

# FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA IMPLEMENTS STRATEGIC ROLL- OUT OF COLLECTIONHQ

The Free Library of Philadelphia is made up of 54 branches serving a population of over 1,500,000. Managing the collection across such a large system requires making more cost effective choices. Staff required a system that would make more efficient use of collection dollars as well as streamline daily tasks. Following a structured roll-out of collectionHQ the Library observed positive results.



## THE CHALLENGE

Prior to implementing collectionHQ at the Free Library of Philadelphia, staff were faced with two challenges - developing their collection with a shrinking budget and maintaining regular weeding processes with current resources.

Lynn Williamson, a Materials Manager at the library explains that they "used to have a regular weeding routine across 54 branches but over time that had disintegrated and wasn't being done on a consistent basis." She continues that one of the factors contributing to this shift was that reports from ILS system, SirsiDynix, were not accessible for all and so weeding lists were put together by the IT department. Since these reports from IT were difficult to pull on a regular basis, when they were distributed "branches received one huge list and were often overwhelmed with what they had to do."

Williamson highlights that her colleague, Anne Silvers Lee, Head of Materials Management decided to take on collectionHQ to make tasks more accessible at a branch level and to have the ability to "stretch dollars further by implementing transfers."

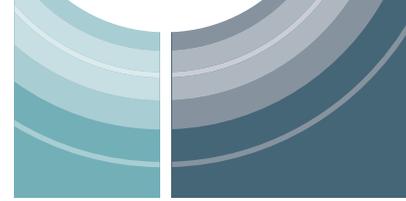
## THE OUTCOME

**MEASURED ROLL-OUT** | When taking on collectionHQ, management wanted to truly incorporate the software into daily workflow in order to improve collection performance at each individual branch. Being such a large system, they introduced a roll-out plan consisting of a pilot group and 3 waves. The pilot group kicked the process off using collectionHQ to carry out the task of 'collection checks'. Once complete, this group then moved onto using the software's 'transfer tools' while the first wave started on collection checks, and so on.

### Collection Checks

Due to the difficulty of weeding regularly at the Free Library of Philadelphia before collectionHQ, it was important for staff to regain control of the collection and ensure it was in a suitable condition before launching transfers.

Williamson explains that collectionHQ's 'collection checks' highlight "items which haven't circulated in four years so staff pull out items from shelves and weed them." She highlights that it is "up to their (the staff's) discretion to pass each item on case by case. They are then checked to the



## KEY BENEFITS

The adoption of collectionHQ has enabled Free Library of Philadelphia to:

- Carry out collection checks to identify items which have not circulated in a long period of time.
- Implement regular weeding.
- Increase circulation.
- Make informed purchasing decisions.

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discard cart then purged from system.” The Library does not hold any of these items for possible transfer since these items have not checked out in so long.

Williamson explains that the pilot group consisting of 9 branches was established to “figure out how to set up internal policies and to identify any technical issues which could then be avoided for the first wave.”

#### Transfers

After completing the ‘collection check’ each group then moves onto using collectionHQ’s ‘transfer tools’. Williamson explains that popular author and popular subject functionalities are being used to highlight which high circulating items are lacking at which branches. Carrying this phase out after the collection check ensures that the collection at each branch is accurate when defining who is under stocked and who is overstocked in popular items.

She comments that this process received “lots of positive feedback from those early adopters” in the Pilot Group and that this group is now moving onto the next stage of ‘grubby refresh’, to replace those popular items which are in a ‘grubby’ condition. Wave 1 at the library is now at the transfer stage.

Overall, rolling out collectionHQ in this controlled manner yielded positive results. For example, in terms of ‘collection checks’, the proportion of dead items across the system has fallen 40%. With transfers, since one of the roll out groups moved 95 items, these have since received 49 more circulations.

**THE FUTURE** | As the rest of the waves move their way through the implementation process, Williamson looks forward to utilizing collectionHQ tools for more tasks. One of these tools is the budgeting functionality which she hopes to use in preparation for the next fiscal year. Williamson explains how they have already been able to make informed purchasing decisions thanks to collectionHQ reports, “We realized based on collectionHQ tools that we are dramatically overspending in children’s audio books and children’s music CDs.” Despite not having yet finished collection checks at this point she continues that “we used that evidence to draw back on amount spent on those specific material types because such a clear decision could be made.”

Williamson is also keen to make a start on using collectionHQ marketing tools to better merchandize their collection. “We have been discussing the need for better displays in our popular fiction collection. I have not explored the ‘experimental placement’ tool yet but I like that it makes suggestions for displays.”

And so, strategic implementation of collectionHQ has been key for the Free Library of Philadelphia, a large library system which intends to get the most out of this intelligent platform!



saveTIME



saveMONEY



improve  
PERFORMANCE

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