a desirable destination for scholars from higher-ranked institutions. In the 1960s and 1970s, the presidents and library directors of rapidly-expanding state schools with new graduate programs were often sold on this approach as a way to catch up with the long-entrenched superiority of the endowed and ivy-clad. Eager hustlers, both in the professoriate and the book-trade, advised administrators that it was now too late to compete in collecting **Shakespeare** or **Milton** or **Moliere**, and urged instead that the university get in on the ground floor of some more recent collecting area, which was promised to be a surefire investment for future recognition. The spigot was turned off on additional purchases for other fields; older gift collections without active on-site boosters were declared "closed" to new acquisitions and all funding committed to a single focus of excellence (or, university politics being what they are, two or three foci of excellence). This strategy indisputably encouraged the acquisition or enhancement of some worthwhile collections in a much wider variety of institutional settings. My own library has greatly benefitted from it.



The Four Gambles of Focused Collecting

The strategy of "building to strength" involves four distinct gambles. If any one of the four gambles turns out wrong, the iron law of focused collecting ceases to be absolute.

Gamble 1: Finding Affordable Additions

First, the strategy gambles that a sufficient flow of relevant primary materials, books, and manuscripts would remain available and affordable. Sometimes a collection was started from scratch, but more often it began with a gift (or purchase) from a private collector, with the acquisition of a writer's archive from the writer or the estate, or with the offer of a core collection put together by a dealer. Once the basic materials have been assembled, collecting gets harder. Each item remaining to be bought will be rarer and more costly in the market, what it adds to the sum of knowledge is likely to be more and more recondite, and the incremental improvement it makes to the collection more and more difficult to explain. A collection of books by a less sought-after author acquired at, say $15,000, will not necessarily become twice as useful to the institution by spending another $15,000 on additional material. The library that owns a major collection, acquired initially for, say, half a million, should not feel impoverished or shamefaced if, when dealers offer additional archival material at four hundred thousand or additional artwork at a cool million, it ponders carefully whether the additional expenditure is justifiable and comes to the conclusion that it isn't. Indeed, the $15,000 for yet another inscribed first edition by a major author or the $25,000 for a few additional non-literary letters may not be the best use of money, either. Even where "collecting to strength" means simply the routine checking of a "wants" list to fill definite gaps, as, for instance, of first editions lacking in a donated collection, wisdom asks first whether the collection will be used in a way that is enhanced by completeness, though the default decision in such a case will usually be to buy when one can.

Gamble 2: The Assertion of Uniqueness

Second, the strategy assumes that the chosen collecting focus was truly distinctive, not just the same enthusiasm being pushed at a raft of aspirant peer-institutions. One powerful influence in the adoption of "building to strength" was, paradoxically, the wish of younger faculty in the mid-twentieth century to get library support for research in (their own) new areas, to change collection priorities, not simply to focus them. Inevitably, many institutions refocused their collecting towards the same new-ish fields. Library after library will list among its special strengths twentieth-century American literature (with perhaps a special focus such as the Beats or the hardboiled crime novel or contemporary fiction), modern Irish writing, science fiction, historic children's literature, and even comics. Most libraries (especially among those with few incunabula) list a special collecting focus in modern fine printing and the book arts. Almost every library will assert that it has a significant special collecting emphasis in some area of African-American studies and women's and gender studies, and a remarkable number now identifies a special collecting strength in GBLT archival materials. I am unapologetic that my own library has collected in all of the areas listed above, but the justification for such collecting, or of further expenditure in those fields, must surely be either teaching or intrinsic cultural

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significance, not the development of unique or distinctive "destination" research collections.

Gamble 3: Continuing Research Yield

Third, insofar as the justification for "building to strength" is research, the strategy gambles that what is collected will prove rich and varied enough to allow, not just the research of a single enthusiast, but recurrent research by multiple researchers over time working from varying research perspectives. Few of those who press libraries to focus on their own scholarly specialism would justify a special collection by the future need for their own scholarship to be redone or corrected. It may indeed sometimes be justifiable to acquire or build a collection to support a single research project, for instance a standard biography, definitive bibliography, collected letters, or scholarly edition, but if that is the only kind of research project that can be done with the collection, or if every original document has been edited or reproduced, slimmer and slimmer pickings will be left for future researchers. Rich collections support varied kinds of research use.

