

CORNWALL COUNTY COUNCIL LIBRARY SERVICES SAVES TIME WITH COLLECTIONHQ

Cornwall Library Services is a 32 branch system serving a population of over 520,000. Moving to self-service combined with a major re-structuring project meant that the library required an efficient and effective method of monitoring stock performance with limited staff resources.



THE CHALLENGE

Prior to the implementation of collectionHQ at Cornwall Library Services, the team were faced with two key challenges: moving check out processes smoothly to RFID and self-service in addition to continuing to maintain high standards at a time of staff cuts.

Stock Team Leader at the library, Linda Moffatt explains that the decision “to move to RFID and consequently going to self-service meant that we were no longer going to be able to look at the loans and the loan history and dates.”

Switching to the RFID and self-service process at the time of a re-structuring project which resulted in the loss of a row of stock managers, was to make the regular supervision of stock performance more challenging. Moffatt highlights that this factor “put the onus (of stock management) back into the branch so we needed something that would underpin stock management for people who were not used to using it.”

It was this combination of new work procedures and a limited staff which encouraged the library to take on collectionHQ in 2008.

THE OUTCOME

EVIDENCE-BASED BUDGET PLANNING | Since implementing collectionHQ at Cornwall Library Services, staff have been able to monitor the performance of certain items based on the evidence-based stock management (EBSM) methodology, allowing budget to be planned based on what is truly being checked out per collectionHQ reports as opposed to relying on anecdotal evidence. Moffatt has been using this analysis to plan for the library's 2013 budget, checking monthly performance summaries and encouraging branches to share with her the individual areas where they are under-stocked according to collectionHQ reports.

Notably, Moffatt explains that this process has emphasised not only the under-stocked items which they need to invest in more but the areas of lesser demand where they are over-stocked. She elaborates “we spend a considerable amount of money on large print, talking books and graphic novels but the loaning on those items is not equivalent to the money we are spending on it.” This revelation brought about by collectionHQ evidence has therefore given the library the proof required to allocate less of their budget to those materials.

TIME SAVINGS | Following the removal of a line of stock managers at Cornwall Library Services, members of staff at each branch have been responsible for checking and weeding stock. Moffatt explains that before the adoption of collectionHQ “they (the staff) got scared of



KEY BENEFITS

The adoption of collectionHQ has enabled Cornwall Library Services to:

- Plan budget based on evidence of what items are being checked out.
- Reduce time taken to complete collection management processes.
- Improve stock performance.
- Enhance promotional activities.

COLLECTION PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

stock after using date labels and didn't feel confident to remove." Thanks to collectionHQ reports, Moffatt can now "enrain" in her collectionHQ training sessions that the tool makes the weeding process more automated, providing a "targeted area of stock to review which staff can then look at and make the decision as to whether they need to keep, replace or move it somewhere else." She continues that using collectionHQ in this procedure has "saved time because they (the staff) don't have to look at every book on the shelf like before."

Branch staff are overall very happy with the ease of which collectionHQ allows them to run their own reports and carry out stock development procedures. Moffatt describes that collectionHQ training "is one of the most popular training sessions in branches. I think I could run one every month and get a full classroom!"

IMPROVED STOCK PERFORMANCE | In addition to helping to streamline processes for staff, collectionHQ has also assisted Cornwall Library Services to increase circulation of items thanks to more regular and effective transfer procedures. Moffatt explains that on a monthly basis each branch will work on transfers of particular areas of stock. She highlights that areas of fiction are always included given its popularity and that, depending on size, each branch is given a different quantity of those items to pull out for transfer using collectionHQ transfer lists which highlight the 'dead' stock which hasn't moved in over a certain time period. For non-fiction, transfer lists are also pulled however the stock is divided into 3 sections based on the theory that "we can get around the whole of non-fiction and refresh stock twice a year." Next, using collectionHQ popular author reports combined with personal knowledge, staff can view the items removed from the shelves at other branches and request what the reports have indicated that they need.

Moffatt is pleased to see increased circulation of stock across the library service as a result of this improved transfer process illustrating that with fiction "if we transfer in the region of 5000 titles, we get 3 or 4 times that (circulation) at the new location." She goes on to mention that non-fiction results are naturally not as high but achieve "at least double (the circulation) of the amount we move around."

The process also greatly helps in the movement of dynamic stock around the system avoiding a build-up of items at popular drop-off branches. Moffatt explains "I set those at 'dead for transfer' at 3 months which helps draw these back."

ENHANCED MARKETING ACTIVITIES | The team at Cornwall Library Services have been particularly impressed by collectionHQ's range of marketing tools. Using this functionality, branch staff can access information on the top selling items or 'Top Charts' not only at their own library but libraries in different locations. Moffatt explains "looking at Top Charts for one library 10 miles from another you can see that the pattern of reading is completely different. Staff can print this information and add to a display in minutes." The library also use the Top Charts tool in the reverse by identifying the least borrowed items and looking at ways of boosting promotion of that stock.

Another collectionHQ marketing tool which has proven valuable to the library has been the experimental placement feature which has been utilised within film and prescription books' collections. Moffatt explains "we work in partnership with health partners who provide book lists, for example self-help books for people who suffer from depression or anxiety. If a doctor sees a patient who they feel could benefit from this they will prescribe a book." collectionHQ's experimental placement tool allows the library to monitor how well that partnership is working, relay back to the organisation which books are helping and identify if there are any particular locations where certain books are performing well.

demo@collectionhq.com | www.collectionhq.com

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