

# Directors' Digest

SHARING INDUSTRY INSIGHT WITH LIBRARY DIRECTORS WORLDWIDE



## 3 Steps to Better Performance Measurement

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**ON THE WEB** | [www.collectionhq.com](http://www.collectionhq.com)

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# Welcome

## A MESSAGE FROM AMAN KOCHAR

Greetings,

I am delighted to introduce the latest edition of Directors' Digest from collectionHQ. As you know, evidence-based analytics and data are hot topics where books and content are concerned. For public libraries especially, driving that data to make best use of resources is crucial and that's why collectionHQ plays an integral part in the way hundreds of libraries worldwide manage and develop their collections. collectionHQ's parent company, Baker & Taylor which was acquired by Follett last year, recently announced a newly formed Digital and Software business unit which places cutting edge technology like collectionHQ firmly at the heart of our business. As Executive Vice President of this unit, I look forward to working with the collectionHQ team and customers to evolve and enhance our product. New services like Evidence-based Selection Planning and strategic partnerships are key to enabling continuous improvements in public libraries, and it is our mission to help you maintain engaging content and promote community literacy. Public libraries played an important role in my younger years and continue to inspire me today. I am therefore extremely proud to partner with these institutions as they continue to evolve in line with the ever changing needs of the communities they serve.

In this issue of Directors' Digest, we explore some of the key challenges facing public libraries today. Dead on Arrival or DOA is a term many of you will have heard applied to library collections recently. It refers to new library material that, since hitting the shelf, has never been checked out by a patron. We have carried out research into the challenge of DOA and how it fits in with the growing importance of performance monitoring in libraries which is addressed in the collectionHQ Investigates feature.

In this edition we also evaluate the pros and cons of Patron Driven Acquisitions; share a recent interview with Neil MacInnes from Manchester City Council in the United Kingdom; and feature a case study from Mid-Columbia Libraries, WA.

Don't forget to share your comments on any of our features by contacting us at [more.info@collectionhq.com](mailto:more.info@collectionhq.com).

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## 3 STEPS TO BETTER PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT



Providing a successful library service relies on the ability to provide an appealing and demand-driven collection. To achieve this, your collection management and collection development strategies must be evidence based and measurable to facilitate continuous improvements to the service you deliver. The process of collection performance measurement can be divided into 3 key steps: defining KPIs, introducing a performance monitoring tool, and taking appropriate action.

### **STEP 1: DEFINE KPIs**

Key Performance Indicators or KPIs are “quantifiable” attributes that can be used to monitor success. By choosing measurable KPIs, you can define clear and tangible objectives for your library to evaluate how it is performing as a service.

#### EBSM KPIs

The Evidence Based Stock Management (EBSM) methodology was first established more than 20 years ago by Scottish librarian, George Kerr. Faced with the challenge of making collection management more measurable, more performance driven and less wasteful, George devised a methodology that focused on a clear set of KPIs.

While other collection related metrics are important, their relative importance to a library can be very subjective. EBSM KPIs are not subjective – they universally describe what a patron expects from a high performing library when it comes to collection supply. They are also simple to understand; relatively straightforward to measure; and enable a methodology that is targeted, relevant and practical.

## EBSM KPI

## KPI RATIONAL

Grubby Items	Patrons should not be expected to borrow items which are physically unattractive. This is a major cause of patron dissatisfaction.
Dead Items	Patrons should not be expected to wade through hundreds of dormant items in the search for useful or desirable choices. This is a major cause of patron dissatisfaction.
Popular Author Provision	Users have an expectation of finding a good selection of items by preferred authors or on popular subjects on shelves at all times. Lack of such provision is a major cause of customer desertion.
Popular Subject Provision	A good range of material in the most popular subject areas at a branch is a key patron requirement.
Overstocked Subject Areas	Large quantities of unused and unwanted Non-Fiction items in any subject area, is counter-productive to patron satisfaction and convenience. It is also a sign of wasteful provision in the past, based on assumptions about demand rather than analytical evidence.
Understocked Subject Areas	Supply should always try to match demand in Non-Fiction subject provision. Failure to provide for this is a major cause of customer desertion.

