

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS POLICY STATEMENTS

Periodicals of General Content

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I. Scope

A periodical is a serial containing articles, editorials, reviews, columns, short stories, poems, or essays written by more than one contributor, generally issued at regular intervals of less than a year, and meant to continue indefinitely. This Collections Policy Statement applies to periodicals of a general nature, published either in the United States or abroad, of the type that might be found in Subclass AP of the Library of Congress Classification Schedule. *Collier's*, *Harper's*, *Look*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and some of the major United States news magazines, such as *Time*, provide current and past domestic examples of this type of periodical. Non-U.S. examples include *Caravan* (India), *Kalaikesari* (Sri Lanka), *Paris Match* (France), *Punch* (Great Britain), *Spiegel* (Germany), *Tell* (Nigeria), *Veja* (Brazil), *Vreme* (Serbia), *Wanita* (Malaysia), and *Zaniruz* (Iran).

This statement does not apply to periodicals limited to a specific subject, such as the *Journal of American History*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, or *Science*. Such specialized periodicals are selected for the Library's collections based on their subject content in conformity with the appropriate subject Collections Policy Statements.

The Library maintains a research level collection of domestic general interest periodicals in various formats. Non-U.S. periodicals are, in general, collected at the instructional support level. Specific collecting levels for parts of subclass AP appear in Section VII: Collecting levels.

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's depth and breadth of holdings of United States and non-U.S. general content periodicals constitute major research strengths. There are significant runs of retrospective informational and news magazines in the collections, which provide an overview of history, politics, social conditions, and popular culture. The collections of non-U.S. general interest periodicals, combined with the American collections, provide a rich source of comparative information. Many prominent authors first published essays, fiction, and poetry in periodicals of general content, so they provide a resource for literary scholarship. Runs of juvenile periodicals, such as *St. Nicholas*, further enhance the study of literature and popular culture. Together with the many secondary works in the Library's collections dealing with the history of periodical publishing (subclass PN of the Library of Congress Classification Schedule), these periodicals provide a strong resource for the study of the format in general.

Periodical indexes, both print and electronic, provide access to the contents of general interest periodicals and increase the value of the collections. Electronic versions of periodicals provide service to researchers and enhance and complement the print collections. Some electronic periodicals are accessed through full-text indexer/aggregators, such as *ProQuest*, *Ebsco*, and *Reader's Guide Full Text*. Other e-serials are acquired on an individual basis. The Electronic Resources Online Catalog and *FindIT* guide the researcher to the full text of particular periodicals or articles within the electronic resources collections.

IV. Collecting Policy

General Collecting Policy

Periodicals of general content, domestic and non-U.S., are acquired in all formats, based on content and their importance to Congress and the Library's other user communities.

For periodicals of undoubted research value, complete holdings are acquired whenever possible. The selection of periodicals for the permanent collections is a commitment of the future resources of the Library. All periodicals acquired, whether by purchase, copyright, transfer, exchange, or gift, bring with them the continuing costs of accessioning, processing, maintenance, and preservation.

If a periodical is indexed in one or more regularly published periodical indexes, it should be seriously considered for acquisition.

Special features, including illustrations and advertising, should be taken into consideration in making selection decisions. Many serials have been richly illustrated with drawings and photographs. Others provide succinct commentary in the form of political or other cartoons. Often researchers use advertising to study such topics as fashion and furnishings, architecture, and even pricing in previous decades.

Integrating resources, such as publications intended to be inserted into a binder for regular update, are acquired only if a custodial unit agrees to keep the title as part of its reference collection and to file the inserts and remove superseded pages as received. Otherwise, only the periodically revised basic editions of such resources are kept. This does not apply to the Library's legal collections.

Domestic periodicals may be published in differing editions for local or regional distribution; frequently only the advertisements are different. When there is a choice of edition, the edition which will best serve the Library's users is selected. If very little varies from edition to edition, the original or parent edition should generally be selected if it can be determined. If more than one regional edition is to be acquired, the editions to be retained for the permanent collections should contain substantially different content and provide insight into that area of the country. International editions of periodicals

may differ markedly for each country. In such cases, more than one edition may be selected insofar as editions provide important information about the countries in question.

Some periodicals are collected solely for their current reference value and back files are not retained ("current issues only" titles). If an accessible online version exists for the same content, a print title should not be selected on a "current issues only" basis. This does not apply to titles designated "current issues only until microfilm received" or "current issues only until cumulated volume received." If currency is not a critical requirement, the microfilm edition of a periodical may be acquired in lieu of individual paper issues.

The Library obtains e-only serials through subscriptions and purchased licensed access. Additionally, since February 2010 the Library has obtained selected e-only serials through Copyright demand for inclusion in the permanent classified collections. The Library will continue to develop policy and infrastructure to expand the permanent collecting of e-only serials. Additional guidance is provided in the Library's [Supplementary Guidelines on Electronic Resources](#).

