

# Details leads to better collection decisions at Virginia Tech

*University Libraries team turns assumptions into hard facts with WorldCat Collection Analysis*



## Situation

Virginia Tech has the largest full-time student population of any higher education institution in Virginia. Originally created as a land grant college in 1872, Virginia Tech today is home to more than 25,000 students and another 2,000 remote students. Each year, they advance their studies in 60 undergraduate and 140 graduate programs.

Supporting the students and curriculum is the Universities Libraries, a main library with three specialty branches. **With more than 2.2 million titles accumulated over the years, knowing what's in the collection and how it relates to the mission of the university wasn't easy.** Nor did library staff know how their collections compared to other peer universities. Just ask Paul Metz, Director of Collection Management. It's his job to answer those questions and **he wanted the ability to do so with details—not speculation.**

## Solution

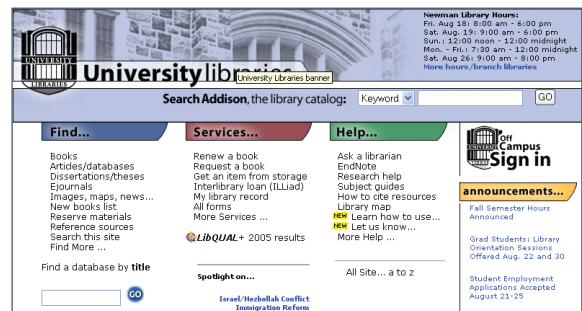
“We bought WorldCat Collection Analysis as part of a group purchase through ASERL,” Metz says. ASERL, the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries, is the largest regional library consortium in the country, and by participating in the group, Metz knew he would be able to immediately conduct comparative research using WorldCat Collection Analysis.

“I selected 13 southeastern doctoral institutions as a peer group tailored for Virginia Tech,” he says. “By comparing our holdings to these libraries, **I was able to see where we were relatively strong or weak.**”

Fortunately, in most cases, we were stronger in areas that Virginia Tech emphasizes programmatically, and weaker in areas of lower priority.”

## AT A GLANCE

- Located in Blacksburg, Virginia
- Eight colleges and graduate school
- 25,000 full-time students
- Ranked 55th in university research in the United States
- More than 2.2 million titles in collection



**“The data gave me the ability to speak empirically, comparatively and in detail.”**

Armed with this new resource, Metz can now address questions related to specific subsets of the collection. “I received an inquiry from a faculty member wondering about our holdings in African-American studies. **The data gave me the ability to speak empirically, comparatively and in detail,** whereas without it I could only have been speculative or very general.”

## Results

Comparative analysis, collection assessment, weeding—these are just some of the many tasks Metz and his team have been able to accomplish with WorldCat Collection

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Analysis. “We can look at our collections on a large scale or down to a very granular level,” he explains. **“This gives us the ability to make smarter decisions about what’s needed in our collections.”**

He cites a recent example where he examined the uniqueness of the library holdings to determine gaps. The comparison of the collection to peer institutions identified 2,000 titles the library should consider adding. “I sent these titles to our bibliographers who asked that we try to acquire just over half of those titles.”

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For more information about WorldCat Collection Analysis, visit [www.oclc.org/collectionanalysis/](http://www.oclc.org/collectionanalysis/), call 1-800-848-5878 or send an e-mail to [libservices@oclc.org](mailto:libservices@oclc.org).