Reference Collection Statement
Memorial Library, Berry College

Memorial Library will continue to provide reference resources needed to support all curricular areas, faculty and student research, and general reference needs. Increasingly, users expect to begin their search for all types of information online, and they do not necessarily divide their information seeking behaviors into “reference” and “non-reference”. More and more, users seek out interactivity in information resources. As users’ needs and expectations change, we must change our services and content delivery to meet these needs. It is our obligation to offer search and discovery tools and technologies, as well as online access to quality “reference” content resources that embrace and acknowledge that reality, while also acknowledging and respecting that users may continue to need or prefer print formats to accomplish selected tasks or meet specific content needs.

We are focusing a majority of reference collection development efforts on electronic formats, particularly for search and discovery (indexes, databases, etc.) but for other areas as well (overview sources, encyclopedias, other sources of overview content, traditional quick look-up tools). Online tools such as data visualizations, statistical graphics and interactive information mapping, allow users to manipulate and relate to resources in new and dynamic ways. We strive to actively connect our users with these technologies, as well as other emerging resources.

We are reducing the size of the current print reference collection with the ultimate objective of creating a smaller, more useful collection consisting of essential, unique core resources that complement rather than duplicate our electronic offerings.

Items eligible for withdrawal from the existing print reference collection will meet one of the following guidelines:

- The item is outdated or no longer relevant to the curriculum
- The item has been replaced by electronic access
- The item is in poor physical condition
- Or the item is better suited for the circulating collection (upstairs, stacks) and should be relocated.

The remaining collection should be:

Essential core resources, either not available or affordable electronically or for which primary users (faculty and students) have expressed or exhibited usage behavior indicating that continuing in print adds value.

For our future acquisitions of print and electronic reference materials we will take a highly selective approach. All reference materials recommended for acquisition should meet a value-added standard that considers the following: Is content unique? Does it add new perspective or search capability? What will this resource do for our users? If print is recommended, why? What does it do for the user that our existing print or electronic resources cannot do? Is there value that only a print format can provide?

Through these considerations, we aim to create a blended collection of electronic and print materials that embraces the diversity in user needs and the future trends in reference-related services.