### Dead on Arrival

In the last issue of Directors' Digest, we introduced a new metric aimed at supporting the evaluation of selection performance. 'Dead on Arrival' or DOA reports material added to your library collection over a 12 month period, which subsequently does not achieve more than one circulation.

In theory, all public libraries should aim for the percentage DOA of their collection to be 0%. This goal can take time depending on your current "score", but defining clear steps and objectives in your collection management strategy will help to reduce that number gradually. Lowering your DOA score is achieved by selecting items based on patron demand, buying the right quantity of items – not too many, and by distributing items proportionately to branch locations relative to local circulation evidence. Introducing a method to monitor DOA is pertinent to improving:

- Selection & distribution processes
- Weeding of dead items
- Movement of items to locations of higher demand
- Promotion of existing collection

Applying evidence based analytics with collectionHQ and the new ESP service helps to lower DOA and improve performance in line with the EBSM methodology.

## DOA Worldwide

USA	16.4%
Canada	17.5%
United Kingdom	16.4%
Australia	10.7%
New Zealand	12.2%

### Marketing

Experimenting with new collections can be enhanced if supported by a targeted marketing campaign. For example, based on demographics or patron requests, one of your branches may become a contender for more foreign language material. The best way to establish whether that demand exists and the collection adjustments required to meet that demand is to purchase small, promote heavily then measure the outcome. Measurement of experimental marketing campaigns will show one of three results: 1) there is a high demand for those items and you should invest more in that collection, 2) you are adequately stocked in that collection and don't need to purchase more items, 3) there is little or no demand for that collection in which case you should not invest in that collection and consider moving existing items to a new location.

As with all marketing activities, introducing KPIs based on past campaigns and steps to measure the impact of your efforts will help to ensure that they have achieved a suitable return on investment and to help with effective planning of future campaigns.

### **STEP 2: INTRODUCE METHOD TO MONITOR PERFORMANCE**

Once you have established a list of KPIs, it's time to introduce a method by which to monitor performance. Good performance monitoring requires the ability to view results both at a high and granular level using data that has been collated over time to reveal trends. collectionHQ provides a customizable Dashboard of charts and graphs that allows you to review:

- Collection Use
- Summaries of Dead and Grubby Items
- Circulation and Turnover
- DOA
- Scheduled Tasks
- Task performance by individual users

From the Dashboard, users can drill down into more detail by accessing a range of Performance reports then access Action Plans to take appropriate steps to improve results.

### **STEP 3: TAKE ACTION**

Once you have selected the KPIs you wish to measure and the right tool to monitor the performance, it's now time to take action. Sharing performance results regularly with multiple staff members supports the Action stage by offering a justification to the more mundane collection management tasks. Equally, distribution of collection statistics helps to create a shared goal among staff by dispelling myths and assumptions about your collection performance through hard statistics.

Measures can be taken to ensure that the Action stage becomes more efficient and less labor intensive over time.

- A. Schedule regular reminders to check performance and take appropriate action.
- B. Involve all staff in use of an evidence-based toolset to make continuous and performance based improvements.
- C. Share results with your team to encourage shared responsibility.

*collectionHQ offers a powerful toolset that supports libraries through each of the steps outlined in this feature. Contact your collectionHQ Account Manager to find out how you can improve performance monitoring at your library or, if you do not subscribe to collectionHQ, contact us to arrange a demo at [demo@collectionhq.com](mailto:demo@collectionhq.com).*



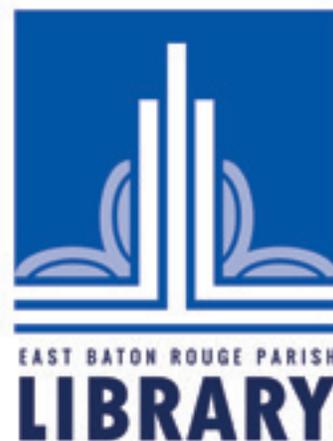
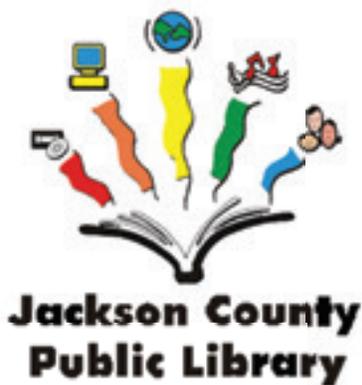
Congratulations to the winner



collectionHQ

collectionHQ's Biggest Improver Challenge celebrates libraries where considerable collection performance improvements have been achieved through smart, evidence based collection management.

