



CASE STUDY

CURATING AN INCLUSIVE COLLECTION AT OAK PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY



save**TIME**



save**MONEY**



improve**PERFORMANCE**



Oak Park Public Library, Illinois, is a three-branch library system serving a population of more than 50,000. The library implemented collectionHQ to gain better insight into the collection and to support regular improvements.

THE CHALLENGE

Providing an inclusive collection that is accessible for all has always been a priority for the staff at Oak Park Public Library.

In 2018, the library implemented a process to audit the inclusivity of small parts of the collection. Later, in 2020, the staff started to highlight diverse content by applying a “tag” to newly selected material where the author, character, or subject identified as belonging to a diverse community.

While this process offered a way to recognize the diversity of new material, it did not support backlist titles or offer a holistic view of the collection.

THE SOLUTION

The introduction of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Analysis from collectionHQ in 2021, offered a revolutionary new toolset for the team at Oak Park. Now, collection management staff can evaluate the collection against twelve industry-respected DEI topics to enhance the representation of diverse content in both print and digital collections.

THE RESULTS

IMPROVED REPRESENTATION OF DIVERSE CONTENT

DEI Analysis has helped the team to improve the representation of diverse communities in the collection by highlighting areas that are understocked.

Dontaná McPherson-Joseph, Collection Management Librarian, shared that, “(historically), there has been a shortage of disabilities and neurodiversity content published. Now we’re starting to see more of this subject and have been able to address that gap in our collection which I can see clearly in the information provided by DEI analysis.”

To further address these gaps, the team uses the tool’s flexible dashboard filters to view the analysis in different ways.

Jenna Friebe, Collection Management Librarian, explained, “I really like that I can view the breakdown of DEI content by title or number of copies. When we do have certain subjects where there is just not much published, one way that we can compensate is by adding more copies of the few titles that are.”

DEI Analysis also enables staff to see inclusive content in collectionHQ’s weeding action plans.

Jenna commented, “I use it when I run my collection removal report in collectionHQ. It’s nice to be able to see if any of the items in that report are tagged as DEI so I can give it a second consideration and perhaps give it an extra push before removing it from the collection!”

EASIER TO MONITOR PERFORMANCE AND SHARE WITH STAKEHOLDERS

DEI Analysis shares information about the representation of diverse content in a visual dashboard which is easy to understand. The dashboard also provides the option to drill down to more detail about specific parts of the collection. This flexibility and ease of use greatly help both library management and the staff to better understand their collection.

Barbara Fitzgerald, Manager of Collections and Bibliographic Services, shared, “From a manager’s perspective, I can share the snapshot directly with my leadership and I don’t have to change anything. The DEI module is the best tool for visualizing outward and upward, and it’s very self-explanatory, so it helps us tell our story better than anything I could do myself.”



“We have intention, strategic objectives, and desire, but the only way to track it is to use collectionHQ.”

BARBARA FITZGERALD

*Manager of Collections and
Bibliographic Services*

Collection Management Librarian, Kathy Sexton, added, “One of my favorite things is that we can look at the branches specifically or at a system-wide level and it shows that we’re moving in the right direction.”

INCREASED SATISFACTION AMONG THE COMMUNITY

One important goal for the Oak Park Public Library is to deliver a collection that resonates with readers and serves all members of the community equitably.

The hard work of the team combined with the ability to measure and enhance these efforts with collectionHQ has resulted in positive responses from the community.

Barbara shared, “We recently received an award from Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association+ (OPALGA+). Part of it was due to our collection and one of the tools we use to ensure we’re keeping up with that is collectionHQ. It was nice to be awarded by the community by the people you are trying to support.”

Kathy added, “Our circulation is fantastic!” A fact that correlates with the fantastic feedback from members of the community, including:

“Happy that we’re able to utilize all books from all types of backgrounds of people no matter their race, gender or creed.”

“I can get almost any book I want to read from the library.”

“Tons of new books - lots of copies - great service.”

“OPPL offers something for everyone!”



These positive comments and the library’s high performing collection help to highlight the results that can be achieved with determination and a methodical, data-driven collection management workflow supported by collectionHQ.



KEY BENEFITS

*Improve
inclusivity of
collection.*

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*Measure
collection
performance.*

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*Enhance
the patron
experience.*