Gamble 4: Time's Revenges and Damaged Reputations

Finally, "building to strength" gambles that the area will turn out to be a good long-term investment, of genuine intellectual and cultural interest to future generations. At one level this is a matter of protecting the brand, the library's and institution's public identity. One generation's glamorous and widely-touted macho belle-lettrist may seem forty years later to be a minor, culturally-peripheral, misogynistic drunk; the world's greatest collection of, say, phrenological books may seem cute when first one rediscovers it but somehow less compelling over time.[6] What University wants the identity of its library tied to dated chauvinism or long-exploded pseudo-science? The topics of such collections may remain legitimate, if not necessarily central, subjects of research, but only a big library with a convincing variety of more obviously important collections can avoid being defined by, tarred with, the collections that have lost cultural clout or cultural resonance.

Coping with a Failing Strength

Research activity follows cultural and intellectual interests. Collections initiated in the fifties or sixties, or offered for gift as the sixties generation passes into retirement, reflect the enthusiasms of a specific time and generation. Just as, say, **Conrad** or **Galsworthy** or **Robert Louis Stevenson** were hotly collected in the 1920s, but slipped sharply in both reputation and market value in thirties and forties, so we must expect that many currently-touted strengths will soon start to look quaint.

The standard response is covertly to close or mothball collections that have become dated or peripheral, shutting off further acquisition, to avoid throwing good money after bad. In my own library, for instance, we seldom add to a once-prized collection of writings by the Kentucky author **Jesse Stuart** that **Stuart** himself described, wrongly, as the best collection of his writings in any university. Maybe we are being short-sighted, and now is the time to expand it, while **Stuart** remains in a reputational trough, but to do that anywhere outside Kentucky risks a library looking outdated and provincial. There has, however, been little published discussion of how libraries segue from strength to strength in collecting policy, or how they utilize collections they have ceased actively to curate. Any collecting of contemporary authors and topics ("buying now the rare books of the future") must be a gamble, and this fourth gamble (on the long-term cultural centrality of a collecting area) is in many ways at odds with the gamble that a collecting area will, over the long term, also remain distinctive, if not unique.

Shortening the Odds: Alternative Collecting Strategies

How can one hedge these bets? The nightmare outcome if a library stays rigidly committed to a stated collecting focus is that it will end up defined by its ownership of the best collection anywhere on a topic that matters to nobody on campus and seems insignificant to the broader scholarly world. Collection development for Special Collections, quite as much as elsewhere in a library, needs to focus, not just on the specialness of the materials to be acquired, but on their purpose and potential use. Though frequent changes of focus would be counterproductive, any collection development plan needs regular review and updating.[7]

Strategy 1: Balancing Risk

One way of hedging bets is to consciously balance the collecting portfolio by seeking out more conservative acquisitions. On a small scale, some money can usefully be held back from additions to the designated "strengths" for safe, staid, recognizable purchases — not necessarily expensive highpoints but older books that link to older collecting and teaching emphases, or representative examples of different kinds of books and printing illustrating different aspects in book production and book history. But decisions on major acquisitions might also aim to balance the range of materials held in a Special Collections program. Four years ago, we were offered a major collection of **John Milton**. It is a great collection in itself, and it brought with it very generous gift support, but it was way outside our established collecting priorities. At that time, while we had many nice early books, we had no major collection earlier than the mid-eighteenth century. The decision to go forward therefore flew in the face of conventional wisdom. The collection has proved transformative in the opportunities it offers to teaching as well as research. But it was also a strategic choice for the library and university. Hanging in the air during the process of decision was awareness that, after retaining cultural influence for four centuries, **Milton's** work is likely to remain of recognized significance and of recurrent interest, providing cover for collections whose future now seems riskier.

Strategy 2: Spreading the Bets

University and college Special Collections benefit from range, as well as focus. Expanding the variety of good collections, on topics that can link to the teaching curriculum or current faculty research, may be more valuable than adding expensively to a single collection already bloated beyond any imaginable use. A few years ago, the chance acquisition of the first magazine version of **Charlotte Perkins Gilman's** frequently-taught story "The Yellow Wallpaper" spurred us to build, book-by-book, a **Gilman** collection, including a full run of her periodical *The Forerunner*, which attracts regular use. Just this past year, we built from scratch a collection of the nineteenth-century woman poet **Christina Rossetti**, with unrestricted gift money, including her very rare first book, at half the cost of the previous year's purchase (also with gift money, but restricted gift money) of a five-page typescript for a magazine article by one of our "focus" authors. (Of course that kind of rapid collection-building would hardly have been possible before the ubiquity of online antiquarian book sites.) All three expenditures — **Gilman**, **Rossetti**, and the typescript — were, I believe, justified, but the ones focused on curriculum will do more in the immediate future, dollar-for-dollar, than the one focused on "building to strength."

