

## **GUIDELINES FOR DISCARDING**

Each library must establish its own general and specific guidelines for discarding materials. As is true of acquisitions, each library has its own peculiar needs, its own type of users. It is important to weed materials to meet the needs of those users, not the standards established in a text or at another library.

### **General criteria:**

**Timeliness** Most of the reference books that are used for ready reference have to be up to date. Older ones may be helpful historically, but are of little value for current material.

**Reliability** Data and viewpoints change, and these changes must be reflected in the reference collection. Yesterday's reliable explanation of a given event or phenomenon may not apply today.

**Use** Needs change from generation to generation, and yesterday's valued reference work may no longer be used by today's reference librarian or today's user.

**Physical Condition** Books wear out, and must be either discarded or replaced with new editions.

**Later editions** Most popular reference works go into several editions, and it normally is pointless to maintain earlier editions when the latest edition of a standard work can be obtained.

### **Discarding Requires:**

**Thorough Knowledge of the Collection** The librarian should know how it is used and by whom. Should X work be totally eliminated, or should a new edition be purchased, or should a similar work be considered? These are all questions that vary from situation to situation and can be answered only by the librarian working closely with the collection and the public.

**Knowledge of Other Resources** An understanding of the collections of regional and national libraries is needed-- is at least one copy of what you propose to discard in a local or national collection for use at some later date?

**Older Works Worth Keeping** Specific rules for discarding depend upon use, not upon any arbitrary set of rules.