Directors' Digest

Non-Traditional Library Collections

PAGE 4

Plus:
The Power Of Benchmarking

PAGE 9

Index

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Welcome

Greetings,

Welcome to *Directors' Digest,* a publication from collectionHQ which explores the latest trends and challenges facing senior management in public libraries today.

In this edition, we explore the rising need for Benchmarking in public libraries and discuss how the practice can be introduced to improve library performance.

We will also investigate the non-traditional collections making the headlines and explore whether offering a collection of seeds or musical instruments can make a difference to communities.

Our case study featured in this edition is from former Library Journal "Library of the Year", San Diego County Library, CA. You can also find out about the latest challenges facing the City of Wanneroo library in Australia in our interview with Community Capacity Building Manager, Michelle Brennand.

With this and much more, I hope you enjoy reading our latest issue.

Don't forget to share your views with us at **more.info@collectionhq.com**.

Scott Crawford

COLLECTIONHQ VICE PRESIDENT
AND GENERAL MANAGER

NON-TRADITIONAL LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

Seeds, cakes pans, musical instruments and even plots of land are just some of the services being provided by more and more public libraries today.

As these non-traditional library collections make their way into the media and even some political debates, collectionHQ investigates the justification for such collections and how they are helping public libraries to reinforce their role at the heart of the community.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENT LIBRARIES

Learning a musical instrument has been proven to relieve stress in adults and support development in children. As books provide an escape and support juvenile education, it can therefore be argued that musical instruments provide the same benefits. Lopez Island Library, WA and Forbes Library, MA, both in the U.S.A., are just two examples of public libraries that embrace the benefits of playing a musical instrument by offering patrons the chance to check out from a range of instruments - from the banjo to the violin – for up to one month.

While some may argue that long waiting lists combined with limited loan periods don't fully support the learning of

a new instrument, the service provides a valuable support to local schools and musicians. As support grows from the public and charitable organisations, libraries can grow to play an integral role in the development of new musicians.

CAKE PAN LIBRARIES

Where musical instruments require perseverance and lots of practice, you could say the same thing about baking. As televised baking competitions take the world by storm, more unlikely bakers are keen to try out their sponge making skills – an example of which comes from the Charles County Public Library, MD, where a cake pan collection has been introduced thanks to a novel idea of the library's IT manager.

The launch of the cake pan collection at this library has brought a great deal of excitement to the local community and has helped to reinvigorate membership at the library. Many patrons have commented on the fact that before the cake

pan service they had not used the library since "elementary school".

SEED LIBRARIES

Seed libraries exist in many public libraries today to encourage patrons to become more self-sufficient by growing their own vegetables, but also to develop a culture of "seed saving" where pure seeds are stored to protect food security amidst climate change and other environmental factors.

Surprisingly some controversy has surrounded the seed library. The Department of Agriculture in Pennsylvania responded to the seed library at Joseph T. Simpson Public Library by stating that the seed library violated state law regarding the sharing and distribution of seeds. This objection sparked outrage among other seed libraries who

called on the government to relax supervision of seed sharing and instead encourage the practice of seed libraries.

The debate continues today meanwhile seed libraries continue to operate and offer diversity and environmental benefits to library communities.

PLOTS OF LAND
Taking seed sharing to the next level, Northern Onondaga Public Library, NY, is encouraging self-sufficient and green fingered patrons by allowing check outs of plots of land. Not only are plot owners provided with land to organically grow vegetables, but education about sustainable gardening and growing food is provided.

CONCLUSION
The number of examples of non-traditional collections is telling of the theme that to keep patrons involved, libraries have to offer something new and evolve with trends. Supporting local interests like sharing cake pans and growing food, helps to reinvigorate interest in the public library and strengthen its role at the heart of the community.

Introducing a successful non-traditional collection requires imagination, community interest and a process for monitoring its performance.

