

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS POLICY STATEMENTS

Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges

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I. Scope

The Library develops a universal collection of knowledge by selectively acquiring materials in all formats and languages from all nations of the world. This Collections Policy Statement (CPS) highlights the acquisition of materials by the Library from countries outside of the United States that are in geographic regions of the world where acquisition of publications is more difficult, challenging or problematic.

The regions of the world where acquisition of publications is challenging for the Library were historically referred to as “developing countries” by intergovernmental organizations. Of the major IGOs, the World Bank and the United Nations have used different terminology to define those countries that were once called “developing countries” or “less-developed countries.” The latter organization also uses “least developed countries,” “small island developing states,” and “landlocked developing countries.”

Currently, the World Bank’s main criterion for classifying economies is gross national income (GNI) per capita; previously it used the narrower gross national product (GNP) as its primary determinate. Similarly, the United Nations has stated that, “There is no commonly agreed upon definition of developing countries.” The following additional criteria, which expand upon the definition of the term “developing countries,” have been recommended by the United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP).¹

- human development level indexes
- country indebtedness
- responsibility to address climate change issues
- state of governance
- specific geographic features
- access to and weight in international trade

For the purposes of this Collections Policy Statement, the Library adds the following factors, all of which impact acquisitions:

- disputed territories

¹ CDP Background Paper No. 21 September 2014

- social/political instability
- irregular publishing patterns
- weak information technology infrastructure
- lack of national bibliographic control systems
- hard to obtain popular materials
- self-published collections
- terrorism and emerging national security threats
- autonomous regions (whether granted by civil authorities or due to civil war, internal unrest, or pressures from ethnic minorities)
- marginalized communities
- threatened languages

Library Services, Law Library, and the Congressional Research Service want publications in all subject areas from these regions, but in particular are interested in materials published by religious and ethnic minorities, opposition groups and political parties, with an emphasis on socio-economic, political and democratic developments. The Library collects materials in print (reference works, monographs, and serials), microform, and digital (databases, web sites, and electronic books and serials) formats.

II. Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement

As the nation's de facto national library, the Library of Congress strives to build an expansive, yet selective, collection that records the creativity of the United States and is reflective of the nation's diversity and complexity. The Library's mandate is to have collections that are inclusive and representative of a diversity of creators and ideas. A priority includes acquiring material of underrepresented perspectives and voices in the Library's collections to ensure diverse authorship, points of view, cultural identities, and other historical or cultural factors. The Library also seeks to build a research collection that comprises a globally representative sample of international materials that are diverse in voice and perspective, relative to their places of origin, further supporting the Library's mission to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for Congress and future generations.

Diverse collecting is mentioned within many of the Library's Collections Policy Statements. In addition, the Library has adopted several specific collection policies in an effort to ensure it is building an inclusive and representative collection. For more information, see the Library's Collections Policy Statements on [Ethnic Materials](#), [LGBTQIA+ Studies](#), [Women's and Gender Studies](#), [Independently Published and Self-Published Textual Materials](#), and [Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges](#).

III. Research Strengths

The Library systematically began to acquire overseas imprints after World War II. Through agents, dealers, and acquisitions trips by LC staff, and the operations of the overseas offices, the Library has acquired a truly universal collection, one that supports studies of all cultures. In some cases, the Library's collection has been used to supplement research materials no longer available in some of the regions covered by this CPS. Many of these materials, published outside the United States, are in a language other than English.

IV. Collecting Policy

It is understood that a high degree of independent judgment will be exercised in recommending materials from these regions of the world, and that acquisitions from these geographic areas should be highly selective, especially those that require significant investments of preservation resources, e.g., newsprint. The Library has a myriad number of titles published in these regions found throughout the general and special collections. Major research strengths include the many unique materials housed in the Library's area studies divisions.

The Library's collections covering these regions benefit greatly from the efforts of its overseas offices in Cairo, Islamabad, Jakarta, Nairobi, New Delhi, and Rio de Janeiro, which are in an exceptional position to acquire, catalog, preserve, and distribute collections materials from the regions covered by this CPS. Uniquely qualified by location and staff, and guided by Collections Policy Statements, the offices acquire newly published books and monographs (including reference works) as well as revised editions of earlier works in all subjects and in all available and appropriate formats, including serials, newspapers, journals, official gazettes, pamphlets, maps, posters, compact discs, musical scores, sound and video recordings, and electronic media. Furthermore, where such materials may be essentially unavailable through traditional acquisitions methods, the overseas offices are also in a prime position to help to enrich the Library's collections by offering recommendations for online resources—including government web sites, digital newspapers, or newspaper-like e-publications, blogs, political party web sites, etc.—for web archiving to become part of the Library's collections.

