

COLLECTION OVERVIEW

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. SCOPE

There are two distinct categories of resources (“subject” and “format”) within the Library’s general Z class book collections. The first includes the subject categories Library and Information Science in classes Z4 through Z1000.5, and Information Resources (General) in class ZA. The former includes materials on the history, philosophy, and technicalities of writing, publishing, book collecting, history of the book, the book and serial trade, libraries, library and information science, anonyms and pseudonyms, and all works published by the Library of Congress. Paleography and calligraphy are included within “writing.” ZA, a classification since 1996, is a subject classification for works about the Internet and other electronic/computerized information resources. Subscription databases, Web sites, and non-book formats corresponding to these subject areas are also within the scope of that classification.

The second category of resources covered by this overview is Bibliography, which precedes Class ZA and is subdivided into: General bibliography (Z1001-1 140), including descriptive and analytical treatments dealing with books as physical objects; National bibliography (Z 1201-4980); Subject bibliography (Z5000-7999); and Personal bibliography (Z8001 -8999).

These are essentially “format” categories made up of bibliography-format materials on any subject, whose monographic literature could fall into any Library of Congress class from A through V. In the Library’s Classification system, bibliographies on a particular subject are not shelved with the regular monographs on the same topic, but are instead given Z designations; thus, for example, works on “Indians of North America” are mainly clustered in E51-99 in American history, but bibliographies on them are classed at Z1209. Electronic and microfilm equivalents or analogues to these materials are also within the scope.

II. SIZE

As of the Librarian’s *Annual Report* for 2006, all of the Z through ZA classes in the Library’s general collections consisted of 239,327 titles in 649,071 volumes. The Library’s subgroup of Personal bibliographies (Z8000s) is particularly outstanding, taking up approximately 900 linear feet of shelving.

According to the 1997 North American Title Count, the Library had the largest collections for any of the various subdivisions of Class Z among participating libraries. WorldCat comparison analyses have proven to be problematic, partly because of the lack of the Library’s PreMarc records, and partly because of inconsistencies in cataloging

practices in the database.

III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS

The Library is especially rich in its collection of descriptive and subject bibliographies covering all subject areas. The Z class sources make up the largest group of reference materials in the Main Reading Room. The Library has a history of vigilantly seeking out, prominently shelving, and actively using its collections of published bibliographies.

The Library's subgroup of Personal bibliographies (Z8000s) is particularly outstanding at ca. 900 linear feet. These descriptive and subject compilations of citations to works by or about prominent (and obscure) individuals are an important and immense time-saver to researchers who are working on any of these individuals.

Bibliographies assembled by knowledgeable scholars go a long way toward showing researchers within various subject fields the overall "shape" and extent of the relevant literature, in ways that are often obscured by Web search methods. Published subject bibliographies provide conceptual overviews of topics and enable researchers to recognize listed works that they could not clearly ask for in advance. Bibliographies bring unanticipated resources to their attention.

IV. AREAS OF DISTINCTION

A major (and unique) strength of the Library's holdings is its own archives in the Manuscript Division. This rich collection of internal documents, memos, and working papers is an unparalleled resource for the study of the Library's historical role in both influencing and determining library policies and practices throughout the nation and the world.

In addition to the Library's institutional archives, Manuscripts also holds the papers of individuals whose work has been important to the Library, among them Thomas Jefferson, George Watterston, Ainsworth Rand Spofford, Daniel A. P. Murray, L. Quincy Mumford, Verner Clapp, Archibald MacLeish, and Daniel Boorstin. The Division also holds microfilm records of the American Library Association's Catalog Code Revision Committee, which resulted in the Anglo-American cataloging rules, and another major research collection, the papers of the Council on Library Resources.

The Library also owns over 9,000 American doctoral dissertations in the fields of "Library Science" or "Information Systems" (as designated by these descriptors in the *ProQuest* database for dissertations and theses). Although other libraries subscribe to this same database, the Library of Congress alone owns a full set of the actual dissertations, in microfilm and microfiche formats suitable for long term preservation.