Well done to this year's runners up:



#### Notable mentions:

Allen County Public Library, IN  
Carol Stream Public Library, IL  
Fountaindale Public Library District, IL  
Howell Carnegie District Library, MI  
Lubbock Public Library, TX  
Marion County Public Library, WV

Rodman Public Library, OH  
Stillwater Public Library, OK  
Twinsburg Public Library, OH  
Woodford County Library, KY  
Plainfield Public Library District, IL

For more information visit [collectionhq.com/bic2017](http://collectionhq.com/bic2017)



## NEIL MACINNES



### MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

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

Using the whole range of data intelligently to influence services is more crucial than ever, in order to meet customer demands within growing financial pressures. Using collectionHQ has enabled us to focus our spending on the types of material which are used by most customers, and crucially reduce spending significantly on areas of stock where there is little demand. The use of collectionHQ really has made our book fund go further.

#### What projects are you most excited about working on over the next year?

Manchester's Library 2020 strategy details our transformation plans over the next three years which will see significant investment in self-service technologies across the entire library estate, replacing existing RFID, People's Network PCs, introducing self-service and Wi-Fi printing, on-line payments and extending opening hours. We are also planning a refurbishment of one of our libraries in its 90th year and also a new build co-located library and leisure centre. We will continue to develop libraries as cultural hubs as well as continuing to grow our Central Library and Archives + programme of events and activities. The possibilities are endless!

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

I volunteered in my local library as a child and always knew that I wanted to work in public libraries. I joined Glasgow District Libraries working in lending libraries before transferring to reference services at The Mitchell Library working in various subject departments including local studies, science and technology and business information. After 20 years with Glasgow Libraries I moved to Manchester in 2005 and have been Head of Libraries since 2010.

#### What do you consider to be the 3 main challenges facing public library Directors today?

The three main challenges are pressures on local authorities spending, technological disruption and changes in people's lifestyles and competing cultural and leisure opportunities.

#### Nowadays, we have increased access to information and our expectations of local services are growing. What initiatives must public libraries adopt to keep up with these trends?

We need to make use of technology to push information out - making people aware of the library offer. We also need to make better use of the data we have to inform decision making and use of resources and to make better use of our people resources to engage with communities to ensure that our offer is relevant and meets their needs.





## PATRON VS EVIDENCE BASED ACQUISITIONS

Patron-driven acquisitions (PDAs) – sometimes referred to as “demand-driven” acquisitions – offer patrons access to the library’s catalog to request items they need that are not already available in the library’s collection. The practice is prevalent in Academic and Public libraries, and favours the purchasing of material “just in time” over “just in case”.<sup>1</sup>

### PDAs and Public Libraries

The theory behind PDA is clear: allowing patrons to select the material they want helps libraries to keep up with the superfast delivery services of retailers which consumers have become accustomed to. It also removes the guesswork from deciding what specific titles patrons want to read during the selection process, as well as increasing the diversity of the collection.

In 2013, Chicago Public Library in Illinois was one of the first public libraries to pilot PDA for 2 years to maintain collections at their 80 branches, limiting the model to specific collections initially. As a result, items were introduced to the collection which might not have otherwise been selected<sup>2</sup> and the library could respond immediately to the needs of patrons.

Many librarians, however, have expressed hesitation to follow a similar model: items selected through PDA are guaranteed to circulate once, but what happens next? A book selected to accommodate an immediate need from one patron does not necessarily translate into demand from another and so the impact of PDAs on future circulation and overall collection performance is unclear. However, for supporters of PDAs, proving its success through circulation rates is not the be all and end all; offering choice and responsiveness to patron requests is deemed a better indicator of success, but is this model really a sustainable one?

