

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY WEEDING POLICY

Weeding is a systematic review of the use and condition of a collection. It involves periodically assessing the continued usefulness of individual items in the collection, and then disposing of those which are no longer current.

Weeding is a very time-consuming process that requires : a) concentration, b) some knowledge of many fields of study so that the librarian can determine if information is still accurate, c) a computer check to see how recently and how many times the item has circulated.

Weeding can become a monumental task if you procrastinate.

Weeding is essential because it turns up: 1) unnecessary duplicate copies, 2) gaps in the collection, 3 books that need mending or cleaning, 4) missing books, and 5) crowded or uncrowded areas.

The concept of weeding is very difficult to explain to the general public, so it is best for the library to maintain a written weeding policy, and to adhere to professional librarian weeding standards.

Regular weeding produces a more useful, efficient, reliable, browsable, and physically attractive collection.

Prairie du Chien Memorial Library will weed the entire collection every 3 years, but make continuous weeding a regular routine. Priorities will be set for weeding as recommended by discussion among employees and the Library Director, so that one area at a time in order gets weeded. The library recognizes that, in technical areas, such as health and science, weeding needs to be done more frequently.

The library will make every effort to recycle weeded items through sales to customers or offering the items to other libraries or organizations. Sales and offers will precede physical disposal of the items, unless material is judged by the Director to pose possible harm, as in the case of outdated medical materials.

The following criteria are important tools for weeding:

1. What is the age of the item? If nonfiction, is the information still accurate?
2. What is the physical condition of the item?
3. When was the item last circulated?

Regular selection criteria will be applied to potential weeds:

1. Is it fiction which has lost its popularity?
2. Is the point of view, scope, timeliness, accuracy, and style appropriate to the collection and the community?

OTHER QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED DURING WEEDING:

1. Does the material perpetuate racial and gender stereotypes?

2. Is it a duplicate copy? Does demand require 2 or more copies?
3. Is the information in the book still up to date?
4. Is it available elsewhere – in an area library, or through interlibrary loan?
5. Can the item be replaced with a newer copy, an updated edition, or a replacement on the same topic?
6. Does it simply need cleaning or a new plastic jacket? Can it be repaired in 15 minutes or less? Will rebinding save it? Is it worth the cost of rebinding?
7. Would the item be useful to a group in the community?
8. Is the location wrong? Could relocation increase its usage?
9. Is the item by a local author? Does it have a local setting? If so, item might need to be kept for that reason.

The preceding weeding criteria may be shared with the public, should there be serious complaints about items discarded from the library.

Approved August 1997