Circulation Analysis Two Ways: In-house & OCLC Collection Evaluation

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About UAS Egan Library

Egan Library is the main library serving University of Alaska Southeast, the smallest of the three public universities in Alaska. We serve 3,000 students in programs ranging from occupational endorsements to master’s degrees. We have a staff of 13, including 4 librarians and a library director. Our ILS is part of a consortium with the University of Alaska Anchorage, the Juneau and Anchorage Public Libraries, and other libraries in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska.

Library Circulation Data

Egan Library uses Sirsi/Dynix Symphony 3.5. Our records for total item circulation counts have been migrated into several successive ILS systems since the 1990s. Five years ago, we initiated circulation analysis using a snapshot report of items checked out on a single busy day each semester. We now get data for the entire semester using an API report generated by our systems administration staff.

For OCLC Collection Evaluation, we generated a list of items that had circulated during the past five years – 22,194 items. Unfortunately, only 62% of these items had OCLC numbers associated with them in our ILS, although our holdings were set to the appropriate record in OCLC. Therefore, our circulation data loaded into Collection Evaluation was incomplete. However, it can still be used to look at the popularity of any one subject area relative to another.

In-house reports

The library uses reports from the ILS to analyze circulation each semester. We employ Excel and Wordle to generate lists such as:

- broad collection areas ranked by circulation
- top 50 call numbers of circulated items each semester
- word clouds of top circulating call numbers and subjects

OCLC Collection Evaluation reports

For our library, and any library with an ILS other than Worldshare Management System, circulation data must be exported from the ILS, formatted to OCLC specifications, and uploaded into Collection Evaluation. Once uploaded, the following limiters are available in certain Collection Evaluation reports:

- circulated # times in lifetime
- latest circulation date

These limiters can be used in any My Library reports (which list items in your library) and in My Comparisons Unique/Shared Titles reports (which list unique and overlapping titles with peer libraries or authoritative lists).

For example, we applied the latest circulation date limiter to our comparison with University of Alaska Anchorage and University of Alaska Fairbanks.

We also used circulation data in Collection Evaluation to compare the subject strengths of our collection with the subjects most circulated. The resulting chart (see below) shows that circulation in Biology, History, and Language is disproportionately high relative to the size of our holdings in these areas. Although we already knew from our own in-house analysis that these areas were popular (and more specifically what subsections get used the most), this provided additional data to support increasing acquisitions in these areas.

Conclusions

Looking at circulation patterns is an important part of collection development. With in-house analysis, we know the most used sections of our library and can prioritize our purchases. Our in-house methods have focused on identifying high circulating areas. Collection Evaluation can easily identify the most and least used areas.

Collection Evaluation has many capabilities that do not rely on circulation data and is a valuable tool even without such data. We have been able to produce many useful reports about the age and uniqueness of our collections. For a self-study, we used Collection Evaluation to produce a chart showing how weeding in certain subjects positively affected average publication dates, and which subjects still had too much outdated material. The ability to cross-check our collection against Choice Outstanding Academic Titles also assists with smart de-selection.

Because circulation data and call numbers are only complete in our ILS, when we want to create actual pull-lists for weeding, in-house reports are the best option for our library.

### Pros and Cons

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**With either method...**

you will want to use other tools to create graphic representations of your data...such as Excel, word cloud generators, or Piktochart.

**Wordle representation of top circulating broad subjects, Spring 2015**

**Example of a chart created within the Collection Evaluation interface, My Comparisons menu**