Does your library offer a non-traditional collection? If so, please tell us your experience more. info@collectionhq.com.
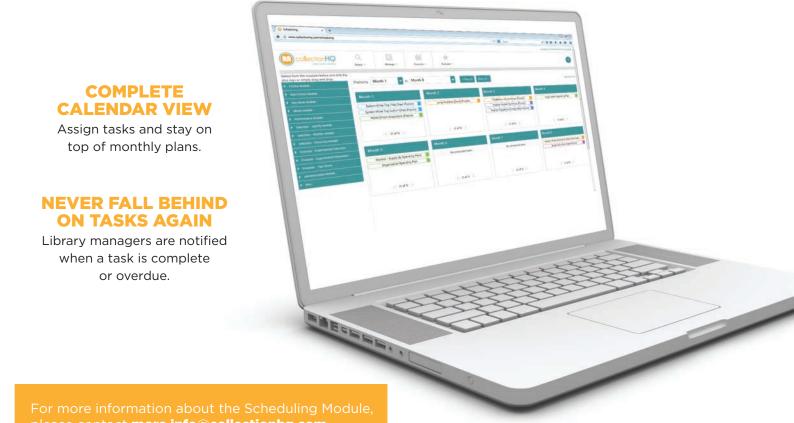
Scheduling Module

THE CHALLENGE:

Less time.

Less staff.

Higher expectations.

THE SOLUTION:

Your management team needs a robust method to manage staff completion of vital collection management and development activities. The Scheduling Module from collectionHQ is a set of revolutionary new tools which will allow library managers to assign tasks to staff members on a branch and system wide level, monitor task completion, and importantly visualize the benefits and results of their efforts.

COMPLETE CALENDAR VIEW

Assign tasks and stay on top of monthly plans.

NEVER FALL BEHIND ON TASKS AGAIN

Library managers are notified when a task is complete or overdue.

For more information about the Scheduling Module, please contact **more.info@collectionhq.com**.

Director Spotlight

Michelle Brennand

City of Wanneroo, Australia

When did you first decide that you wanted to work in public libraries?

Straight after I finished my Bachelor of Arts. The Arts degree in itself was wonderful and taught me how to think in new ways, but it wasn't a specific qualification. I saw Librarianship being a logical next step for me.

What do you enjoy most about your role as Manager Community Capacity Building at The City of Wanneroo?

I work in an outer metropolitan council that is one of the fastest growing local government areas in Australia. We have a population of 189,000 and by 2036 it will be 354,000, a growth of 89%. This rather staggering statistic means that my job is fast, challenging, hugely diverse and very rewarding.

I work with a team of 122 staff to delivery services and programs that make our community stronger and more capable. I look after libraries, museums, arts, heritage, ATSI and multicultural services, disability access and inclusion, community funding and early childhood. As a package it is all about working with the community to make their lives better.

This may mean I am writing a community gardens policy in the morning, assessing public art submissions before lunch, watching a new learning and play program for young children in one of the libraries in the afternoon and launching a major exhibition in the evening. It's a busy role that works closely with the community. All of this work complements each other and all of it is about offering learning experiences to the people living in Wanneroo.

I love it all, but libraries remain my heartland.

Who is the most popular author at your library at the moment?

Lee Child

What do you consider to be the 3 main challenges facing senior management in public libraries today?
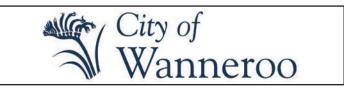
Managing the digital space (ebooks, copyright, digital licensing), explaining the relevance of libraries (any library) to decision makers and ensuring our staff have the right skills for the 21st century libraries which is so much more multifunctional that it was when I first starting working in this field.

How is your library using 'Big Data' to improve collection performance?

As with most libraries, we make a significant investment in our collections and it's important to us that we use an evidence based approach to getting the most from these, both physical and electronic. Using collectionHQ. we're doing this through designing metadata schemes to track the use of our collections so that we can move them to where it's best used and to grow the collection to meet the needs of our community.

What projects are you most excited about working on over the next 12 months?

