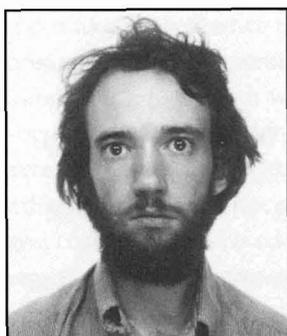


JOURNAL DISPOSAL OR, WHAT CAN I DO WITH ALL THESE JOURNALS?

Keith Nockels

Librarians should actively seek alternatives to throwing away duplicate journals. This paper draws on the author's own experience in medical libraries to suggest ways of finding good homes for these journals by filling gaps in the holdings of other libraries. The schemes outlined include some for matching surplus literature to the needs of libraries overseas. There is a list of contact addresses for the schemes described.



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In this article I shall concentrate on disposing of surplus duplicate journals, rather than acquiring back issues. What I have to say is based on my own experience, and may not reflect the experience of others.

Duplicates

As I have had little experience of disposing of back runs of journals, I propose to concentrate on ways to find a good home for duplicate current issues. Sometimes these are runs of recent issues of a title, and sometimes single issues. However hard we try, we seem to end up with shelves of unwanted duplicates: two copies are sent where we wanted one; claimed issues turn up, closely followed by their replacements, titles which we do not really want, or, to keep, persistently arrive. The result is a lot of potentially useful journals which are not useful to us. I think it is a great shame to throw them away, especially since they may fill gaps in other people's collections. We all know the frustration of not being able to find a copy of that issue which no one will replace.

I rarely throw anything away, as my wife will confirm, and so have been interested to discover ways of meeting others' need with our surplus. Admittedly all these ways involve costs: postage, time to prepare lists, and so forth. This need not be a deterrent. Having things which others can use is an issue we need to address.

So, what can be done with these journals? Here are a few suggestions.

Duplicates lists

These lists are fairly easily prepared. Make a list of what you have available and send that list to other libraries. They select what they want and let you know. You send it to them for a refund of postage. This does recoup some of your costs. It is common to ask for a refund of the postage in stamps: this gives you stamps to obtain material from other people's lists.

Be selective in who you send the list to. Obviously, make the list available to other libraries in your field. There is little to be gained from sending a list of medicals journals to a music library! Look at the material you have available. If, for example, it is all specialist medical journals in Italian, it is likely to be of little use to a hospital library in Ipswich. If it is all "core" medical journals, on the other hand, then it may be very useful.

I compile our list, which has been done when necessary rather than regularly, using a word processor. It is also possible to make such lists available over the Internet

Sending journals to developing countries

There is nothing to be said for sending every spare journal issue to a library in a developing country. This merely deluges them with useless material, and transfers the problem somewhere else. Neither can sending what we do not want be a permanent solution to the problems faced in such places. It is only relatively recently that libraries in developing countries have had problems in buying journals. The economic climate has made journals unaffordable and exchange partners have cut their publication exchange programmes. However, sending surplus journals is a good temporary solution. We have found several ways of getting material to libraries in the developing world.

International Campus Book Link (ICBL)

This scheme matches up demand for journals from university libraries in Africa to the surplus materials held by libraries and individuals in the UK. It is administered by Book Aid International, based in Camberwell, South East London. ICBL is their project for dealing with journals and they cannot handle journals unless they have been requested as part of the scheme. A database of needs is kept and offers are matched to that database. Send a list of what you have available to The Project Manager, ICBL.

International Exchange of Duplicate Medical Literature (IEDML)

This is a scheme administered by the library of the World Health Organization in Geneva. Libraries which are members of the scheme send their duplicates lists to the WHO in Geneva. The WHO copy the list and send it to other members, who then contact you directly. It is possible to ask for a refund of postage, though I wonder whether it would diminish the usefulness of the scheme to do so. This scheme works well in my experience of it. We have had several letters from recipients of our duplicates to say how useful the journals were. It ought to be said that if you send a lot of material to other members of the scheme,

your postage bill can be rather high. This is self evident, but worth pointing out. Members of the IEDML scheme are located world wide, undoubtedly one of its strengths.

Other schemes

There are other ways of disposing of your duplicates. The British Library operate Booknet, which, though geared to books, can handle journals, seeming to concentrate on annuals or runs of a title. Material is sent to Boston Spa and libraries who wish to request it contact the Booknet office. A charge of £5.00 is made for each year, or part of a year, of a periodical which you request from the scheme. The number of journals appearing in the lists lately seems to be minimal.

We have also seen several special appeals for journals. It is worth watching in the press for such requests. In the field of medicine it is worth looking in the publications like the *BMJ*, *Lancet* and *Amnesty International's Medical Group Newsletter*. There have also been appeals in the past in medical journals from countries like Romania, and in the library press. We have also been able to find homes for our duplicates in libraries with whom we have a publications exchange agreement.

Further reading

Issues in the field of medicine, and other schemes I have not tried, along with things to do with books, are covered in:

Groves, Trish. Information sharing: getting journals and books to developing countries. *British Medical Journal* 307, 1015-7, December 18-25 1993

Addresses

- International Campus Book Link, Book Aid International, 39-41 Coldharbour Lane, London SE5 9RN. Tel: 0170 733 3577; Fax: 0171 978 8006
- International Exchange of Duplicate Medical Literature, c/o The Library, World Health Organization, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland
- Booknet, The British Library, Boston Spa, Wetherby, LS23 7BQ. Tel: 01937 546066; Fax: 01937 546112