

Letters

To the Editor:

It is very gratifying to note that John Rutledge and Luke Swindler (*C&RL*, March '87, "The Selection Decision") have successfully grappled with the vexed question of how to make that all-too-important selection decision and emerge from the experience relatively unscathed. Just about all the angles of the selection process appear to have been covered in the authors' effort to arrive at a "practical and holistic model for microselection." It is freely (and frequently) acknowledged throughout the article that the selection of materials will always contain a "subjective element," since "it is an art—not an exact science."

It is admitted, too, that the proposed selection model could be flexible, accommodating the divergent needs of libraries and their clientele. Book reviews that selectors routinely rely on could perhaps be fitted in intellectual content or bibliographic considerations. The treatment that the topic receives in a publication, or how well the book is written, may be subsumed under the rubric of intellectual content.

About the only aspect that the article does not encompass, for understandable reasons, is the impact of online databases on the whole question of collection development. The authors were talking only about the selection decision and not the global aspects of collection development, but it might still be helpful to note that the rules of selection of library materials have changed to an appreciable extent in the context of this ubiquitous phenomenon. This is particularly significant for special libraries, some of which go so far as to eliminate all but the most essential hard copy materials. In the field of law, for example, one could say that there is no need for any of the state or regional reporters if the library subscribes to Lexis or Westlaw.

It may therefore be observed, however tangentially, that the rules of the collection development game are constantly changing, thanks to the advances in information technology. The next question perhaps is: Will collection development as we know it become obsolete, like original cataloging?

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To the Editor:

Eugene Sheehy's article "Selected Reference Books of 1985-86" (*College & Research Libraries*, January 1987) includes a review of *Walford's Guide to Current British Periodicals in the Humanities and Social Sciences*.

The review states that this title is available from the Library Association, London, at £38 or U.S. \$50. In fact, the book is distributed exclusively in the United States by ALA Publishing Services with a list price of \$55.00. The ALA order code for this book is 0-8389-L676-2.

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