

ADULT FICTION COLLECTION PLAN

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DESCRIPTION: Adult fiction at ICPL consists of general fiction, two separately-shelved genres (Mysteries and Science Fiction), a leased collection of recent bestsellers (Express), and Book Club Kits. Designed to meet the recreational and cultural needs of a diverse population, this large collection can only meet demand by providing multiple copies of popular titles, and furnishing considerable breadth in styles, periods, and degree of seriousness.

EXCEPTIONS AND SCOPE: This plan does not include the large print and uncataloged paperback collections, though considerable overlap exists with fiction, and in many cases they are used interchangeably.

The scope of the collection varies. We maintain standard works with as many copies as needed to provide reasonable access. We have only a basic collection of foreign authors, with no attempt made, in most cases, to collect their complete works. Similarly, we have a basic collection of short story anthologies by established authors. We attempt to buy comprehensive collections of works by Iowa authors and books set in Iowa. We purchase popular authors comprehensively in multiple copies, even if particular titles receive bad reviews. Both hardback and paperback books are purchased for this collection. Many titles are purchased which are only published as paperbacks.

Gifts provide vital duplicate and replacement copies of titles in demand. We seldom add gift titles not already owned unless they are new.

Two genres at ICPL are shelved separately, and indicated with spine stickers. Comments on genres follow:

MYSTERIES: This collection does not include spy or thriller titles, which go in general fiction. We emphasize breadth in the mystery collection to suit the wide variety of community tastes. Backlists by popular authors are in strong demand.

SCIENCE FICTION: Both Science Fiction and Fantasy titles are shelved in the Science Fiction area. Subject headings and spine labels are used to designate them as one or the other (although some contain elements of both). Science Fiction readers are often young, so some overlap with the Young Adult collection exists. We try to collect those paperback series we can identify as the most popular. Interest is concentrated in newer titles, with very few titles over thirty years old.

ICPL provides access to some other genres through subject headings and stickers to identify Christian Fiction, Horror, Romance, Short Stories and Westerns. Where more than one genre applies, the cataloger determines which sticker to use. These titles are shelved with General Fiction.

AUDIENCE: Practically all users above elementary school age in the most culturally diverse city in Iowa use the fiction collection at some time. Reasons for using this collection vary widely. Adult bestsellers are read for pleasure or to stay current. Standard titles may be read as cultural landmarks, as well as for entertainment and personal fulfillment. Students and book clubs are often assigned specific titles.

Without stereotyping too much, some general observations about users may be made. Science fiction readers tend to be young, and passionate about favorite authors. Female cult authors have begun to emerge in the last few years, challenging the stereotype of the adolescent male science fiction reader. Mystery readers tend to be at least slightly older, and are much more often female. Western readers tend to be older males.

SIZE AND DUPLICATION. Overall, the adult fiction collection constitutes 21.2% of the adult print collection, providing 40.2% of that collection's circulation. Adult fiction is 11.6% of the library's total collection, providing 11.7% of the circulation. There are roughly 17,500 General Fiction books, 7,500 Mystery, 3,500 Science Fiction, 400 Express books and 8 book club kits.

Circulation is heavily skewed toward the New Book Shelf. Studies have shown that as much as 43% of Fiction's circulation comes from new books. Item purge shows that after being removed from the new bookshelf, some titles never circulate again. Standard titles and classics are notable exceptions to this, circulating steadily for years. Former bestsellers tend to lose appeal over time, ideally at the rate multiple copies wear out.

The clear dilemma in furnishing multiple copies lies in providing enough for immediate demand, while not ending up with too many unused copies in a year or two. The Express collection provides one solution, as we lease the books, and can return them when demand dies down. Bestseller lists, hold notices and prepublication notices in *Publisher's Weekly* and *Library Journal* provide the best ideas for Express titles. We currently lease 30 books per month.