<b>PROS</b>	<b>CONS</b>
Gives control to patrons	Difficult to measure
Increases diversity of collection	Not representative of overall demand
Frees up selection staff time	Doesn't support a balanced collection
Responsive to immediate needs of patrons	Cost effectiveness is not proven

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/keeping\\_up\\_with/pda](http://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/keeping_up_with/pda)

<sup>2</sup><https://www.mhpbooks.com/chicago-library-patrons-influence-book-purchases-with-new-pilot-program/>

## PDA vs Evidence Based Selection

Applying an evidence-based selection model allows you to apply the same basic principles as PDAs while offering a solution that may prove to be more cost effective and less wasteful over time.

- **Breadth of collection** Relying on patrons to select the right titles for your library may introduce other users to new items. Applying evidence of demand to selection broadens this choice by offering selection staff the option to explore reading trends on a local, regional and national scale. Therefore it could be argued that using evidence with a tool like collectionHQ actually helps to develop a more diverse collection than is possible with PDAs.
- **Patron focus** Material selected through PDAs reflects the demand of that user only. An evidence based approach looks at the bigger picture, examining the reading trends of all users to help selectors develop collections that are reflective of their communities. Relying on PDAs might exclude those patrons who are time poor or who do not frequent the library often, therefore are less likely to make selection choices. With evidence based selection, all patrons are represented, regardless of how actively involved they are with their local library.
- **Freeing up time for selection staff** Instead of handing selection over completely to patrons, evidence based selection maintains collection development staff involvement while making the selection process more seamless by providing them with the tools required to make more informed decisions about which titles to buy in which quantity.
- **Breaking the Cycle** Without evidence of circulation or the ability to apply predictive analytics to support selection of future titles, public libraries face the challenge of knowing exactly which titles to buy, how many copies, and where to distribute. Add to this the handing of selection responsibility over to patrons, and the risk of an increased percentage of dead material is heightened. As a result, many libraries can become caught in a cycle of buying to weed. This cycle can be broken by applying evidence of local demand, national trends and holds analysis to selection, therefore reducing wasteful purchases and creating a collection that is more balanced and representative of demand on a larger scale. Applying evidence of demand to inform selection offers a more measurable, performance driven and cost effective method of collection development.

## Summary

*There are clear arguments in favour of PDAs and there is no denying that this method is extremely relevant today in keeping up with consumer expectations. However, the proof remains to be seen as to how cost effective, measurable and representative this method actually is. Adopting a proven, evidence-based approach with tools like collectionHQ and ESP can alleviate many of the concerns raised around PDAs and selection in general.*





## MID-COLUMBIA LIBRARIES, WA

*Mid-Columbia Libraries, WA is a 12 branch library system serving a population of 196,000.*

### GOALS

Mid-Columbia Libraries' mission statement is to:

*"Enhance quality of life by providing excellence in books and services for our residents and communities."*

Prior to implementing collectionHQ, the team at Mid-Columbia Libraries introduced some key goals in line with their mission statement to maintain high standards and to improve performance.

1. *Courtesy & Expertise*
  - Meet demands and needs of individual communities.
2. *Appearance*
  - Establish standards across all libraries.
  - Reduction and elimination of unwanted and unused materials.
3. *Efficiency*
  - Eliminate waste, better use current materials and collection budget.

While the goals were agreed across the staff, an evidence based solution was required to achieve them and so collectionHQ was introduced to the library in 2010.

Michael Huff, Collections & Services Director explained: "We chose collectionHQ to automate what we were doing by hand and to share responsibility among the branches. Although we had adopted centralized selection, collectionHQ gave us an opportunity to get the branches more engaged."

### MEETING THE GOALS

On adopting collectionHQ, Michael and the team were able to pinpoint the parts of the tool that could be used to achieve the library goals.

#### 1. COURTESY & EXPERTISE

collectionHQ's Transfer tool was introduced to help to: "Meet demands and needs of individual communities". Michael explained: "Transfers allow you to submit data to accumulate information on what is going on so you can understand the difference between branches and identify where there is demand."