Wanneroo is facing extraordinary population growth. I am really excited about this because to match the population growth and their needs, we have 4 new libraries planned for the next 10 years, with 2 in the concept planning phase this coming financial year. But our new community infrastructure won't be the same as what we have now. We are looking at new ways of doing things, new partners and alliances, new offers and in doing so, we are planning to work much more closely with the community than we ever have before. The community is going to be an integral part of what our new libraries – or hubs – will look like. We will be working 'inside out' and I suspect that will be challenging and frustrating, but also immensely rewarding, too.

I am also really excited about stepping down from my role as President Public Libraries WA. I have been President for 3 years and am not allowed to do any more! I have had a great time and have been really proud of what I have achieved in my term as I have worked hard on governance, relationships and vision and seen some very positive results. However, it's time for someone else to shape its direction and more importantly, it's time for me to have a rest! On average I would have been doing an extra 10 hours of PLWA work on top of my day job and I am really looking forward to having some extra space and time in my day!

THE POWER OF BENCHMARKING

WHAT IS BENCHMARKING?

Benchmarking by definition is:

> *"A measurement of the quality of an organization's policies, products, programs, strategies, etc., and their comparison with standard measurements, or similar measurements of its peers. "*

The practice can be used in all types of business, from major sports brands to utility companies, and is becoming increasingly popular in public libraries. Introducing benchmarking can greatly contribute to the success of your library by helping to see what is working well for peer libraries and identifying where your own strengths and weaknesses lie.

WHY BENCHMARK?

Fundamentally, Benchmarking can be used to set targets, refine processes and improve performance.

Setting targets

How does my library's circulation and turnover compare to others of a similar size and does that vary by geography? If you find yourself asking similar questions then using benchmarking to set targets for turnover and circulation can help.

Let's use turnover as an example. Setting targets can be twofold: an average target based on what your library should be achieving based on the turnover at libraries of a similar size serving a similar population, and a target that would set our library apart from the norm. Setting your "average" targets, if you are a 1 branch library system serving a small rural community, then you'll want to find out what turnover is like at other small libraries serving small rural communities. But what about a high performing, multi-branch inner city libraries? What's turnover like there and could we get to that relative to our library size?

Carefully selecting peer libraries on what you should be achieving and what would make your performance stand out will help you to define targets and ultimate goals. Turnover at these libraries as a benchmark can be used to identify any outlying trends – the areas where your library is behind and the areas in which it excels. It will also offer some valuable insight into which processes are working well at other libraries that could benefit your collection. And that's the beauty of benchmarking. Working with other libraries to learn new processes and share success stories encourages collaboration which makes setting future targets and benchmark projects even simpler.

This peer based approach to setting targets is also a great way to increase staff morale. There's nothing like a little competition to boost motivation and strengthen team bonds. Some may decide to encourage team managers to offer small incentives and in turn boost your staff productivity.

Strategy

Besides the regular use of benchmarking to assess performance and adjust actions accordingly, the practice is probably most commonly used as a strategic tool.

Prior to implementing targets and amending processes based on what you've learned from peers, use benchmarks to analyse your library's overall performance by drawing opportunities from what you identify as its strengths and weaknesses.

Consider using benchmarking to assess patron satisfaction. How does your library compare? If your library is achieving high scores then this is a great opportunity to find these happy patrons and encourage them to spread positive word of mouth. What are you doing so well that is making patrons happy? Is it that your collection is always up to date with the latest bestsellers? Or is it your unique displays? Whatever the reason, find ways to promote your successes via newsletters or social media.

If you find your turnover is below the average of your peers then turn this into an opportunity to investigate why. Is your staff using an evidence based tool like collectionHQ to ensure that shelves are filled with the right material in the right quantity to satisfy patron demand? Is your staff keeping on top of the removal

of overused items that have become worn and are unappealing to patrons? Benchmarking gives senior management the opportunity to improve the library as a service to patrons based on what you gather from benchmarking. Once you start analysing peer libraries to create benchmarks, you can find out what is making patrons tick and ensure that your library matches what they are looking for - before they have to ask for it!

