

Stocking eight rural branches for real demand at Western Plains Library System

Buying ran on a fixed ratio and word of mouth, with no way to see which titles were earning their place. collectionHQ gave a one-person collection team the evidence to weed, transfer and buy for every branch.

8

Branches plus a bookmobile

46,500+

Residents served

7.5%

Less dead stock since June 2022

THE CHALLENGE

What the library was up against

Western Plains Library System serves rural western Oklahoma through eight branches and a bookmobile, with collection development led largely by one person, Jamie Hudson. Purchasing once ran on physical catalogs and hand-keyed ISBNs, and beyond bestsellers it depended on word of mouth about what each branch liked.

Circulation figures showed whether usage was up or down overall, but not which titles were earning their place on the shelf. Buying followed a fixed ratio by branch size regardless of local demand, and some assumptions went unchallenged, such as the belief that the bookmobile's readers wanted mainly Christian fiction.

THE SOLUTION

What they did

Western Plains adopted collectionHQ in June 2022, giving Jamie a clear view of where each branch is overstocked or understocked, and where titles are and aren't circulating.

Weeding and transfers with confidence

Weeding reports tailored to each collection mean a branch can be cleared in half a day rather than a full one. Under-used titles move to understocked branches that don't already hold them, with no new spend.

Buying for demand, protecting what matters

Popular author and subject data show what each community actually reads. Core collections keep memorial copies, local authors and rare titles safe from accidental weeding.

THE RESULTS

What changed

A healthier collection

Dead stock has fallen by 7.5% since June 2022, a steady move toward a more active collection.

Assumptions replaced with evidence

The data showed the bookmobile's readers wanted romance, not only Christian fiction, and revealed a landlocked branch understocked on sailing books.

Budget directed where it counts

Formats that no longer circulate, such as audiobooks on CD, are no longer bought, and extra copies go to the branch where they will circulate.