

## Boston Public Library Collection Maintenance

- Boston Public Library adds 11,000 books, CDs, and DVDs to its circulating collection each month.
- This is an average monthly figure yielding approximately 132,000 new items available for borrowing each calendar year.
- BPL also owns a digital library of e-books, digital magazines, and streaming content.
- Many of the new titles Boston Public Library purchases are selected in direct response to user requests. 75% of the physical books/CDs/DVDs requested are purchased. 85% of the ebooks and other downloadable materials requested are purchased.
  
- Libraries also regularly evaluate which materials should be removed from the open shelves.
- There are many reasons an item might qualify for this, including having out-of-date information; being worn, torn, or damaged; no longer responding to readers' needs or interests or being part of large group of duplicates.
- Collection management is an everyday, year-round service that librarians provide.

### **Collection Maintenance Project**

- 24 neighborhood branches received a list of records for books that have not circulated in 3, 4, or 5 years, depending on the number of shelves the branch has.
- Librarians review the following criteria:
  - Does this record have a corresponding book on the shelves?
  - Is it there?
  - Is it damaged?
  - Is there more than one copy?
  - If it is a travel book or computer software book or test prep book, for example, is there a 2008 version alongside the 2014 version? If yes, please remove the 2008 version.

Part of every librarian's job is to evaluate their shelves. This is essential and ongoing librarian work. Even if a book is on the list to be evaluated and has not circulated in years, each librarian can decide, because they know their local users best, that it should stay in the building.

Two very important things to keep in mind:

- Each location in the Boston Public Library system shares its circulating materials with every other location. A library cardholder can request a book to be delivered to any branch of a patron's choosing, whether it is near home or work.
- The records being evaluated across the system are limited only to "take-home" or "circulating" books, CDs, and DVDs. These are but a fraction of Boston Public Library's deep, rich, and historic holdings and do not even take into account our digital library of e-books, digital magazines, and streaming content. In all, the library has upwards of 23 million items in its collections: maps, photographs, manuscripts, music scores, paintings, artifacts, sculptures, and much more.

### **What Happens to the Books?**

1. Offered to local library friends groups for their book sales.
2. Sent to one of the library's partners-in-residence, the Internet Archive, a nonprofit library whose mission is to digitize all published information for storage and digitization.
3. Books that the Internet Archive does not select are then sent through a third-party company to a variety of retail outlets to be sold.
  - a. Proceeds from these sales are returned to Boston Public Library's collections budget and used for library collections.
4. Any books not sold or in poor condition at the end of this process are recycled.