HOW TO BENCHMARK?

While the theory of benchmarking makes sense, it is important to follow a methodical roll out of benchmarking and adopt a suitable methodology for improvements.

1. SELECT AREAS TO BENCHMARK

Successful benchmarking begins by first of all selecting what you want to assess the performance of.

Any quantifiable process or result can be selected to compare with results at other libraries for example: circulation, turnover, collection development, supply of popular authors, and much more.

At this stage, it is important to identify what performance indicators are most important to your library and create benchmarks based on those. You may already have an idea of where your library's

weaknesses lies, but don't limit benchmarking only to those areas. Benchmarking can expose strengths and room for improvement in the areas where you least expect. The process can also explain unusual trends.

collectionHQ's Performance tools provide the perfect basis for identifying the areas to benchmark by revealing trends of where your performance is improving and where your results are more stagnant. Any areas with notable trends are good contenders for benchmarking.

2. ACCESS TO PEER DATA & PROCESSES

Once you have defined what you want to benchmark, it is time for the information gathering part of the process. At this point you must identify how you will gain access to peer data and processes, this point usually determines the peer libraries you will choose from in terms of your contacts and access to information.

Once you have established your source of information and data has been gathered, you can use your findings to benchmark your library's performance against others and identify areas for improvement.

collectionHQ supports this process by offering access to peer data via its Discovery tool. Discovery provides the ability to benchmark your supply of popular items on a title, author, subject and genre level against hundreds of other libraries on a local, regional and national scale. And that's not all. Once you have recognized the high performing titles at peer libraries, you will then have the option to take direct action and purchase copies of those titles either to meet an unidentified demand at your library or to introduce your patrons to undiscovered hot titles.

Discovering processes that are working at other libraries to achieve desired results is again reliant on access to information. collectionHQ supports this sharing of information via its online Community and by hosting a series of free regional forums.
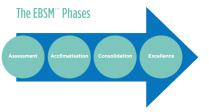
3. METHODOLGY TO IMPROVE

Introducing new processes to improve your library's performance in line with benchmarking requires careful roll out of a methodology.

evidence based stock management

Evidence Based Stock Management (EBSM) is a methodology which applies Big Data to help librarians make better and more efficient decisions. EBSM was first introduced to the UK over 25 years ago and is now used in more than 450 public libraries worldwide.

The 4 phases of EBSM can be applied to improve your collection in line with your benchmarks.

The EBSM™ Phases

Assessment
The assessment stage of EBSM involves gaining an understanding of the current performance of your library's collection. At this stage take stock of the information gathered throughout the first two stages of your benchmarking process and set targets and dates for improvement.

Acclimatisation
EBSM Methodology supports improvements by helping librarians to figure out what processes have worked well and not so well at your library based on evidence. Use this evidence to fine tune the processes you have picked up from other libraries until you get to a workflow that meets your library's needs.

Consolidation
The longest phase where the EBSM methodology is being used consistently to work towards the targets set out by benchmarking. At this stage you should begin to notice gradual signs of improvement.

Excellence
Once you have reached the targets achieved by peer libraries, you will begin to recognize improvements as a continuous cycle which will bring your collection closer towards the excellence phase of EBSM. Use evidence of what worked well in the initial EBSM stages to make continued improvements.

4. IMPLEMENT BENCHMARKING SOFTWARE

collectionHQ's toolset was founded on the EBSM Methodology to support improvements in public libraries while helping them to be more efficient. With masses of performance data from a variety of sources, the latest collectionHQ tool in development will support the 3 stages of benchmarking from identifying what to benchmark, to comparing with peers, and finally to rolling out a methodical process of improvement.

What to benchmark?

So now that you understand the benefits and how to roll out benchmarking, what will you benchmark first?

Share your benchmarking experiences and plans by contacting our team at more.info@collectionhq.com and we'll share these in our next issue.

