Collection Development Policy

John M. Olin Library Federal Depository Library

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MISSION STATEMENT

John M. Olin Library is the largest of Cornell University's 19 libraries, which constitute Cornell University Library (CUL). Olin is a land-grant designated depository, created in 1907. It serves the 22nd (formerly 26th) U.S. Congressional District of New York. It shares the responsibility to serve community depository patrons with two other Cornell campus depository libraries, the Albert R. Mann Library and the Cornell Law Library.

The CUL's and Olin's primary patrons are Cornell University's faculty, and students pursuing a wide variety of degree programs. The Cornell University Library Mission promotes a culture of broad inquiry and supports the University's mission to discover, preserve, and disseminate knowledge and creative expression. It engages with the ongoing transformations of society to deliver world-class physical and digital content and services critical to research, education, and outreach, now and in the future. The Library acts globally, supporting Cornell's land grant mission in New York State and beyond, and builds partnerships within and outside the university. It invests in its staff, collections, and physical and virtual libraries and it serves as a neutral and trusted party supporting information access and scholarly communication.

Olin's collection contains a broad range of materials, generally representing the array of disciplines in social sciences and humanities. Olin has particularly strong holdings in national and international documents, and includes newspapers and maps from around the world. Cornell's libraries are physically open to the public and many of its resources are also available to individuals not affiliated with Cornell. Olin and Cornell's other libraries make depository information in all formats available for the free use of the public in the library.

Cornell's depositories are located in and serve the City of Ithaca, and Tompkins County, New York. The City has a citizen population of just over 30,000, and the county population exceeds 100,000. 82% of the county's population is White, 9.6% Asian and Pacific Islanders and other races, 4.3% Black, 4.6% Hispanic. 48.5% of the county population works in Educational Services, Health Care and Social Services. Major elements of the local economy include three educational institutions: Cornell University, Ithaca College and Tompkins-Cortland Community College. Ithaca is located in the heart of the Finger Lakes and is the county seat of Tompkins County. While the area is predominantly rural, it provides a number of urban conveniences. Excellent city and suburban public bus service, including handicapped access, is provided. Additional handicapped accessible transportation is also available to bring county residents to the Cornell campus.
SELECTION RESPONSIBILITY

Collection Development at Cornell is administered by the Associate University Librarian for Scholarly Resources & Special Collections. Day-to-day decisions are made by approximately 50 bibliographers, curators and selectors who select materials in all of the areas which Cornell’s collections cover. Librarians with collection development responsibilities are grouped into four teams: Area, Humanities, Sciences, and Social Sciences, for consultation and coordination. Primary responsibility for depository item selection and coordination of documents collection development for Olin Library depository rests with the Olin Library Documents Coordinator, a librarian in the Research & Learning Services Department. Technical services support for cataloging and processing of physical materials is provided by a documents assistant within the Library Technical Services department. The Olin Library Documents Coordinator is a member of the Social Sciences Team.

The Olin Library Documents Coordinator is the single individual with comprehensive knowledge of the full range of government documents available for selection, as well as the means to do the selection. Active consultation with bibliographers and selectors from not only Olin Library, including its Map and Media collections, but also the Engineering Library, the Hotel, Labor & Management Libraries, the Fine Arts Library and other campus libraries informs the selection of depository materials supporting a broad range of subjects. The Olin Library Documents Coordinator is also responsible for review of new items and for annual update of the selection profile. Consultation with appropriate bibliographers is frequent and active.

SUBJECT AREAS & COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Subject Areas
Federal government publications received via the Federal Depository Library Program are used by social scientists, historians, engineers, and scientists across the Cornell library system. For many years, three libraries on campus – Law, Mann and Olin – have functioned as selective depositories within the FDLP, receiving a selection of sometimes overlapping government publications from all three branches of the government, including many agency documents.

In 2011, a Cornell University Library task force was charged with developing new selection policies for its depository collections. Current selection policies stipulate no duplication of tangible items among the three libraries, selecting virtual by default; paper only when desirable or necessary for certain types of publications, and discontinuing selection of most CDROMS, while continuing to provide access to all online and print publications via the library catalog.