Strategy 3: Meeting Wider Needs

It is also fair and prudent to seek out acquisitions that will broaden the range of disciplines, departments, and interest-groups regularly using Special Collections materials. When we added good new author-collections in history of science (**Darwin** first editions, through gift) and philosophy (**David Hume** first editions, through gift purchase), it achieved far more, at much less cost, than adding to one of the major literature collections. Relatively modest expenditure on a long-neglected older collection may spark new faculty interest. Purchase of just one late book by **Charles Babbage** that had been lacking in the antebellum college library (for obvious reasons, acquisitions here fell off sharply after 1861) brought us new interest from computer science. A few targeted acquisitions may helpfully pluralize holdings and dispel lingering suspicions of ideological tunnel vision. For a state institution like ours, a good collection of English Bibles (the 1611 King James, a fine Doves Press), built up over time, has probably been more usefully enhanced by adding an eighteenth-century Haggadah and some nineteenth-century Islamic manuscripts than by staying with the original collecting focus. We happily accepted a **John Bunyan** collection (gift-purchase) and an eighteenth-century Presbyterian church-state relations collection (wholly gift), not just because they arguably "built to strengths" in seventeenth-century literature (**Milton**) and eighteenth-century Scottish studies (**Burns**), but because this is an overwhelmingly Bible Belt state (indeed overwhelmingly Baptist, like **Bunyan**), and both collections help ensure that we can maintain cultural contact with the wider public from which our students come.

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Strategy 4: Recognizing Synergies Elsewhere in the Library

Nor do Special Collections necessarily have to aim at being self-sufficient for research. Special Collections are no longer just for faculty or specialist research but have as an essential task giving students experience using primary, original-condition, materials, as part of their undergraduate education.[8] Indeed, an increasing number of courses build in an undergraduate research-component using Special Collections. A generation ago, the aim was to make each collection complete enough to support all imaginable research projects on the topic. In practice, Special Collections research has always relied for support on the proximity of the general stacks. Research on original-format materials in Special Collections, both in smaller collections and even on isolated highpoints, can also draw the contextual material it needs from microform or digital sources. For instance, a few years ago, a gift collection (of children's literature) brought with it five isolated manuscript pages of poems in his own hand by **James Weldon Johnson**, poet of the Harlem Renaissance and longtime leader of the **NAACP**. Neither Special Collections nor the stacks then held much **James Weldon Johnson** in original editions. We rapidly built a good collection of firsts, maybe thirty items in all. But a vastly wider context for use of those materials, as for work on **Johnson** generally, is provided by the microfilm series of the **NAACP** archives.

The Continuing Impact of Single Items

More dramatically, two years ago, the library purchased a first edition of **Phillis Wheatley's** *Poems* (1773). Even if it did not make the "Grolier 100" in 1893, the **Wheatley** (the first published book by an African-American) is clearly a highpoint, the kind of acquisition conventional wisdom would disapprove. The copy we got was apparently the first copy in any library in a state that is more than thirty percent African-American in population, it was immediately made available to schools via the Web, and it rejuvenated interest in some of our other early books by African-American writers.[9] If a collection development policy cannot allow for that acquisition, it is an inadequate policy.

Closing Thoughts

The nostrum or mantra of "building to strength" has always been more honored in theory than in practice. Some libraries inherit great collections, some build great collections book-by-book, and some have great collections thrust upon them — or, in truth, most libraries have at least some collections acquired in each of the three ways. Focus is fine, but the focus should be less on perfecting the collections themselves, and more on fulfilling the purpose of having them. No policy can fully anticipate the element of opportunism in Special Collections development or the importance of weighing cost against value. The one essential, as **A. E. Housman** said about the editing of classical texts, is that you have a head and not a pumpkin on your shoulders. It helps for the Special Collections librarian or team and the library dean or director to have broad academic backgrounds, interests, and contacts. It is good if you also have colleagues in relevant teaching departments who share the big picture, rather than simply lobbying for a bigger piece of the pie. Collection building requires not just funds and forcefulness and a single-minded plan, but balance and a sense of proportion and responsiveness to people and to opportunity. For Special Collections, at least, collection development should be less like driving a bulldozer and more like learning to ride a bicycle.

Endnotes

1. For a recent, nuanced application of this approach, see **Elaine B. Smyth**, "A Practical Approach to Writing a Collection Development Policy," *Rare Books & Manuscript Librarianship*, 14:1 (1999): 27-31. Surprisingly, even thirty years ago, **Cave's** standard book contained no mention of limiting Special Collections acquisitions to a few chosen strengths: see **Roderick Cave**, *Rare Book Librarianship* (London: Clive Bingley, 1976, revised ed. 1982).