Specific Collecting Policy

United States Periodicals

The Library of Congress acquires for its permanent collections periodicals published in the United States which:

- a. reflect current events and opinions;
- b. provide information about government and politics, social conditions, contemporary culture and trends;
- c. record the present and past life achievements of the people of the United States;
- d. provide current information about the United States as a whole, or provide important information about a particular region, state, city, or ethnicity;
- e. reflect the general recreational, aesthetic, and cultural needs of the people.

Every effort should be made to collect publications expressing a variety of opinions and viewpoints, both from the mainstream press and from alternative sources of information, to complete the historical record.

United States periodicals whose contents are of a tabloid type, based on a formula of gossip and sensationalism, are not usually collected, or are collected on a very limited basis, depending on the needs of Congress and other Library users. In the United States such periodicals are sometimes designated "supermarket tabloids."

Non-US Periodicals

The Library acquires for its permanent collections periodicals from other countries, which:

- a. reflect current events and opinions;
- b. provide information about government and politics, social conditions, contemporary culture and trends of the country;
- c. record the present and past life achievements of the people;
- d. provide current information about the country as a whole or of an important region, state or province, city, or ethnicity;
- e. reflect the general recreational, aesthetic, and cultural needs of the people of a country or of a significant region, state or province, city, or ethnicity.

In light of the current trend toward globalism, it is particularly important to carefully, but adequately, select non-U.S. general content periodicals. This includes non-U.S. editions of United States imprints if they have research value and substantially different content from the domestic version.

As with United States periodicals, every effort should be made to collect publications expressing a variety of opinions and viewpoints, both from the mainstream press and from alternative sources of information, including representative nationalist and propaganda serials from areas where they provide critical insight into beliefs and historical movements.

Non-U.S. popular serials, based on a formula of gossip and sensationalism, which provide little or no new information, are not generally acquired. However, they may be acquired on a very selective basis, depending on the specific needs of researchers and Congress.

For periodicals from strife torn countries, a more liberal selection policy may be followed. This is in recognition of the short life span of many publications from these countries, as well as the difficulty in acquiring serials from some countries on a regular basis. The general principles set forth in the [*Collections Policy Statement on Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges*](#) should be taken into consideration.

Juvenile periodicals (United States and Non-U.S.)

The Library selects for its permanent collections juvenile magazines published in the United States of a general, non-specialized content, except for periodicals purveying primarily gossip and sensationalism, with little informational content. Juvenile periodicals intended solely as teaching aids in the classroom are not acquired unless they represent a new and innovative approach to teaching methods. In those rare cases where periodicals aimed at kindergarten through high school levels are

acquired, the teacher's edition is preferred rather than the student edition.

Non-U.S. periodicals intended for juveniles are acquired selectively on the basis of their lasting research value to scholars in the field. Emphasis is given to acquiring juvenile periodicals from major ethnic concentrations in the United States and from non-U.S. countries with conflict zones or histories of ethnic inequality or strife. Further guidelines may be found in the [Collections Policy Statement on Children's Literature](#).

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 and web archiving, see the following Supplementary Guidelines: <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/electronicresources.pdf> and <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/webarchive.pdf>.

VI. Acquisition Sources

The Library acquires most United States periodicals of general content through the Copyright Office, although some may come as gift subscriptions. Additional copies of United States general interest periodicals may be purchased if they are especially important to researchers and the work of Congress, or if multiple reference copies are required in various reading rooms. Non-U.S. periodicals of general content are acquired through the Library's overseas offices, gift, exchange, and purchase. Non-U.S. periodicals with a significant distribution in the United States may also be acquired through the Copyright Office.

Periodicals will continue to be published in physical formats for the foreseeable future. Periodicals will also continue to be issued in multiple formats, including electronic, with some periodicals available only electronically. The content of the same periodical issued in multiple formats may differ, and selection should be based on content. Acquisition of a periodical in one format does not preclude acquisition of the same periodical in another format. The Library will continue to obtain periodicals through print Copyright deposit, subscription, transfer, gift, and purchase. Additionally, the Library now obtains e-only serial files for inclusion in the permanent classified collections through Copyright. The Library's current and future acquisition strategies recognize that one interdependent collection is being developed that contains traditional physical formats, as well as materials in digital form.

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

Collecting levels for specific parts of subclass AP are listed below. Some general interest periodicals may class in other parts of the Library’s classification schedule.

For explanation of the Collecting Levels used by the Library, see <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/cpc.html>

LC Classification	Description	U.S. Levels	Non-U.S. Levels
AP1-(271)	Periodicals	4	3
AP101-115	Humorous periodicals	4	3
AP200-230	Juvenile periodicals	3	2

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