

Community library breathes new life into collections

Detailed view of holdings and comparison data guides collection development to the delight of users



Situation

When Lee Phillips was hired as director of the Butte-Silver Bow Public Library, one of the first things she wanted to do was get to know the collection—in detail. The library, located in historic downtown Butte, Montana, has supported city and county residents since 1894, and to continue serving their interests, Phillips decided **an analysis of the entire collection was essential.**

“I was unsure of the condition of the collection,” she says. Occasionally weeding and looking at the circulation of individual titles was how the staff managed the collection. But that was time-consuming and limited in view. **“We wanted a more informed process,”** says Phillips. In addition, she wanted to know how the collection compared to holdings in libraries of similar size—another level of management complexity and potential time drain.

Solution

After researching her options, it quickly became apparent to Phillips that **WorldCat® Collection Analysis from OCLC®** could provide exactly what she needed:

- A detailed view of the entire collection—searchable, sortable and reportable by characteristics such as age and genre
- The ability to compare side-by-side with other libraries’ holdings

Once set up, **it didn’t take long to see the advantages** of WorldCat Collection Analysis. For example, the staff was able to isolate and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the children’s collection.

AT A GLANCE

At a Glance body bold

- 88,500 holdings
- Annual circulation of 90,000 items
- Serves community of 34,500
- In 2009 the library served 16,304 users or 48% of Butte-Silver Bow population

“Our purchases are guided by an accurate assessment of our full collection.”

Lee Phillips

“This was a major benefit since this part of our collection had very disparate areas that needed development,” explains Phillips. “If we had not been able to look at the collection separately, we would not have seen that the science and biography categories were not current.”

Age turned out to be a recurring theme for other areas of the collection, as well. “The age of our nonfiction was unacceptable. We had areas that had not been weeded or updated in 20 years.” With this information now at their fingertips, **the staff was able to prioritize acquisitions.**

Complementing that information was the comparison data the staff was able to now gather. With WorldCat Collection Analysis, libraries can view their collections side-by-side with other libraries of similar size and geographic location. “It saved us time in evaluating our weaknesses,” says Phillips. “We got quick access to sound comparison data, which meant **we could start planning collection development much sooner.**”

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Continued



Results

Aided by the customizable reports WorldCat Collection Analysis generates, the library staff has been making informed decisions about acquisitions for two years now.

“I think this is a valuable tool for any library...especially for libraries that have not weeded or conducted collection development in a long time,” Phillips says. **“It will save time and money** in the long run and it was a good investment. Our purchases are guided by an accurate assessment of our full collection.

“More importantly though, we now have a richer collection that is more responsive to the needs of our community.”