# The Axiologies of the Anti-Collection: Preliminary Explorations

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The late Ross Atkinson (1994, p. 95) famously viewed the "universe of publication as bifurcated into the local collection and what we might call the anti-collection, i.e., the set of all publications not held in the local collection." Atkinson's view of the anti-collection was an undifferentiated one: everything published outside the local collection within the economics of what he terms the "line of acceptance" appeared to be subject to selection. Most subsequent mentions of the anti-collection in the collection development and management literature have centered around those issues of cost, comprehensiveness, cooperation, and copyright in relation to the user needs for a specific local collection. The proliferation of electronic publication, the current drive for digitization, and the turn toward licensing rather than ownership of many resources has further accelerated both the progress and the problems involved, raising questions as to how far these boundaries may erode.

Michael Gorman (2000, p. 11) agreed that a library's collection includes tangible objects locally owned by the library, intangible objects locally owned by the library, tangible objects owned by other libraries but accessible to local patrons through cooperative agreements, and remote intangible objects not owned by the local library but to which the library gives access, though he criticized this implicit metaphor of the collection as a widening ripple of concentric circles, gradually encompassing all the world's information and knowledge, pointing out that a given library's customers are generally local, and largely prefer local resources and access.

However, the local collection and the anti-collection are now contiguous in many mental maps of the Internet. And, beyond Atkinson's and Gorman's professional gaze lie those certain bits of data, types of information, and forms of knowledge which, if not inconceivable as being part of most "local" collections, are much less likely to be included. The anti-collection is not an anonymous, amorphous mass of digital objects: since the advent of the Internet, there are certain highly-organized sectors that appear to be immediately adjacent to the local collection and there are other sectors that may have moved even further away. Just as the local collection environment has evolved dramatically since Atkinson and Gorman expressed their views, so too has the anti-collection environment.

This presentation provides a preliminary typology of the anti-collection and its axiologies, showing that there are different sectors and different value systems within this rapidly expanding information universe. It examines four well-known collections (An Archive of Our Own, arXiv, the NAGPRA databases, and the World Without Oil) from four different sectors of the anti-collection (the transformative, the transgressive, the transumptive, and the transactive) in order to explore how their embedded values may differ from the espoused values of NISO's Framework of Guidance for Building Good Digital Collections, and whether they may also have other values that might prove

particularly useful for local collection consideration. It also deals with whether and how further exploration of the various sectors of the anti-collection may prove beneficial in enhancing local collection management and services.

## References

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Gorman, M. (2000). *Our enduring values: Librarianship in the 21st century*. Chicago: American Library Association.