COLLECTIONHQ HELPS SAVE MONEY AT SAN DIEGO COUNTY LIBRARY

collectionHQ facilitates San Diego County Library to save staff time and evolve with customer needs. Library Journal's 'Library of the Year 2012', San Diego County Library serves a wide variety of customer , in rural and urban settings in areas as diverse as the mountains, desert and coast. To keep pace with their customers' different needs, the library system in 2010 became among the first in the United States to start using collectionHQ, the software tool that applies the principles of Evidence Based Stock Management (EBSM) to library collections.

THE CHALLENGE

With 33 branches, two bookmobiles and a collection of 1.5 million items, San Diego County Library has a lot of titles to keep up with. Because its collection is fully floating, the library was looking for a way to anticipate the needs of its diverse customer base and utilized its collection in the best way possible. The library moved to a centralized selection system two years ago after years of a more decentralized system.

In addition, the library was seeking a tool that would help it analyze its annual budget by pairing the money it was spending with circulation trends, to make sure that it was allocating money efficiently. It was a painstaking task that had been done manually.

When collectionHQ was first introduced into the U.S. market in 2010, San Diego's library director heard about it and sought to determine if it was the right product for the system's needs. His staff examined collectionHQ's features, purchased it and quickly put it to use.

THE OUTCOME

TIME SAVINGS
As with most library systems, San Diego can't afford to have staff waste time on unproductive tasks. collectionHQ has made librarians in San Diego more efficient, because they now have data and information that was not previously available.

"collectionHQ has provided an opportunity for branch staff to look at data on how their customers are using the collection," says principal librarian Robin Isicson. "Before, a lot of staff felt like they didn't really know what was in their building. collectionHQ helped us put that information back in their hands."

Instead of spending valuable time trying to glean that information, branch staff now can instantly receive reports on circulation trends at their branches. With that information, they can develop programs such as book clubs, and they can design displays of top authors based on actual data from their branch.

FINANCIAL SAVINGS
collectionHQ has helped San Diego County Library ensure that its money is spent wisely. When the system was planning for the opening of two new buildings, the collections staff used collectionHQ to provide a detailed look at what kinds of books in the system circulated most. Traditional library buildings in San Diego allocated about 70 per cent of shelf space to non-fiction titles. But in looking at what titles were actually circulating, library staff members realized that fiction works should take the majority of space.

They worked with capital projects staff to ensure that shelving reflected customers' book preferences.

San Diego has found similar advantages in budgeting. When spending money, librarians tried to perform what they call a "bang for the buck" calculation allocating funding to collection areas based on circulation rates. It was hard and often imprecise work, Isicson says. "Before, with the bang-for-the-buck calculation we did by hand, we couldn't tell what types of fiction were most needed by customers – we only knew that we needed to allocate 35% of our budget to adult and children's fiction." But now, collectionHQ makes that calculation easy, and it provides far more detail than just fiction versus nonfiction: Librarians now know, for instance, what percentage of their fiction needs to be mysteries and thrillers.
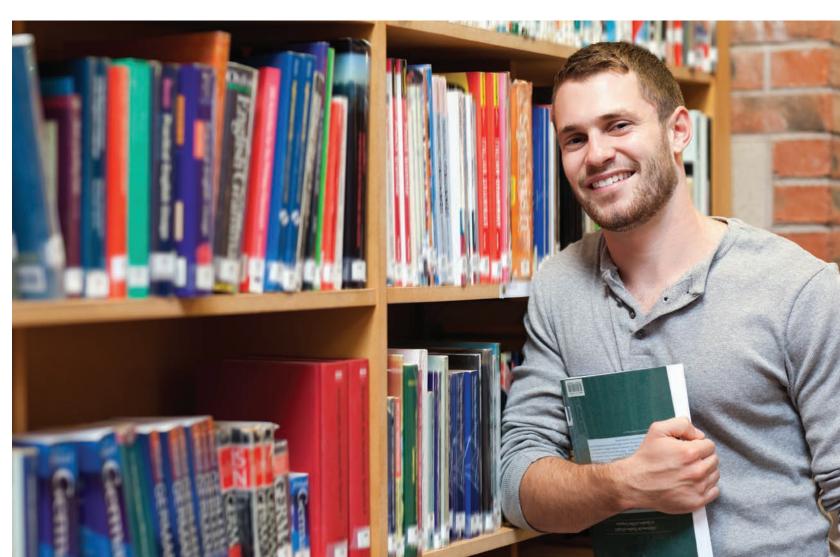
"We're not buying titles that are just going to sit there, or buying too few copies," says collection development manager Heather Pisani-Kristl. "We can't afford to make bad purchases. We can't afford to have something that might circulate only once or twice. We need every book to circulate multiple times."

