

COLLECTIONHQ HELPS QUEENS LIBRARY TO MANAGE SHRINKING BUDGETS

Queens Library is a 62 branch system serving a population of over 2,000,000. During a period of tight budgets, staff at the library realized an innovative approach to managing the collection was required to make the most of the resources available. In 2010, after identifying collectionHQ as the solution to help with this goal, Queens became the first North American library to implement the software.



Queens Library
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THE CHALLENGE

Queens Library was faced with two main challenges before taking on collectionHQ: the implementation of a regular weeding schedule and the efficient production of user-friendly, in-depth reports.

In terms of weeding, Hong Yao, Associate Coordinator, Collection Development explains that the library staff had been very efficient in identifying new authors and adding these to the collection but the library was "lagging behind" in keeping the collection up to date. She explains that it was "easy to weed on physical condition but more difficult when you needed to base it on content or publication date." For this reason, the task of weeding was not carried out on a regular basis across the library.

Another factor holding back the implementation of regular collection maintenance was the library's reliance on reports from the ILS system. Yao highlights that with the ILS reports weeding was extremely "Time consuming as you have to check every single item." What's more, those reports were not user friendly and so it was often the responsibility of the IT department to run the reports and distribute to the branches. This factor meant that branches were unable to carry out ad-hoc collection checks.

It was in 2010, when collectionHQ first launched in North America, that Queens Library arranged a demonstration of the software which appeared to provide the solution to the challenges that they were faced with.

THE OUTCOME

FINANCIAL SAVINGS | Since implementing collectionHQ at Queens Library, the team have been using the software to make more informed purchasing and placement decisions. For example, in relation to collection development, Yao explains that the majority of her dollars are to be spent on best-selling titles. collectionHQ allows her to pull information on which branches each of those titles will receive highest circulation at, quickly into a concise report – helping to make the most of that limited budget. She describes "Before collectionHQ we had been carrying out surveys amongst branches on what circulates well but this was not always accurate...Now (with collectionHQ) we run system wide reports to get a general sense of what type of material circulates best at certain branches. This helped me a lot with distribution lists for the 62 branches."

COLLECTION PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

KEY BENEFITS

The adoption of collectionHQ has enabled Queens Library to:

- Make evidence-based purchasing decisions
- Streamline collection maintenance tasks
- Save staff time
- Better match supply with demand



collectionHQ has not only helped with the development of the collection across the existing branches but also to decide how to allocate budget for an opening day collection, following the decision to move one branch into a larger building. For this project, Yao explains that collectionHQ reports were pulled from that branch's historic data to show what items were most popular with patrons. This detailed information then helped to decide how much budget and shelf space to allocate to each area of the collection.

TIME SAVINGS | In addition to helping with development of the collection at Queens Library, collectionHQ has also allowed staff to save time taken to complete once labor intensive tasks.

One of the processes which has been streamlined thanks to the software is weeding, where Yao highlights that the library has made "tremendous time savings." Prior to adopting collectionHQ, the weeding process was a manual task where a volunteer would look through the shelves for any items they considered to be in a poor condition or dated. Once gathered, the volunteer would then take the material to a computer where each item was scanned individually to check the circulation rate. Often a large proportion of those titles would be put back on the shelf.

Since using collectionHQ's easy to run and clearly detailed reports for this task, Yao explains that 75% of staff time has been saved: "Now you have a report in your hand so you go to the items you are sure need to be weeded."

This ability to run reports efficiently has helped to make regular weeding a possibility and has put some power into the hands of the branches who no longer rely on the expertise of the IT department for this task.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENTS | collectionHQ has helped staff at Queens Library to make significant performance improvements by revealing patron trends which may not have been so apparent beforehand - ensuring collection supply matches demand.

Yao explains that collectionHQ has exposed high circulation at certain branches which were not considered to be so frequented by patrons. She explains "Surprisingly there are branches I didn't know had a huge children's DVD need. With collectionHQ I can now focus more on those smaller branches."

collectionHQ has also revealed those items with low circulation which are in fact known to be popular with patrons. One such genre was non-fiction biographies which the staff are now working on building a better display for.

Overall, Yao concludes "collectionHQ has put us in a position which will help our collection, not only from a purchasing perspective, but to see how well the items we have now are performing. The software has opened our eyes."



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