Michael commented on how the Transfer tool has helped with Fiction and Non-Fiction: "With Fiction we got enough copies to meet demand for holds but with collectionHQ, we were able to see top authors at individual branches. Things might sit at one branch with no action, but transferring and setting targets in collectionHQ allowed us to get additional circulations out of those items. Non-Fiction (tools) allowed us to highlight finer detail on what each community is reading and to see with floating where items get stuck and where they need to go."

#### 2. APPEARANCE

At Mid-Columbia Libraries, weeding tools have been used in conjunction with Transfers to maintain a suitable appearance and to establish standards across all libraries. Michael said: "We see shelf space as prime real estate so we want to make sure that those books on our shelf are pulling their weight."

collectionHQ's Grubby Item Removal and Dead Item Removal tools for Fiction and Non-Fiction books are scheduled to be used in January, May and September. Refresh tools for Grubby and Dead Items are applied in April, August and December. Between those times, the team regularly applies Collection Check and Long Overdue Check,



and will apply Dead Item Removal/Refresh for Non-Book items once a year. Regular use of the Removal and Refresh tools have helped to maintain appearance of the collection by reducing and eliminating unwanted and unused materials. Michael shared: “Dead and Grubby Definitions have changed drastically over the year, getting more refined than since we implemented.”

In addition to applying collectionHQ weeding and Transfer tools, Michael also uses Conditional Weeding and Polaris Shelf Space Capacities to maintain appearance.

### 3. EFFICIENCY

The third goal laid out by Michael and the team at Mid-Columbia Libraries was to create efficiencies with collectionHQ so that they could:

- A. Increase circulation with fewer items**
- B. Allocate more funds to high demand items and make more informed purchasing decisions.**

Michael shared: “We schedule lots of collectionHQ tasks and this has paid off in the time and money we have saved, allowing us to purchase new collections for new branches and to expand our digital collection.” Efficiencies gained by scheduling regular tasks in collectionHQ have been demonstrated by the ability to complete goals with a smaller staff.

So, did collectionHQ help to achieve the goals laid out through increased efficiencies?

#### **A. Increase Circulation with Fewer Items**

As a result of careful roll out of the EBSM methodology and working consistently with collectionHQ, Mid-Columbia Libraries have achieved phenomenal results.

Fiction:

- Transferred 16,044 items over 2 years
- The average title was Dead for 7 months before transfer
- This has generated 79,773 additional circulations from Dead Items
- That’s turned \$160,440 worth of Dead Stock into Active Stock (based on \$10/item)

While the results are impressive, Michael and the team really wanted to know the impact of setting out these clear goals on patron satisfaction. To find out, the library coordinates feedback surveys regularly which have revealed that over 90% of customers feel their life is enhanced by library and that the material they want is there.

#### **B. Allocate More Funds to High Demand Items and Make More Informed Purchasing Decisions**

collectionHQ’s Popular Author and Popular Subject Summary tools have helped to make sure that the library is suitably stocked in high demand items to meet patron expectations. In addition, Michael explained: “We also run reports to show where any additional portions of funds would best be spent, to see how our standing orders are working out, as well as what collections need more funds and which need less.” To support the spending of extra funds, the team uses the Select tools including Selection Specification – System Wide, Popular Author Standing Order, Spending Plans, and one of Michael’s favourites, the Understocked and High Use Subject Detail.”

### STAFF FEEDBACK

Gaining staff buy in to collectionHQ is one of the keys to getting the most from the tool. At Mid-Columbia Libraries, training and sharing of positive results has encouraged branch staff to see the value in the tool so that they use it regularly. Michael continues: “Each branch has someone dedicated to collectionHQ which gives control back to the branches to see what’s important and to pull things in based on transfer number.”





## James Bennett

YOUR SOLUTIONS PARTNER

### BACKGROUND

From humble origins in Collaroy over 50 years ago, James Bennett has grown in size and stature, to become an integral part of the library and information industry in Australia and New Zealand. The company

employs over 150 staff in Sydney with a national sales team distributed throughout other major Australian cities. Its blend of creative bold ideas, market-leading efficiencies and expertise makes James Bennett the number one choice for a library to partner with.

