

I've been in the Vermont Library world (over 30 years) and have seen a lot of changes in the makeup of our collections. From albums to tapes to discs to streaming, the needs and wants of our patrons have kept pace with the changing media formats of the time. Although our collection at the St. Albans Free Library has seen an increase in digital acquisitions, print format is still the foundation of our services. How much longer that remains has been the ongoing question.

At our Library our reference based print resources have been whittled down to less than a dozen titles and we have not replaced or updated a title in the last few years. We have no plans to add to this collection. We are extremely selective when purchasing any audio/visual materials as we dedicate more funds to online content services. We are a little less selective with donated audio/visual materials but even that is starting to change as space and processing are given consideration.

For our Library, the current challenge is to fill requests from patrons for one title but in various media formats. Someone might want the latest Louise Penny in print, while someone else might want Large Print and another wants audio but doesn't have the ability to stream. This is where ILL services and the Courier have played a very important role.

To look ahead and ask how the Vermont Department of Libraries could help libraries with their collection development, I would say the continued funding of ILL/Clover and the Courier is a must. There is also a need for guidance on how libraries can collaborate on collection development. How can we have a collection strength and share that with others while not having our patrons lose out? I also feel the need for more collaboration with the funding of streaming services is also necessary. This is a service that will only grow and get costly to libraries.

Thanks to the group and all the work they are doing.

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