

# LEXINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY MAXIMIZES COLLECTION WITH COLLECTIONHQ

Lexington Public Library, KY, consists of a downtown central library and 5 full service branches. **Serving a population of 305,000, the library has a book budget of \$1.6 million and circulates 575,491 items.**



## THE CHALLENGE

Prior to the implementation of collectionHQ, staff at Lexington Public Library faced the challenge of making sound collection management and development decisions without evidence-based direction. Cathy Howell, Technical Services Manager at the library comments "Our biggest challenge was that all information we had was anecdotal and not numbers based. We had some reports from our ILS vendor but it wasn't giving us what we needed to be able to look at our collection as a whole."

Weeding was another challenge at the library. Using ILS reports allowed staff to see how long books had been on the shelf but the library lacked the evidence required to carry out action on those items either by removal, moving to a location of increased demand or, if in a poor condition, replacing with an item from another branch.

## THE SOLUTION

Overall, Lexington Public Library required a tool that would help to implement a systematic approach to collection management and development. collectionHQ was identified as that solution and rolled out across the library system in 2011.

## THE OUTCOME

**STREAMLINED COLLECTION MAINTENANCE** | The implementation of collectionHQ allowed staff at Lexington Public Library to get straight to work on refreshing the collection and weeding through those items that had poor circulation (dead) or were in a poor physical condition (grubby). This collection refresh was easily rolled out across the branches thanks to evidence-based collectionHQ "action plans" which directed staff to the items in question.

Cathy explains that the ability to set "parameters" which determine the items identified by collectionHQ as dead or grubby has allowed the library to maintain a degree of control over the weeding process, instilling confidence amongst branch staff to weed in line with the action plans. Central library can also monitor branch use of these action plans with collectionHQ's "Administration" tool. Cathy explains that the tool is used to ensure that the individuals responsible for certain action plans are carrying those actions out. She continues "even more than watching (use) it has been a great way to see if people are really being successful. New employees sign in a

## KEY BENEFITS

The adoption of collectionHQ has enabled Lexington Public Library to:

- Implement efficient weeding processes
- Maximize the existing collection
- Reduce wasteful purchases
- Gain better insight into the collection

lot and if I can see that they are going over the same report time after time I give them a call to see how it is going and if they need clarification or help. It's been useful as a means to open up communication."

As a result of this increased branch responsibility, Cathy comments that staff members are "working more collaboratively than before" and viewing the collection from more of a system wide level than a branch level.

Overall, the roll out of collection management procedures with collectionHQ has made the weeding process more efficient and reliable. As a result, dead items across the collection overall have been reduced significantly.

**COST SAVINGS** | Weeding with collectionHQ does not always result in the removal of items from the collection. Using collectionHQ Transfer tools at Lexington Public Library in conjunction with weeding tools allows staff to move dead items to branches with increased demand and identify replacements within the existing collection for grubby items.

The accessibility of both tools allows staff to carry out Transfers on a regular basis, maintaining the collection at a high standard for patrons. What's more, replacing grubby books with copies already in the collection, while optimizing use of dead items, saves the library significant costs and increases circulation. For example, within the fiction collection, one branch transferred 100 items that had been dead an average of 13.28 months. At their new location, those items received an additional 555 circulations in 10 months – an additional circulation of 0.55 per item.

In addition to saving costs by maximizing existing material, collectionHQ also helps Lexington Public Library to make more informed purchasing decisions and reduce wasteful spend. Cathy provides the example of one children's librarian who was using collectionHQ's overstocked and understocked tools to verify her thoughts on graphic novels: "She knew they were popular but she made changes to her buying plans based on the usage she could see from collectionHQ evidence."

Cathy explains that it has also been interesting to identify with collectionHQ the difference in reading trends across the branches, a feature will help greatly with the transition to centralized selection.

**THE FUTURE** | The team at Lexington Public Library is delighted with the results achieved so far with collectionHQ and is excited about the potential improvements that can be made with more recent modules added to the toolset. Cathy identifies the eBooks module as a feature she believes will benefit the library's digital collection: "We are spending more and more money on ebooks. I want to see how they are performing and where I need to focus." collectionHQ's eBook module not only provides an overview of the ebook collection on a system wide and branch level but allows libraries to compare ebook performance side by side with print book performance.

As with all tools in collectionHQ, the eBook module will help the library to develop that collection in line with patron reading trends, not based on the instinct of librarians. Cathy concludes "It's all going back to being a good steward of public funds. For a long time librarians bought what they thought patrons should read. We have a variety of classics and literature but you need to get what people want to read."



saveTIME



saveMONEY



improve  
PERFORMANCE

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