

OCLC WorldCat Collection Analysis debuts

Libraries can run collection analysis online with easy access to 58 million records and nearly 1 billion holdings in WorldCat

BY BOB MURPHY

The new OCLC WorldCat Collection Analysis service makes it possible for library staff responsible for collection management to analyze the age and subject content of their own collections, compare their collections with those of peer libraries, and compare, as a group, the level of overlap or uniqueness of their collections.

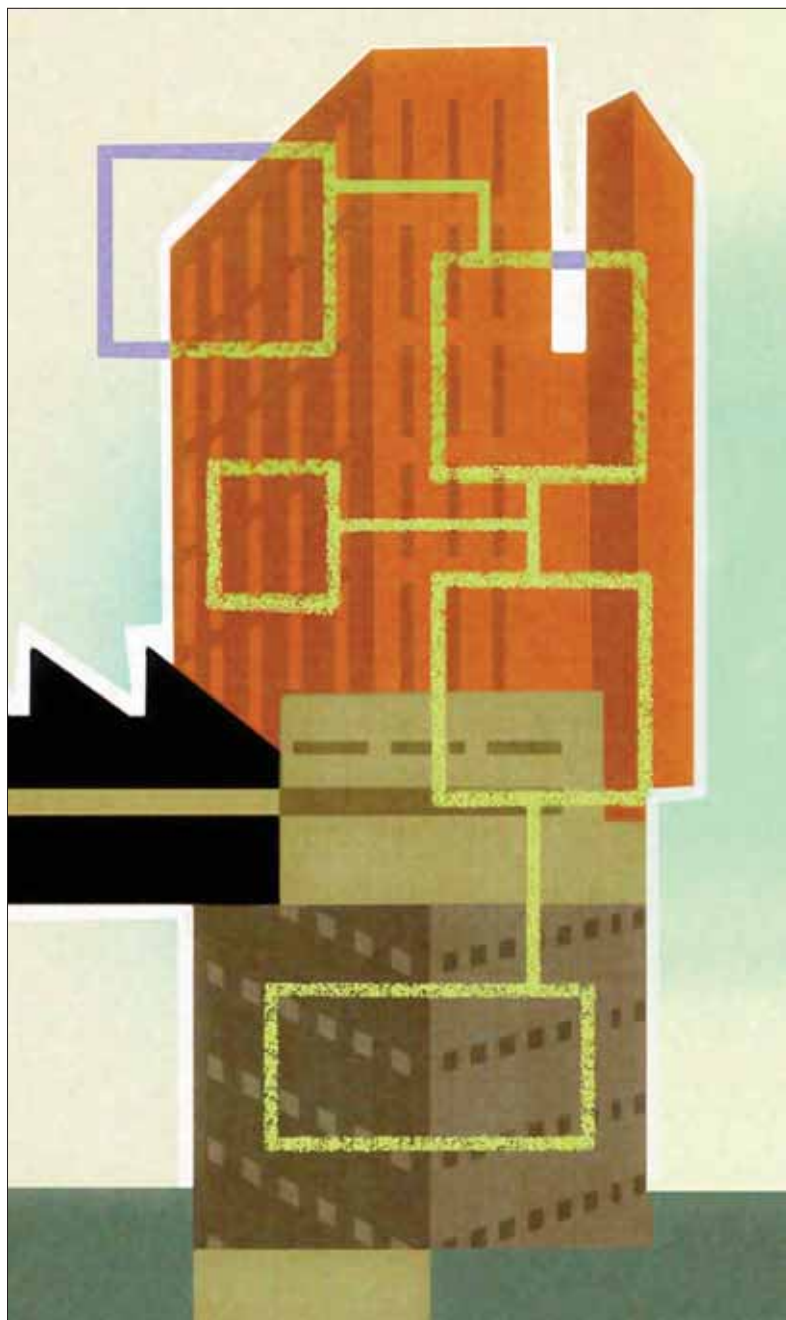
The new service is designed to provide the most cost-effective way to routinely evaluate collections. It enables library staff to communicate collection decisions to faculty, boards of trustees and administrators, as well as demonstrate financial needs and responsible stewardship of library acquisitions, budgets and collections.

“The WorldCat Collection Analysis service is incomparable in the library community because it leverages the cooperative effort of thousands of librarians around the world who have built—and are continuing to build—WorldCat,” says Phyllis Spies, Vice President, OCLC Collection Management Services.

WorldCat is the world’s richest database of items held in libraries, comprising more than 58 million records that represent nearly 1 billion holdings. The WorldCat database grows at the rate of one new record every 10 seconds. The OCLC WorldCat Collection Analysis service provides tools for libraries to mine the deep, rich database that thousands of librarians worldwide collectively maintain as part of their daily workflow.

The WorldCat Collection Analysis service allows library staff to view and analyze the age and content of their own collections by subject, and compare their library’s holdings with the holdings of peer libraries, and limit the analysis to specific subject areas. For example, an academic library considering an Italian language program might compare its collection to other college libraries already offering such a program. Or, a public library might want to demonstrate the strength of its small business management collection by comparing its holdings with those of peer libraries.

For groups, the service provides an affordable way to evaluate group collections and validate cooperative collection activities. The service allows libraries to review collection gaps, the degree of overlap of their collections



with others and their uniquely held titles. The results are provided in formatted reports.

The OCLC WorldCat Collection Analysis service is now available to any library with its holdings in WorldCat that also subscribes to WorldCat through the OCLC FirstSearch service. Libraries that would like to use the collection analysis service but do not currently have holdings in WorldCat can load their records into WorldCat at no charge.

From the staff view of the FirstSearch interface, library staff can perform a variety of collection analysis and

collection management tasks in real time once a comparison project has been set up. In the past, collection analysis projects could take months to complete. OCLC can set up a project for a library within 24 to 72 hours, depending on the scope of the job. Once the project is set up, collection analysis can be completed online, instantaneously, through WorldCat.

“Librarians and staff need to know what they have in their collections, and they need to know where there might be gaps in their collections,” says Glenda Lammers, Product Manager, OCLC WorldCat Collection Analysis. “They need to know what materials they have in common with libraries that are part of their group, and they need to know what unique items they have to offer. If libraries know exactly what materials are accessible to them, then they are better able to decide what they need to buy, digitize or preserve.”

WorldCat Collection Analysis software is centrally hosted at OCLC, offering subscribers a low-cost, easy-to-

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use system technically supported by the OCLC Customer Service Division and Network Services staff.

The OCLC WorldCat Collection Analysis service is available for all libraries and all collections, regardless of the types of materials to be analyzed, the type of library or the integrated library system used. A library that subscribes to the OCLC WorldCat Collection Analysis service may compare its collection to any library that maintains holdings in WorldCat.

Over the last year, OCLC has been working closely with libraries to develop the collection analysis service, and librarians have been enthusiastic about its potential.

“The response has been overwhelming,” says Ms. Lammers. “Collection analysis has always been an extremely labor-intensive project—it’s time consuming and ultimately can be very expensive. There are not many automated tools available for analyzing and comparing collections to peers. Libraries want an automated tool that can do this for them quickly, and the WorldCat Collection Analysis service can do this—and more.” ■

