

Utah public library benchmarking its collection with WorldCat Collection Analysis

Web-based service generates reports quickly and impresses local government



Situation

Ronald Jenkins, Director of the Logan Library in Logan, Utah (85 miles north of Salt Lake City), didn't like trusting his gut feelings about his library's collection when his former collection development librarian retired in 1999 and 20 years of collection knowledge was lost.

"We try to use automation to do our jobs better," says Jenkins, "but at the time I wasn't aware of anything that could help us gain the information we needed."

Fortunately, Karen Clark, Logan Library's new collection development librarian, was enrolled in a collection development course in which she became familiar with the former OCLC/WLN Conspectus Database software. A course assignment introduced her to this software. Knowing the needs of the library, she presented the information to Jenkins.

Solution

Then, in 2005, OCLC introduced its WorldCat Collection Analysis service to help libraries analyze their collections, and benchmark and use the data for collection development and budget planning. Logan Library was an early adopter, and its staff quickly found the new Web-based service a worthy upgrade for their collection development needs.

Jenkins says that though they had to revisit the library budget, the relationships between WorldCat Collection Analysis and OCLC's WorldCat database were very appealing. "It didn't take long for us to see good results," he remarks.

AT A GLANCE

Logan Library, Logan Utah

- Single-location library that opened in 1916
- Serves a population of 46,000, with 26,000 registered card holders
- The library's collection of 178,500 items yielded a total circulation of 765,000 items in 2006
- The library's Web site
- (<http://library.loganutah.org>) logged almost 938,000 visits in 2006; it provides information on library and community resources

"I can see everything about our collection in just a few summary pages."

Electronic Services Librarian Kara Huggard became the library's primary WorldCat Collection Analysis user. As a new librarian then, she found that OCLC's Web seminars on the service made it easier for her to begin using it quickly.

Results

Staff at the Logan Library praise WorldCat Collection Analysis for its ease of use, speed and user-friendliness. Huggard runs various reports that she combines with the library's ILS data and shares with the collection development department.

"We received a grant to buy some Spanish-language materials and I was able to generate a report on what Spanish materials we had already in just a few minutes," reports Huggard.

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“It’s much faster than what we had before,” notes Clark. “And being able to compare to same-size libraries both in Utah and in surrounding states helps us keep our collection current.”

Jenkins uses WorldCat Collection Analysis for budget purposes—being able to determine collection strengths and weaknesses helps with budget justifications. “And as Director, I’ve liked that Karen can analyze our entire collection—I can see everything about our collection in just a few summary pages.”

WorldCat Collection Analysis also makes it easier to request funding. The Logan City Council knows that the library staff do their homework when making budget requests, and council members appreciate the comparison charts that Jenkins’ team produces with WorldCat Collection Analysis software.

Library staff are now starting to make year-to-year comparisons using the service, which enables them to see the progress they’ve made strengthening their collection. Jenkins says WorldCat Collection Analysis will be even more useful when the library has three to five years of data. “It will just get better over time.”

For more information about WorldCat Collection Analysis, visit www.oclc.org/collectionanalysis/, call 1-800-848-5878, or send e-mail to libservices@oclc.org.