2. **David H. Stam**, "So What's So Special?," Keynote address at conference "Building on Strength: Developing an ARL Agenda for Special Collections," Brown University, June 8, 2001, accessed at: *http://www.arl.org/rtl/speccoll/building/stam.shtml* (January 20, 2010).

3. See, e.g., **Roger E. Stoddard**, "Teaching the History of the Book at Harvard," in his *A Library Keeper's Business*, ed. **Carol Z. Rothkopf** (Newcastle, DE: Oak Knoll, 2002): 15-25.

4. For a library dean's argument that smaller libraries should sell or transfer isolated highpoints to those who can look after them, see **Mark Herring**, "Archival Treasures; Blessing — or Burden in Disguise," *American Libraries*, 31:7 (August 3, 2000):41-42.

5. The negative use of "building to strength," in allowing an dean or director to veto proposed new collecting initiatives, is shown by the response to a proposed book history collection by "the library director at a large Midwestern state university": "Within special collections ... it makes far greater sense ... to commit resources towards strengthening existing collections rather than opening new. ... 'the history of the book' could prove a costly distraction. ... Generally, I would urge special collections staff to build upon their existing strengths." Quoted in **Stephen Ferguson**, "History of the Book: Field Notes of a Curator," *Rare Books & Manuscript Librarianship*, 14:1 (1999): 33-48 (pp. 44-45).

6. The recent 75th anniversary volume, *Celebrating Research: Rare and Special Collections from the Membership of the Association of Research Libraries*, ed. **Philip N. Cronewett**, **Kevin Osborn**, and **Samuel Stret** (Washington, DC: ARL, 2007) selected just one collection to represent each library, showing the variety of materials now identified by ARL libraries as "strengths," from Renaissance books and eighteenth-century manuscripts, through collections on tractor manufacture and spiritualist experiments, to **Sri Lankan** manuscripts and a re-embroidered pink Victorian corset (representing a focus on women in the book arts). In almost every case these materials represent a collecting strand, not an exclusive focus, in a library that has well-balanced, even distinguished, collections, but the volume illustrates the risks of tying public identity to a single collecting focus.

7. Sensible models for such reassessment are **Smyth's** article, as in n. 1 above, or the 2004 policy at **Northern Illinois University**, on-line at: *http://www.ulib.niu.edu/aboutus/cdpolrbspcol.cfm*.

8. For recent discussion on the value and uses of original-format materials, see **Susan L. Peters**, "Primary Source Material: Responsibilities and Realities," in *Literature in English: A Guide for Librarians in the Digital Age [ACRL Publications in Librarianship no. 54]*, ed. **Betty H. Day** and **William A. Wortman** (Chicago: ACRL/ALA, 2000): 105-117; and see also sample syllabuses in *Teaching the History of the Book,* ed. **Terry Belanger** and **Daniel H. Traister** (Charlottesville: Rare Book School, 2003).

9. See *http://www.sc.edu/library/spcoll/wheatley/wheatleyp.html*.

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tributing technology solutions and content that will create the fully operational **Europeana.eu**.
http://version1.europeana.eu/

http://digital.casalini.it/retreat/retreat_2010.html

Thomas Guignard the Head of Collection Development of the **Bibliotheque de l'EPFL Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne**, Switzerland) who was at the Retreat has already turned in a proposal for the **2010 Charleston Conference**. Have you turned in your proposal yet? *www.katina.info/conference*

And speaking of the **Charleston Conference**, I don't think I mentioned that the **Holiday Inn Historic District** (corner of Meeting and Calhoun Streets) is now one of our **Conference hotels**! It has been many years but we have finally managed to get a special block of **sleeping rooms** there. There are also four **meeting rooms** which we will be able to use during the Conference. Hooray! Be sure and sign up for a hotel room early because you know how hotels fill up! Do it now, before you forget. *www.katina.info/conference*

I guess it's been reported everywhere that the **Library of Congress** will archive the collected works of **Twitter** from 2006 when **Twitter** began. This archive will be part of the "**Web Capture"** project which was begun by **LC w**ith the Pilot project **MINERVA**. As of February 2010, the **Library** has collected almost 160 terabytes of data encompassing Websites dealing with Darfur, the Iraq War, September 11 the 107 and 108th Congress, the 2000, 2002, and 2004 elections and many others. A collections policy statement and other internal documents demonstrate current policies about selection of electronic resources. In

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