

COLLECTIONHQ HELPS STAFF AT GREAT RIVER REGIONAL LIBRARY CLEAN UP THEIR COLLECTION



Great River Regional Library (GRRL), Minnesota is a 32 branch library system serving a population of 451,125. GRRL has a pre-dominantly “floating” collection and freely shares materials as needed throughout the region. Selection is handled centrally, but each branch is using collectionHQ to manage the collection needs of that location by refreshing and removing materials based on collectionHQ reports. A schedule for the region has been created through 2013 so that all locations will cover the important collection areas.

THE CHALLENGE

Prior to the implementation of collectionHQ at Great River Regional Library, staff were faced with the challenge of maintaining a regular and effective weeding program with their current ILS system.

With a substantial proportion of smaller buildings, weeding has always been a priority at the library however with so many different staff from separate branches carrying out the task at different times, this was a very labor intensive process which was difficult to streamline.

Mic Golden, Collection Development Co-ordinator at the library, highlights “We had purpose built tools but that was bib record by bib record”. Despite having ILS system, Horizon in place, Golden continues “We could run item reports from Horizon but could only look at one library, not the collection as a whole.”

Another issue Golden uncovered due to the range of library sizes within the system was that, because the collection floated, it was easy for items to “puddle up” at busier locations.

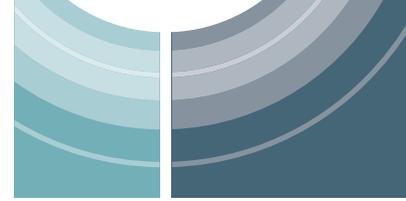
It was this desire for system wide reporting which could be collated in a fast and effective manner as well as efficient and regular refresh of the collection which encouraged Golden and team to take collectionHQ on board.

THE OUTCOME

BETTER WEEDING PROCESSES | Due to the challenges described, the first activity at Great River Regional Library where collectionHQ was to be utilized was in the weeding of grubby materials. Golden explains that before the implementation of collectionHQ, searching for grubby stock was “cumbersome”. However with the software staff are now “systematically removing that material with the most uses and because the collection floats, you don’t have to worry about moving too many on from one library.”

Golden explains that at first those grubby reports from collectionHQ caused concern simply due to the amount of items illustrated and a culture of wanting to hold onto books for as long as possible. Due to this apprehension, when collectionHQ grubby reports were first introduced at the system, those items on the list were subject to double checks sometimes by several staff members. Staff were pleasantly surprised however to discover that in fact 90% of those items on collectionHQ grubby lists were in such

COLLECTION PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT



KEY BENEFITS

The adoption of collectionHQ has enabled Great River Regional Library to:

- Introduce a regular, systematic weeding process.
- Better manage their floating collection.
- Identify popular titles within their collection that staff had not been aware of.
- Effectively manage shelf space according to popular titles.
- Make decisions on which items the library should invest in based on evidence.



a bad condition that they needed to be removed from the collection. This accuracy of collectionHQ reporting is therefore reducing more and more the amount of manual work at the library and has generated a much more streamlined weeding process.

Not only have the grubby reports proved a resounding success across the system but refresh reports have allowed staff to move items in and out of their collection regularly and avoid being over or understocked as a result of floating. Golden explains "refresh reports are functioning really well because we no longer push materials out randomly, but are able to have each library pull in those materials that best fit their needs." She continues that "Creating a new Collection Management process was part of the most recent GRRL Strategic Plan and the collectionHQ service fit into that plan."

IDENTIFICATION OF OVERLOOKED ITEMS | Once the clean-up schedule had been implemented and staff were satisfied that the grubby and refresh reports within collectionHQ were maintaining the collection at a high standard, Golden was keen to start using the 'selection' function of the software.

Using the selection tool, Golden reflects that she asked staff to run reports from collectionHQ of popular titles and authors. It was during this project that one branch came across a shocking revelation that, when running a report on a Dewey range within education, four titles that had been published in the 1980s and 1990s were grubby in every copy but were still checking out and still receiving requests! She describes that the system "had no idea that they were heavily used and popular so we bought replacement copies and have now started looking for more obscure titles that are heavily used by a small population to keep those copies refreshed."

Golden goes on to explain that they would never have come across such "odd and obscure" popular items had it not been for collectionHQ. Ordinary reporting had overlooked such items as "those obscure items don't reach that hold ratio threshold and so these books may not have more than one hold at a time but may always be checked out."

FOCUSED SPACE PLANNING | Such insights from collectionHQ's selection functionality have also helped manage how much budget and shelf space should be allocated to certain collections. Golden describes one example as "a real head change" where management had been regularly told by libraries that they had "too many picture books in the collection." Management's reluctance to act upon these claims was backed up when collectionHQ revealed that in fact libraries were understocked in picture books but overstocked in juvenile fiction. Golden explains "We are now telling people to expand picture book shelving and reduce juvenile fiction."

collectionHQ has therefore highlighted that shelf space parameters for each collection should not be set without hard evidence. Golden explains that regional supervisors are now following this example and when branches request more shelving they are looking at what they really need and whether they should be buying a display area for specific collections.

collectionHQ has also assisted heavily when choosing which donated books should be added and which materials are candidates for replacement. Golden explains that collectionHQ's 'Top Charts' function can be used to check which of those donated books are appearing in popular author and title charts and therefore which they should be spending collection dollars on or adding donated copies. The Selection Discover Module is being used to identify which popular authors, titles and subject areas have a high number of grubby items per title. Replacement purchases have already been made for some heavily used juvenile and adult authors. This process is giving staff the confidence they need to remove grubby but still heavily used materials since they now know that fresh copies will be available.

Golden believes that this element of using collectionHQ to decide where budget should be spent will be a huge influence in planning the library's 2013 budget and the library are excited to see the results.

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