Tastes in Mysteries vary widely, so we buy those in more breadth and less depth than general Fiction, with exceptions for the Cornwells, Graftons, and Clarks who develop large hold queues. Science Fiction seldom requires more than five copies of a title.

We shelve short story collections by single authors with the author's other fiction. Multiple author anthologies, with the exception of most Science Fiction and Fantasy collections, go into the 808s.

MAINTENANCE: Many novels stay in print in paperback only after a few years. Some titles are never released in hardback. Having learned the hard way that paperbacks will wear out after 20-30 circulations, and need reordering, we send many new paperbacks to the bindery before circulating them. The result, while more expensive, provides an attractive volume that holds up better than many new clothbound books. Damaged hardback books may be rebound, especially when the title is still circulating heavily, part of a series or out-of-print.

The library's regular monitoring process also catches many worn books. The selector evaluates these for replacement, binding, or discarding by checking the circulation for each copy, last activity date, and activity within the last year or two. As we attempt to collect Iowa authors and locales comprehensively, we do not often discard the last copy of such a title.

Annual item purge brings to attention titles that are no longer circulating. The large number of copies selected for popular Fiction titles presents a challenge to prevent the shelves from being overrun by John Grisham, etc. The attached book weeding chart (see attachment) assists with determining when past bestsellers are unnecessarily hogging the shelves.

COLLECTION PLAN: All the major review media cover fiction extensively. *Kirkus Reviews* and *Library Journal* seem to be the most useful. A great many books get recommendations each

year, many more than we can comfortably buy. Some marginal purchases, especially literary fiction, are decided by author tours, as we try to buy the new book of any author reading locally.

Most reviews mention at least one previous title by the author, if there is one, and checking the circulation of past books gives a good idea how an author's new book will be received. Over time one develops awareness of authors and their local following. Len Deighton, for instance, is less popular locally than nationally; John Irving, more popular. Also, some romance and science fiction authors generate great initial demand, which does not hold up over time, so that we may find ourselves overstocked.

Book club kits are created each year based on the selections for All Iowa Reads and One Community, One Book: All Johnson County Reads. After the initial year, only one kit is kept per title.

Number of copies to order or maintain remains the hardest decision. Checking circulation on previous titles by an author lets us evaluate whether that purchase was too high or low. We tend to purchase multiples conservatively, then react to demand as it develops. Hold queues and bestseller lists are closely monitored. Our goal is to keep hold queues within 3 holds per item. Again, gifts are most often used to provide duplicate and replacement copies.

Suggestion cards are also useful, and any suggestion that will get to spend time on the new book shelf is an automatic purchase.

While any copy of a novel that circulates 25-30 times has probably justified its purchase, we hope that every volume we buy will eventually be discarded because it is worn out, rather than because it was unused.

Book weeding problem:

a = minimum desired availability (i.e. there is at least one copy on the shelf this fraction of the time)

x = number of copies needed to achieve minimum desired availability

C = the maximum number of circulations available to each copy in the given time period.

What is the optimal number of circulations for a title given the number of copies, x, and the minimum desired availability of the book, a?

As the number of copies, x, increases the minimum availability of each copy can be expressed:

$$a^x$$

It follows that the maximum unavailability can be expressed:

$$1 - a^x$$

The total number of possible circulations can be represented as the product of the number of copies and total possible circulations in a year:

$$x \cdot C$$

So, the maximum desired number of circulations possible can be expressed:

$$x \cdot C \cdot (1 - a^x)$$

Using a=0.8, we can derive the table:

x	Optimal circs	Circs per copy
1	3.5	3.5
2	12.5	6.2
3	25.4	8.5
4	40.9	10.2
5	58.3	11.7
6	76.7	12.8
7	95.9	13.7
8	115.4	14.4
9	135.0	15.0
10	154.7	15.5
11	174.3	15.8
12	193.7	16.1
13	212.9	16.4
14	231.9	16.6
15	250.8	16.7
100	1733.0	17.3