

Open Bookshelf Collection Development Policy

The policy was written by the Open Bookshelf Curation Corps. Open Bookshelf is managed by the [Digital Public Library of America](#) (DPLA) and is generously funded by the [Alfred P. Sloan Foundation](#).

Mission and Focus

Open Bookshelf is a substantial collection of openly licensed and popular ebooks, formatted for modern devices and curated by our nation's librarians. As part of DPLA's core mission of maximizing access to our shared culture, the Open Bookshelf collection allows readers to find a collection of free and popular ebooks all in one place. This e-reading library will be available three ways: to member libraries through the [DPLA Exchange](#) alongside licensed content; as a library collection available to all readers without requiring a library card; and as an OPDS feed.

Open Bookshelf includes widely-read and widely-held books from genres and sources such as:

- Public domain classics
- Textbooks and OERs
- Academic library and press publications
- Government-published books
- Creative-Commons licensed fiction and nonfiction
- Non-English language books
- Children's books
- Cultural heritage materials

Our vision is to build a strong collection of the best available openly licensed content, featuring quality files, content, metadata, and covers. The collection is open to all e-readers and is designed to provide materials appropriate to public, academic, school, and special libraries.

Purpose

The "Open Bookshelf Collection Policy" exists to:

- Provide selection and acquisition guidelines for collection development
- Define the structure in which collection development actions are articulated, executed, measured, and modified
- Provide planning guidance informing the work of the Open Bookshelf Curation Corps
- Capture the mission, focus, scope, nature of the collection, and selection criteria
- Communicate the policies to the public
- Articulate our commitment to intellectual freedom

Selection Process

The Open Bookshelf Curation Corps manages selection/deselection of Open Bookshelf titles. The Open Bookshelf Curation Corps is a group of librarians and information professionals who identify potential providers, select titles, improve metadata, and curate collections.

Scope

Open Bookshelf is an online ebook collection designed to supplement existing library collections. Guiding factors for development of the collection include materials that are:

- Available in the United States through the public domain or via a Creative Commons or other openly published license
- Available in EPUB 3.0 or other format designed for e-reading accessibility
- Supporting a general audience's needs or interests

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used in making selection decisions for materials available in the Open Bookshelf collection:

- Support of Open Bookshelf's mission, focus, and scope
- Usefulness with respect to other materials in the Open Bookshelf collection, including the representation of all sides of controversial issues
- Fill identified, expressed, or anticipated needs from readers
 - Availability of another open edition or version
- Contribution to diversity or breadth of collection
- If not in desirable format or low technical quality, cost of cleanup
- Relevance to the educational, informational and recreational needs of public, academic, school, and special library communities
- Potential for use or known need
- Professional or literary reputation of the author, publisher or producer
- Artistic merit or excellence
- Critical reviews in the professional and popular media
- Timeliness of the material
- Listing in standard bibliographies and guides
- Contemporary significance
- Enduring value
- Readability and style
- Treatment of subject for intended audience
- Creative, literary or technical quality

Deselection Criteria

Open Bookshelf's collection will be reviewed periodically by the Open Bookshelf Curation Corps to determine if materials need to be removed from the collection on the basis of their being outdated, superseded, incorrect or obsolete.

Intellectual Freedom Statement

Open Bookshelf adheres to [ALA's Library Bill of Rights](#) and [Freedom to Read Statement](#) and considers all materials in the collection protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

DPLA adheres to [ALA's Library Bill of Rights](#) and [Freedom to Read Statement](#) and considers all materials in the collection protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. DPLA also recognizes the right of anyone to request that a title be reconsidered. If a petitioner wishes to recommend a title for reconsideration, please contact ebooks@dp.la. Upon receipt of the request, the title in question will be reviewed by the Open Bookshelf Curation Corps to determine if the title aligns with collection guidelines. Once a decision has been made, the petitioner will receive a written response indicating the decision and reasoning. Titles will remain in the collection during this process.

The Open Bookshelf Curation Corps is comprised of librarians and information professionals representing public, school, and academic libraries.

Background

As part of its core mission of maximizing access to our shared culture, DPLA is working to expand the discoverability, accessibility, and availability of ebooks for the general public. At [DPLAfest 2015](#), many in the library ebook community joined DPLA as they began a deep exploration of the ebook space. In 2017, with additional support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, DPLA began work on two projects designed to meet these articulated needs.

DPLA began piloting how to help libraries move to an open service architecture. What does maximizing access to ebooks look like? Facilitating discovery of free, open content; unlocking previously gated content through new licensing and/or access models; and facilitating better purchasing options for libraries.

In addition to the DPLA Exchange pilot, DPLA began building Open Bookshelf. Open Bookshelf is a substantial, free, and open collection of widely-read and widely-held ebooks, with a goal of improving discoverability through metadata and curation.

Policy Review Timeframe

This policy will be reviewed by the Open Bookshelf Curation Corps at the beginning of each calendar year. Upon consensus of the Curation Corps the policy will be revised as needed by the Open Bookshelf Curation Corps and reviewed by the Digital Public Library of America ebook team.

Special Selection Criteria

1. Public domain/classics
 - a. Widely held and/or widely circulated in libraries (public, digital, academic, school)
 - b. Commonly assigned in curriculum (e.g. top title in Open Syllabus, AP language bibliography)
 - c. Inclusion in lists, subject guides
2. Textbooks
 - a. Reputation/authoritativeness of publisher and/or peer-reviewed, peer-validated
 - b. Does not require other materials to go with it (i.e. a companion guide or database that a library user could not reasonably access)
 - c. EPUB format
 - d. Commonly assigned subjects that may also interest a public library audience
 - e. A completed monograph (as opposed to a thesis or dissertation)
3. Contemporary fiction and nonfiction
 - a. Non-fiction is peer reviewed
 - b. Subject is timely and relevant
 - c. Appears in respected best-seller and/or awards lists
 - d. Books with mature subject matter will be held to the same standards in the selection criteria (e.g. quality of content, reputation of author/publisher) and tagged as "Adult Only"
4. Children's books
 - a. Trusted publisher/content creator
 - b. Timely and appealing to young audience
 - c. Appears in respected best-seller and/or awards lists (English-language)
5. Non-English languages
 - a. Non-English titles will be added based on:
 - i. Reputation/authoritativeness of content provider
 - ii. Reputation/authoritativeness of publisher
 - iii. Reputation/authoritativeness of author
 - iv. Evaluation by a Corps member familiar with that language