The level of collecting for particular subjects or formats as described in the appropriate CPS normally should be followed when collecting materials from these regions. This task is made more difficult due to a potential lack of publishers' catalogs, national bibliographies, vendor-supplied title slips, professional literature for reviews, and national library catalogs or bibliographic databases. Nonetheless, for either the areas of expanded coverage in the Collections Policy Statements listed below or in the judgment of the Library's recommending officers, the Library should interpret policies broadly in order to ensure appropriate coverage. Still, recommending officers should be judicious in the number of items they recommend. Areas of expanded coverage should include:

- Dissertations and Theses (<http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/theses.pdf>)
- Education (<http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/educ.pdf>)
- Ephemera (<http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/ephemera.pdf>)
- Government Publications—Non-U.S. (<http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/govfor.pdf>)²
- International Organizations (<http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/intlorgs.pdf>)
- Lesser Known Languages (<http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/lesser.pdf>)
- Literature and Language (<http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/litlang.pdf>)
- Newspapers—Non-U.S. (<http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/newsfor.pdf>)

² In recognition of the extreme difficulties which the Library experiences in obtaining publications from these regions of the world, a more expansive approach to the acquisition of city or municipal materials may be followed than the one recommended in the Government Publications—Foreign CPS. It is understood, however, that a high degree of judgment should be exercised in making recommendations for such material.

Electronic resources form one of many formats that the Library collects to support its universal collections. The increasing availability of electronic resources demands a sustained effort to identify and acquire them. Given the challenges outlined for the regions covered by this document, subscriptions (without perpetual access) may be the only means to gain current access to desired materials. In considering subscriptions, recommending officers will need to balance the immediate need for access with the long term goal of building collections for future users.

Particular emphasis should be paid to materials of contemporary interest which provide unique testimony of the social, cultural, and political issues under represented in mainstream publishing. Electronic resources should include digital newspapers that are available from publisher or vendor platforms that can be accessed via subscription or purchase for perpetual access or via web archiving. As part of the collection/coverage of electronic resources, consider also the role of the vanity press or self-published material, as well as to the archiving of the following: government documents, government departmental databases, quasi-governmental web sites, museum exhibitions, electioneering and campaign literature, and opposition materials.

In general, the Library follows a collection-based approach to building web archiving collections. The Library selects web sites for its permanent collections following a list of criteria, including usefulness in serving the current or future informational needs of Congress and researchers, unique information provided, scholarly content at risk of loss (due to the ephemeral nature of some web sites), and currency of the information.

Recommended sound recordings and videotapes provide a selective snapshot of cultural and political events and activities which offer a research opportunity into current events of analytical interest to scholars and possibly the Congress. These resources should include taped and transcribed interviews, audio and video accounts of oral traditions, and a highly selective sampling of popular and traditional music.

Aside from the country itself or international governing bodies, materials also should be collected from major non-governmental organizations (NGOs), research centers, and humanitarian aid organizations.

Exchange agreements and donations are important sources for acquisition of materials from these regions. These have enabled the Library to supplement its holdings with wide-ranging, non-English, language acquisitions representing a variety of subjects and languages, dispersed throughout the Library from the various area studies divisions to the general collections.

V. Best Editions and Preferred Formats

For guidance regarding best editions for material acquired via the Copyright Office, see: <http://copyright.gov/circs/circ07b.pdf>.

For guidance regarding recommended formats for material acquired via all other means; e.g., purchase, exchange, gift and transfer, see: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs>.

For information regarding electronic resources, open digital content, web archiving, and data sets, see the following Supplementary Guidelines: <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/electronicresources.pdf>,

<https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/opencontent.pdf>, <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/webarchive.pdf>, and <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/datasets.pdf>.

VI. Acquisition Sources

Acquisitions from the countries covered by this document rely on the efforts of agents, dealers, and Library staff on acquisitions trips, as well as the operations of the Library's overseas offices. Some of these regions have political movements that are creating web sites, which will likely be a source of future acquisitions.

Digital materials, both in forms analogous to print materials and in forms unique to new technologies, parallel the contents of these areas. Digital networks (vs. databases) are a useful tool for searching for information on these regions.

Once the Library has procedures in place to collect and archive digital newspapers for which the digital content would be directly acquired, ingested, processed, preserved, and made available by the Library, they should be acquired. Such digital newspapers are especially desired from those regions where a fledgling publishing industry has developed via the web as an alternative to the high cost of paper and distribution.

VII. Collecting Levels

Meeting the Library's Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement (see Section II) and the collecting levels outlined below requires continual evaluation of the publishing landscape, sources of expression, current events, and socio-cultural trends to thus maintain effective collecting policies and acquisitions methods. Changes in publishing or in the creation of materials covered by this policy statement may necessitate collecting efforts not explicitly referenced here. Such efforts will be handled on a case-by-case basis while the Library evaluates the need for policy statement updates.

The level of collecting for particular subjects or formats as described in the appropriate CPS normally should be followed when collecting materials from these regions. In limited and appropriate instances, more expansive collecting is permitted.

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