

FROM FLOATING TO TRANSFERS



OVERVIEW

Nashville Public Library, TN, hosts 21 library branches and serves a population of 670,000. collectionHQ was implemented at the library in 2011 and has since become a vital tool in driving patron demand and guiding collection placement.

THE CHALLENGE

Having floated for a little over 2 years, Noel Rutherford, Material Services Manager, conducted a performance evaluation of the library's floating collection and found some interesting results, including:

- Large, suburban branches where patrons placed most holds benefitted more from floating, pulling items from inner-city branches;
- Frequent pooling of titles at the busiest branches often resulted in the subsequent removal of popular titles – instead of moving to another location;
- Non-Fiction collections gradually became understocked due to holds;
- Circulation of Fiction and Audio/Visual material was poor.

While Floating or Dynamic collections are common practice in many multi-branch library systems and offer several advantages to both staff and patrons, Noel decided to take on a new approach to encouraging item movement with the help of collectionHQ.

THE SOLUTION

collectionHQ offers a comprehensive set of Transfer "action plans" which support users in moving items to locations where there is a high demand and to replace overused or missing items.

Once the results from Noel's research were confirmed and the most overstocked locations due to "pooling" of floating items were identified, action was taken to "turn off" floating.

Next, the use of collectionHQ's Transfer action plans was introduced.

Noel explains: "We introduced collectionHQ's Transfer plans to systematically move material through the library system." Instead of concentrating on popular authors, the focus was on redistributing underperforming titles. Noel shared: "Why concentrate on items that are going to have holds placed on them? They are going to move on their own. We chose to move the items that were overstocked in Branch A to meet demand in Branch B".

THE PROCESS

Involving branch staff in the Transfer process was instrumental in the project's success. Not only did the project aim to encourage item movement and circulation, but to engage branch staff more in their collections by supporting collection development.

KEY BENEFITS

The use of collectionHQ at Nashville Public library has helped staff to:

- Increase circulation
- Make better use of existing items
- Create an enhanced patron experience
- Get to know the collection better
- Generate movement of items to new locations
- Improve 'browsability' of the collection

Roll out of the Transfer project followed 3 steps:

1. Nominate staff and arrange training: Depending on the size of the branch, 2 to 5 members of staff were selected to receive training on how to use Transfer action plans either in small groups or a one-to-one session. Noel sought to make sure that enough staff members would be trained at each location to cover children's, teen and adult.
2. Introduce reports: During Training sessions, participants were introduced to the 3 collectionHQ action plans that would support the process: Popular Author Transfer (for Fiction material), Popular Subject Transfer (for Non-Fiction material), and Grubby Item Refresh (to identify and remove overused items that are in a poor physical condition).
3. Schedule with collectionHQ: collectionHQ's Schedule Management Tool was used to set reminders for staff to run each of the action plans and allowed Noel to monitor progress. Noel explains: "I originally scheduled all 3 tools to run each month, but then as quantities reduced we changed to run Grubby Item Refresh one month, Popular Subject Transfer the next month, and Popular Author Transfer the month after."

THE RESULTS

Using collectionHQ's Transfer tools to maximize the existing collection and move underperforming items to locations of higher demand resulted in an overall increase in circulation of the collection.

NON-FICTION

Number of copies transferred	Average dead months before transfer	Additional circulation since transfer	Average months since transfer	Additional circulation per month	Additional circulation per copy per month
20667	15.72	60911	9.26	6572.91	0.31

FICTION

Number of copies transferred	Average dead months before transfer	Additional circulation since transfer	Average months since transfer	Additional circulation per month	Additional circulation per copy per month
19112	10.27	100558	12.2	8238.96	0.43

AUDIO/VISUAL

Number of copies transferred	Average dead months before transfer	Additional circulation since transfer	Average months since transfer	Additional circulation per month	Additional circulation per copy per month
668	5.65	3640	11.34	320.82	0.48

SUMMARY

The results achieved by Noel and the team at Nashville Public Library reveal that although an item may not circulate in one location doesn't not mean that it will not perform well at another. Therefore making use of collectionHQ's Transfer tools can give items several more chances before they are removed from the shelf.

Noel confirms: "Everything we did paid off. About 75% of our circulation is based on browsing so the best approach is to put it where it is going to be checked out – don't rely on holds."

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