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People Profile: Alice Sneary

Editor

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Moving Towards Data-Driven
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uous user survey. "Being able to compare our collection with peer libraries is amazing. I have only begun to imagine the possible uses for the information."

The WorldCat in WorldCat Collection Analysis

When a library uses the service, it puts the library's materials within the larger context of the 71 million items (records) in WorldCat. New holdings pour in every day, as the database continues to expand beyond the current 1.3 billion mark. In fact, an OCLC member library adds a record to WorldCat every 10 seconds, on average.

The constant rate of expansion makes batchloading a critical component to a library’s successful use of the service. The more data your library puts into WorldCat — the more data your library will get out of WorldCat, in terms of collection analyses and more. Libraries that subscribe receive a complimentary retrospective batchload of holdings into WorldCat.

Batchloading gets metadata into WorldCat, so your library can analyze the results. But your users are more likely to be interested in what materials they can get out of WorldCat. That is, WorldCat Collection Analysis can also help optimize your library's collection for WorldCat.org.

Staff may look at subject area gaps and realize that eBooks or ejournals would be the best way to connect users immediately with the content they're looking for. Run the NetLibrary and eBooks comparison list to help your library supplement print materials with electronic.

Through WorldCat Collection Analysis, a librarian can see at a glance what eContent, digital materials and print citations the library makes available through WorldCat.org on the open Web — and how it stacks up against peer libraries.

Success Stories

So who are the people using this service? Glenda Lammers, Global Product Manager of WorldCat Collection Analysis, provides some insight into these 500 “data-driven libraries.”

"I am always amazed at the ingenuity of our libraries. They are always pushing the service and finding new ways to mine the data from WorldCat. Since the 2005 release, there have been 1,643 analyses done on the service, with peer comparisons by far the lion’s share at 73 percent of total analyses run."

That means libraries have used WorldCat Collection Analysis multiple times in the past 12 months. Historically, libraries have been more interested in knowing how they stack up against each other, although the interest in measuring against an "ideal" authoritative source has started to take off.

Lammers confirms this, as she tells me that Authoritative List comparisons were only added to the service in June 2006, and as of this writing (early September), there have already been 68 reports run in about as many days. The demand for comparisons and comparison lists only continues to grow.

William Woods University

The private, liberal arts institution in Fulton, Missouri, started to use WorldCat Collection Analysis and went from peer comparison to purchase in little over three months. As Library Director Erlene Dudley explains, "Simply saying we have this many titles in History doesn’t do much. We also wanted to see how we compared to other institutions to identify what we needed."

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