The same *ProQuest* database indexes master's theses in these areas—over 3,700 of

them—and is now making full texts of them available online. This is a major new strength of the library science collection, as previously the Library did not systematically collect master's theses at all, and since the terminal degree in the library profession is at the master's (rather than doctoral) level, access to full texts of library science master's theses proves especially valuable.

An additional unique collection is that of the National Technical Information Service reports; these are federally-funded research studies in all subject areas. As with doctoral dissertations, the Library of Congress is the only library to have a virtually complete set, freely available, in one place. This NTIS collection contains over 34,400 studies that have been given the subject descriptors "Library science," "Information systems," or "Data management." A smaller number of research reports, just over 400, indexed under the descriptors "Library science" or "Information Sciences" may be found in the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC) collection.

The Library's collections in languages other than English are strong. In some relevant areas (e.g., incunabula and illustrated books, publishing history) there has been a history of substantial support for special collections in Rare Books, e.g., the Rosenwald Collection (illustrated books, 15th through 20th centuries), the Wilhelm Schreiber Collection (European book illustrations, 15th through 18th centuries), the American Almanac Collection (17th through 19th centuries), the Big Little Book Collection, the Children's Book Collection, the Dime Novel Collection, the McGuffey Reader Collection, the Otto Vollbehr Collection (incunabula), and others.

V. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

The Library subscribes to the major databases in the field, although it does not have full retrospective coverage for all of them. Among these are Library Literature & Information Science Full Text; *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts*; *ERIC*; *Social Sciences Citation Index* (a component of the *Web of Science* database); and *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*. Coverage of library literature is also provided, mixed with other subjects, by databases such as *Periodicals Index Online*, *Nineteenth Century Masterfile*, *Digital Dissertations*, *National Technical Information Service (NTIS)*, and *DTIC 's Technical Reports*. Broad but miscellaneous coverage of library/information science is also to be found in large aggregator services such as *ProQuest*, *EBSCO*, *Wilson Web* and *Gale Cengage*. Studies of book and publishing history are greatly facilitated by full-text databases such as *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, *Early American Imprints Series I (Evans) and II (Shaw-Shoemaker)*, *The Making of the Modern World*, *Sabin Americana: 1500-1926*, *American Periodicals Series*, and *19th Century UK Periodicals*.

VI. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS

The Library does not retain for its permanent collections promotional literature from

commercial publishers or vendors, in-house documents from other libraries (although some of these do appear in the ERIC microfiche set), newsletters, serials of a largely local interest or purview, or booksellers' or publishers' catalogs (except as republished in microform or other commercial compilations). Personal papers of prominent librarians in the U.S. whose careers were spent elsewhere than at the Library itself are usually collected by their own home institutions.

One persistent problem lies not so much in the Library's holdings of library and information science journals, but in researchers' capacity for gaining access to the holdings already owned. While the Library does subscribe to the *Library Literature & Information Science Full Text* database from the H. W. Wilson Company, which is the premiere index in the field (along with some other databases noted above), the Library lacks the corresponding *Library Literature & Information Science Retrospective: 1905 to 1983* backfile. The paper-set index for these years, however, is available.

Similarly, the Library lacks the retrospective coverage of the *Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)* database (one component of the larger *Web of Science* file) back to 1956; the Library's current subscription covers only from 1997 forward. The *SSCI* is unusually important for library and information science in that it indexes all of the core journals in the field in unconventional ways, via citation indexing (enabling researchers to see where any known source has been cited in the footnotes of subsequent journal articles), and via related record indexing (enabling researchers to find any articles that have footnotes in common—such articles being “in the same intellectual ballpark” but very often lacking shared terms in their titles and abstracts, and being thus “invisible” to conventional keyword searching). These important new methods of subject searching cannot be done systematically (citation searching) or even at all (related record searching) via Web mechanisms. As with the Library's overall collection of subject bibliographies, these “alternative” methods of subject searching allow access to resources in ways that turn up important materials that are “invisible” to either keyword or Library of Congress subject heading or LC classification avenues of approach. The lack of retrospective files for both databases is at present a major weakness in the collections.