The library also houses an archival set of Readex microform since the inception of this set. The set includes non-depository items from 1953-2007 and depository items from 1956-2008. These sets are housed in the Olin Library Microforms Collection. Replacement decisions and other collection development decisions may be taken with the existence and character of this set in mind.

Collection Arrangement
Government documents at Cornell are integrated with the main collections and classified in Library of Congress.
Formats

Current item selection practice is to select electronic documents, by default; however, approximately 3% of publications from the GPO are not yet available in digital format. In addition, for some research purposes, print publications may provide a level of access that is superior to the online versions. The Documents Coordinator works with individual selectors to identify any publications that we should continue to receive in print. There is a record for every FDLP publication we have in our selection profile, whether the item is available electronically or in print.

Resource Sharing

The depository at Olin Library shares the benefits of resource sharing arrangements in place for the entire Cornell University Library. We have an active interlibrary loan department. Our interlibrary loan system in New York State relies heavily on the resources of the New York State Library, our Regional Library for federal documents. Borrowing documents in this way from our Regional constitutes the relationship which we have with that library, which is geographically remote from Ithaca. We are a member of the Center for Research Libraries through which patrons may borrow lesser-used materials purchased for member use.

Resource sharing among the three depositories on the Cornell campus, Olin Library, Albert R. Mann Library, and the Cornell Law Library is extensive and an integral part of collection development at each individual depository and for CUL as a whole. We are located on one campus, where our libraries are in walking and campus bus service distance. We share one library online catalog and collection of electronic resources. Librarians from the three depositories are active in the campus collection development organization as members of the Social Sciences selection team.

Collection Evaluation

The most important tool for collection evaluation used by the Olin Library Documents Coordinator is the zero-based collection review. This review is made annually at the time of the selection update cycle. Information is gathered throughout the year, such as new item numbers to be selected. Item deselection takes place throughout the year.

Weeding and Maintenance

The documents collection of Olin Library and the other CUL unit libraries to which it supplies depository documents are integrated collections. Maintenance of the Olin stack collection is the responsibility of the Stacks Management Department, which has a long history of handling and shelving document
materials. Maintenance of the maps and reference collections are the responsibility of those departments.

Decisions are made at time of selection, and may be reevaluated as necessary, concerning withdrawal of superseded documents. Superseded documents which are considered to have research value are retained. Superseded documents that have value only when they are current or which are superseded by other forms, such as slip issues superseded by bound volumes, are withdrawn with reference to the Superseded List.

Documents are included in all library procedures for binding and repair of library materials. Documents are routinely commercially bound, stiffened in-house or paper or pamphlet bound as appropriate. Worn or mutilated documents are evaluated for repair, replacement or withdrawal; such documents are generally discovered by Stacks Management staff and referred to the Preservation & Conservation Department, whose staff may consult with selectors or the Documents Librarian.

Most documents are selected for their research value and retained indefinitely, particularly in the Olin Library collection, in which there is no weeding. Documents which are not added to the permanent collection are retained until they are replaced by a commercial microfiche alternative or for five years and then discarded following the guidelines supplied by our Regional Library.

Access

Online documents, which are referenced in the library's catalog, are available at all times. Documents in all formats are cataloged with bibliographic and holdings information available in the library's online catalog, which is a single integrated file. The online catalog is available to users both on site during regular library hours and remotely, both on and off campus at all hours.

Tangible documents (books, maps and some CDROMs) are freely accessible to members of the public during library hours. Some older, fragile or less-used documents are currently housed in the Library Annex. Items held in the Annex may be requested via an online form and can be viewed at the Annex, with easy bus and parking access, or delivered to any library on campus. In addition, documents may be requested via Interlibrary Loan to any of the public libraries in the area. Professional librarians and trained reference assistants with knowledge of government documents and the skills to find them are available at regularly scheduled hours throughout the day and evening. In addition, the library provides remote reference assistance through e-mail, online chat, and postal mail.

In addition to both historical and current document indexes and abstracts, the library holds a wide variety of commercial indexes which include or are exclusively devoted to government documents. The library user interface provides access to indexes, catalogs, numerical and spatial data and full text documents that are available as networked resources through Cornell's online catalog. Use of these commercial sources is available on-site to all visiting researchers.

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