### PRODUCTS & SERVICES

James Bennett offers a range of products and services covering printed Material, digital Collections, Audio Visual Materials, Shelf Ready, and End Processing Services and associated Support Services such as Opening Day Collections. If a library needs to get more out of its budget, or enhance services, James Bennett is the perfect partner to deliver. The quality of its people and work, and the customisation of solutions are unparalleled. The team provides market-leading efficiencies and expertise needed to meet – and exceed – the expectations of patrons.

### SUPPORTING COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

James Bennett is known for providing sophisticated print and digital content services. Through order management system, JBO, it helps libraries provide the most sought-after titles to patrons, faster, while offering combined print and digital workflows, making the acquisitions process easier than ever. The focus at James Bennett has always been on the library community and on long-standing relationships with local and international publishers and distributors. Through innovation in delivery, together with unmatched global resources, James Bennett can be counted on to provide an unmatched service to our library customers.

### JAMES BENNETT & collectionHQ

Together, collectionHQ and James Bennett aim to introduce a new and improved selection model for public libraries in Australia and New Zealand. The combined expertise of both companies will add to the selection process a level of measurability and accountability; the skilled James Bennett profiling team will have the ability to apply annual data to set agreed KPI's for service improvement and hone profiles to match patron demand using circulation statistics, Dead on Arrival (DOA) data and transfer patterns.

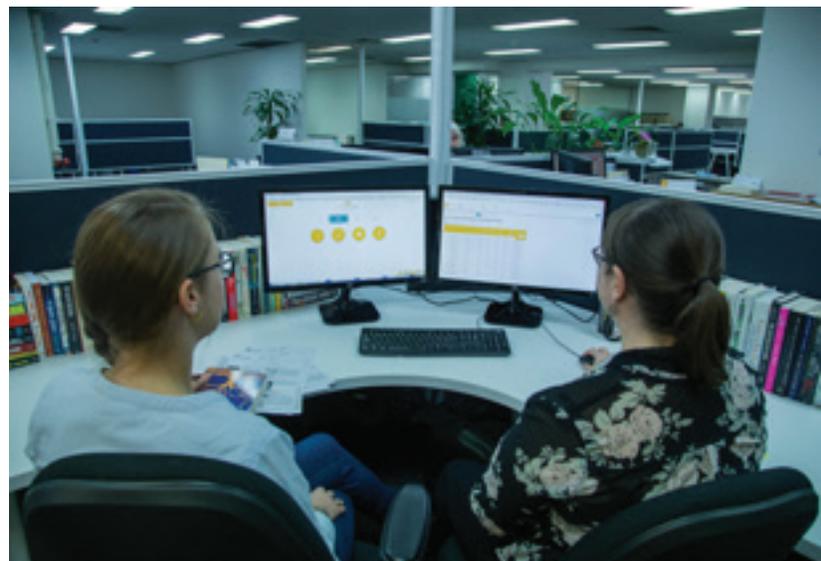
Key Benefits:

- greater selection accuracy
- creation of more accurate spending plans
- cost cutting
- greater efficiencies in workflows
- improved circulation statistics
- improved customer satisfaction
- quicker reaction to performance patterns
- 'dynamic' not 'static' standing orders

### THE FUTURE

As the largest library supplier based in NSW, James Bennett is exceptionally well positioned to provide libraries with a complete solution for the selection, supply and shelf ready processing of library material. James Bennett offers the most comprehensive library supply service in the market delivering better outcomes for current and future communities.

The teams knows that the business is far more than just selling books or content. It is about transforming and adjusting workflows, applying new and diverse technologies to make the process simple and cost efficient. The goal is to be the supplier of choice, exceeding customer expectations and achieving distinction in an ever changing and challenging knowledge services environment.



# BREAK THE CYCLE

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Do you ever feel like you are stuck in a cycle of buying to weed? Break the cycle and select the titles your patrons will love with collectionHQ and ESP. Our unique solution removes the guesswork from collection development by applying a proven evidence-based methodology, pre-publication reviews and other metadata to support selection and distribution of current and forthcoming titles.

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collectionHQ +  
*data. insight. solutions.*

esp  
*evidence-based selection planning  
by Baker & Taylor*

[www.collectionhq.com](http://www.collectionhq.com)