Using an evidence-based approach has helped in working with stakeholders such as the county board of supervisors, because librarians are able to explain their budget decisions with data.

"When you have the statistics and the data, decisions are not coming from an emotional place," Isicson says.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENTS

One of the main advantages of using collectionHQ, Pisani-Kristl says, is that it has helped librarians develop a collection that is "dialed in closer to customer interests." The library system recently analyzed its purchases since acquiring collectionHQ and found that 95 per cent of items purchased had been subsequently requested by customers. "We're definitely keeping up with what people want to read," she says. She credits collectionHQ with helping keep the library's average item circulating well above its benchmark of six times per year.

The software has also helped alert librarians in San Diego to opportunities to increase circulation with their existing collection. Because the system's collection is fully floating, unread items can stay in one branch for a long time. With collectionHQ, librarians identified 3,817 nonfiction books that had not circulated in more than a year and moved them to other branches that might have interested customers. After being in a new branch location for 2-12 months, those previously non-circulating books circulated 6,885 times. Pisani-Kristl concludes: "We wanted to be able to manage where items go based on demonstrated circulation patterns, and now we can."

bibliotheca

SUPPORTING INNOVATION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Background

With over 20,000 unique pieces of equipment deployed across libraries in the UK alone, including self-service kiosks, Bibliotheca is helping more than 5,000 library sites across the globe to boost patron satisfaction by offering solutions which facilitate and enhance the patron experience.

More recently, they have also introduced opus™, a unique eBook solution allowing librarians to curate the most relevant content for the communities they serve.

Matching the Changing needs of Libraries

As library needs evolve, so do the range of Bibliotheca's services and solutions. Bibliotheca is committed to the principle that technology and innovation are key to future library services. Longer opening hours are enabled by open+™, the automated 'open library' concept that will greatly impact the way libraries move forward, allowing almost any library to open to its members seven days a week in a controlled and secure environment, without the need to increase staffing costs.

Over the past six years, open+™ has been implemented in 150 libraries throughout the Nordic region, the UK and Ireland.

Bibliotheca and collectionHQ

Like collectionHQ, Bibliotheca is committed to helping libraries become as efficient as possible by using technology to realise cost savings through streamlining processes, which also enables staff to utilise their time in the most productive way to benefit the patrons they serve.

Both teams will work together at the collectionHQ UK Forum Series starting in November 2015 where we look forward to engaging with customers to discuss the latest developments in public libraries and new ways of optimising efficiencies.

All Directors' Digest readers are welcome to attend the collectionHQ UK Forum Series where the Bibliotheca team will exhibit a range of products and services that will help increase the efficiency and relevancy of libraries. Find out more here http://www.collectionhq.com/ukforums/

MEET WITH US

We are back on the road to host a number of Forums worldwide and you are invited.

Each Forum is free of charge and will provide you with the opportunity to:

- Discuss the hot library topics with fellow library thought leaders

- Discover how other libraries are applying Big Data to improve the patron experience

- Share tips and tricks of getting the most from collectionHQ

- Find out upcoming collectionHQ enhancements

- Network over lunch

Find out more today by visiting www.collectionhq.com/chq_events