



CASE STUDY

A SINGLE PLATFORM SOLUTION
TO MANAGE MATERIALS AND
GAUGE USAGE AT MARIN COUNTY
FREE LIBRARY



save**TIME**



save**MONEY**



improve**PERFORMANCE**



Marin County Free Library (MCFL), California, is a medium sized library system. It has ten branches with four large, regional libraries, six smaller libraries, and a bookmobile serving the county's rural communities. Marin County serves a population of 148,000 where the majority is Caucasian, but the Latin American community makes up 15% and is growing. The library's collection delivers diverse language materials including collections for Latin American and Asian communities.

THE CHALLENGE

Marin County Free Library has a floating collection, however staff reported “pooling” or a surplus of material building up at certain branches. Part of this imbalance was due to infrequent weeding and little space for new items.

Additionally, the library's administration wanted to improve the representation of diverse communities in the collection. Clara McFadden explained, “We have a mandate to buy more diverse books, but we had no way of tracking them other than our own spreadsheets.”

“Real estate in this area is so expensive that our branches are small, and we don't have a giant warehouse where we can store everything.”

CLARA MCFADDEN
Collection Development Librarian

THE SOLUTION

The library sought a solution that would help to introduce a systematic way to manage materials and gauge usage all from one platform.

collectionHQ was identified as a decision-support platform that would enable the efficient development of a diverse collection that meets the reading trends of the library's community.



“We needed a tool to help us discover what is circulating well so that we can align our selection accordingly.”

KATRINA SADLER
Collection Development Librarian

ROLLING OUT COLLECTIONHQ

The first task from the collectionHQ toolset to be rolled out was Collection Check, which helps to identify missing items and cleanse the library catalog.

To introduce this task to the ten library locations, Katrina contacted each branch manager providing clear instructions on what steps to carry out, to make it as easy as possible for staff. Katrina, along with Clara and Mildred Arencibia, Collection Development Librarian, also held virtual “drop in” sessions for branch staff to ask questions.

To achieve buy in from staff at each branch, Katrina communicated the end benefits of doing this work which would include a more appealing collection and a more accurate catalog to lay the foundations for making further improvements with collectionHQ.

Throughout the collection check, Katrina used collectionHQ to monitor progress at each of the library locations and checked in with branch managers regularly to offer help where required.

MOTIVATED BRANCH STAFF

As a result of this methodical roll out, MCFL have made significant improvements to the catalog with Collection Check and staff are enthused about continuing to work with collectionHQ.

The teams are now moving on to Long Overdue Check with collectionHQ to identify items that might be missing or are due to be returned in order to improve catalog accuracy further.



“Everyone is doing a great job and they are really enthusiastic about it. Staff ask questions and challenge things which helps me to learn more too!”

KATRINA SADLER
Collection Development Librarian

BETTER COLLECTION INSIGHT

While collectionHQ delivers action plans to guide staff on making improvements, it also offers powerful analysis with the Dashboard and Performance tools.

Katrina pays close attention to circulation and turnover charts in the Dashboard to understand what collections are the most popular within the library’s community. She explains that seeing both metrics together is extremely helpful in assisting where to allocate spending - while it may appear that one collection is outperforming another in terms of circulations, this can simply be due to that collection having a higher number of items.

The team can also evaluate the representation of diverse populations with collectionHQ’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Analysis tool. Clara explains, “Every time we show DEI Analysis to branches, they are very impressed. It is really easy to use, and you can break down the charts by individual branches and by individual DEI topic. Before collectionHQ, we had no way to quantify how we were doing, but we’re pleased to see that we are above the national average.”

WHAT’S NEXT

Having completed Collection Check, Katrina looks forward to rolling out more regular collectionHQ tasks such as weeding overused “grubby” material and items that are poorly circulating or “dead”. Using collectionHQ’s Core Item functionality, will enhance these processes by enabling Katrina to tag items that should not be weeded, such as story time titles.

Katrina describes, “When you have multiple locations and multiple copies, it’s not necessarily that the title didn’t do well, it’s just that a copy of that title didn’t do well. I can see that with collectionHQ’s Dead on Arrival metric.” Therefore, using collectionHQ to identify poorly performing items and moving to another branch can give them another chance and avoid waste.

KEY BENEFITS

***Improve circulation
and reduce waste***

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***Representation
through DEI Analysis***

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***Increase efficiency of
library staff***

