Book Review

Michael Fernandez, editor

Fundamentals of Collection Development and Management, Fifth Edition. By Peggy Johnson and Mary Beth Weber. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2025. 484p. $85.00 softcover (ISBN 979-8-89255-565-4).

In its fifth edition, *Fundamentals of Collection Development and Management* remains one of the field's most comprehensive one-volume works. For this first post-COVID-19 revision, author Peggy Johnson, a long-respected authority in collection development, now teams up with Mary Beth Weber, a leader in academic technical services, to present an ambitious and far-reaching survey of collection practice. The authors clearly state their goal: to provide both a comprehensive guide for new professionals and a useful reference for experienced selectors and managers. For the most part, the book succeeds with few limitations.

What sets this edition apart is its broad coverage paired with practical, up-to-date guidance. The text delves into traditional topics such as budgeting, selection criteria, vendor negotiation, and collection evaluation, while also incorporating current concerns like evolving e-book licensing models, accessibility law compliance, and social media marketing. The structure remains similar to previous editions, with material organized into nine chapters (now supported by updated case studies), revised suggested readings (all from 2017 or later), and online appendices.

The fifth edition addresses shifting library priorities in response to digital transformation, tightening budgets, and increased expectations for data-informed decision-making. In this respect, *Fundamentals* remains a top-tier resource among a robust field. Its treatment of legal and licensing issues surpasses Gregory's *Collection Development and Management for 21st Century Library Collections,* and while Evans and Saponaro's *Collection Management Basics* is possibly stronger pedagogically, it lacks *Fundamentals*' coverage of digital strategy and impact assessment, critical to current practitioners.[1]

Fundamentals begins by introducing the discipline as one shaped by legacy practices challenged by budget constraints, evolving user needs, and format diversification. There is a focus on collection responsibilities within different staffing models, with special attention paid to the growing role of paraprofessionals and important ethical concerns tied to selection, censorship, and labor. The authors provide clear guidance on how to align collection goals with a library's mission and detailed approaches to budgeting and policy writing. Similar to the entire work, the early sections are strongest in an academic library context while offering a solid foundation for understanding how collections are shaped by both long-term strategy and day-to-day decisions for all library types.

Fundamentals supports readers through the full life cycle of a collection, beginning with clear guidance on material selection and extending through licensing, vendor negotiation, and long-term maintenance. The discussion balances professional judgment with tools like demand-driven acquisitions (DDA), evidence-based acquisitions (EBA), and approval plans. Chapters 5 and 6 stand out for their deep dives into licensing language, legal compliance, and vendor communication, including a particularly

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helpful callout box highlighting common license elements (226). The authors' focus on actionable and ethical strategies is an improvement over quickly outdated vendor lists often included in similar works addressing this topic. One of the most striking quotes from the book, "Acting ethically is one of the most essential attributes a librarian can have" (199), summarizes a key ethos that pervades the text. The inclusion of upcoming accessibility laws along with up-to-date compliance timelines is indicative of how the work marries thoughtful practice with practical value. The work fulfills the promise in its title to address both collection development and collection management by outlining deselection, preservation, and storage planning as essential, rather than secondary, activities in sustaining collection health and access equity.

The inclusion of expanded marketing and outreach content in chapter 7 is a welcome development. The introduction of tools like Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, market segmentation, and social media planning reflects the increased integration of marketing strategies into everyday library practice. The chapter includes a case study on developing a social media plan, which, like other case studies throughout the work, successfully ties abstract concepts to real-life applications.

Also appreciated is the well-developed distinction between collection assessment and evaluation made by Johnson and Weber, emphasizing not just data collection but meaningful interpretation. The authors make a key observation: "To be meaningful, the librarian and the library need to understand why they are collecting data and what they intend to do with the results. Simply counting things is not enough" (328). They effectively address the increasing demand for libraries to demonstrate value by outlining diverse assessment frameworks such as use-based, cost-based, user-centered, outcome-based, and Social Return on Investment (SROI).

The final chapter, titled "Collaborative Collection Development and Management," completes the text with a timely and thorough look at the topic. The authors emphasize that their change from the term *cooperative* in the fourth edition to *collaborative* in the fifth reflects the intention of current library efforts, even if that intention is still aspirational. They present a wide variety of consortial partnerships, shared print programs, and cooperative licensing agreements as necessary adaptations to financial and spatial limitations. Its detailed overview of past and existing collaborations, along with related infrastructure and even the characteristics of the most successful consortia, provides an excellent example of how *Fundamentals* shines as a comprehensive reference work.

While the book is impressive in its comprehensiveness, its density may challenge some readers. There are several informative visual aids within *Fundamentals*, such as the sample budget plan and report in chapter 3, "Planning, Policies and Budgets," but given the book's instructional purpose, additional charts, matrices, or diagrams throughout might improve usability, particularly for Library and Information Science (LIS) students and early career professionals. The inclusion of structured tools like figure 6.1 ("Guidelines for Weeding and Replacing Materials in a School Library Media Center") is valuable, but its specificity highlights a missed opportunity. Offering comparable visual frameworks for each library type would have reinforced the concept for all readers while helping new practitioners recognize critical differences across settings. Similarly, while the included case studies are helpful, the

book would be further strengthened by offering multiple case studies representing a range of libraries (e.g., school, public, academic, special) for each chapter. This would not only better reflect the book's wide audience but also enrich its pedagogical application for LIS instructors and trainers.

Ultimately, *Fundamentals of Collection Development and Management* is a well-structured and up-to-date resource that delivers both breadth and depth. Its practical orientation—paired with a strong ethical framework and timely coverage of emerging issues—makes it an excellent choice for LIS students, early-career librarians, and seasoned professionals alike. Despite minor limitations in formatting and balance across library types, this fifth edition remains an important and useful guide for navigating the complexities of modern collection work.—*Christina Mune (Christina.Mune@sjsu.edu), San José State University, California*

Note

1. Vicki L. Gregory, *Collection Development and Management for 21st Century Library Collections: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2019); G. Edward Evans and Margaret Zarnosky Saponaro, *Collection Management Basics*, 7th ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2019).