
Collection profiling at the University of York Library

**Better information, better decisions,
better results**



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INTRODUCTION

The University of York is one of the White Rose Consortium partner libraries involved in the JISC-funded Copac Collections Management (CCM) Tools project (begun in 2011). The CCM tools, using data from the Copac database, were developed to support library staff in collection management decisions through effective pulling together of analytical data. Libraries involved in the development of the tools have identified cases that save staff time and effort around 'space-making' tasks and in managing book collections; this has resulted in quantifiable savings.

York has been using the CCM tools since spring 2012 to develop 'Collection Profile' (CP) reports; these gather collection management information in a graphic and accessible manner and are shared with librarians, library managers and academic departments to help inform stock decisions and contribute to enhanced collaborative relationships between the library and the academic departments.

DATA EXPLORED IN COLLECTION PROFILE REPORT

The CP report combines information produced from the library management system (LMS) and the CCM tools.

AREA	ANALYTICS / MEASURE	NOTES
Collection awareness	Growth per annum	Last 10 years
	Age profile of collection	By publication date
	Most / least loaned stock by department / budget	Limited by date
Stock relevance	Stock use in first year following year of purchase	Comparison of all subject areas
	Snapshot of loans made on specified day of month	Collect year-on-year figures
	Stock used in library but not loaned	Input of usage statistics from LMS
	NSS score compared against % of stock loaned / renewed in first year following purchase	
Collection management	Stock for potential withdrawal (not used within the last 10 years; not purchased within the last 10 years)	

Fig. 1 Example of selected LMS information included in the report

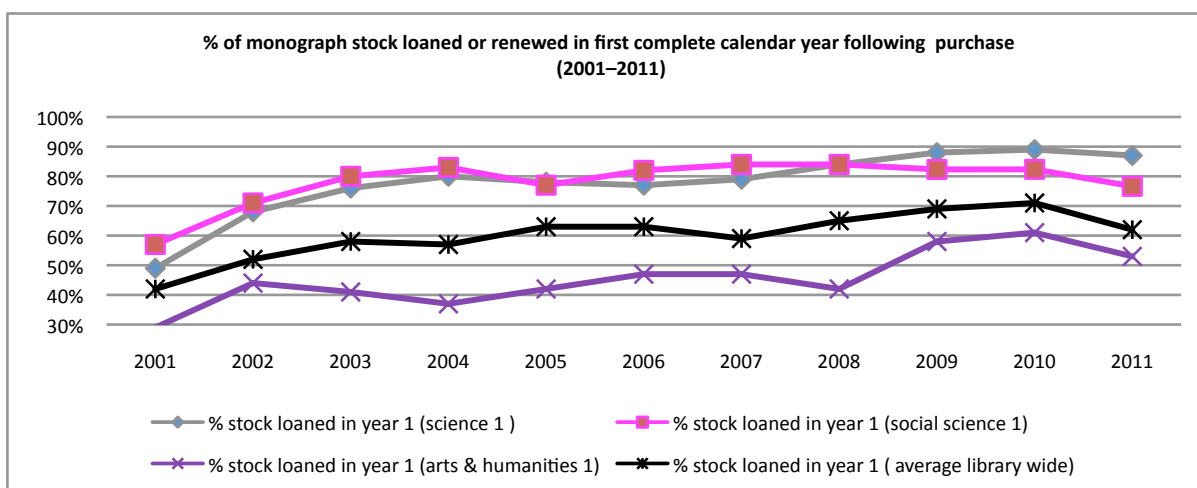


Fig. 2 Example of data from LMS displayed in CP

AREA	ANALYTICS / MEASURE	NOTES
Stock Comparisons	Stock selected for potential withdrawal that is available in eight or more Copac libraries	Information to input to consultation process with departments
	Stock selected for potential withdrawal that is unique to York	Retain in collection
	Collections strengths	
	Collection gap analysis	
	List of potential items for purchase	

Fig. 3 Example of CCM information included in report

The CCM tools can be used to measure collection strengths in particular areas as part of a regional or national picture, providing a benchmarking tool. By enabling comparison of holdings against other libraries, York is able to make informed decisions regarding stock management. The

library can identify items that are rare or unique to York, and ensure their retention as a 'last copy', and hence contribute to the safeguarding of a national research collection. Evidence provided by the tools about unique titles can be incorporated in stock-editing policies and help develop corre-

sponding retention and preservation policies, thus allowing greater confidence in stock retention decisions.

At York the CCM tools are also being used to identify gaps in current stock holdings. The 'gaps' are then addressed by using the CCM tools to identify titles for potential purchase. (Further details are available on CCM website) <http://copac.ac.uk/innovations/collections-management/>

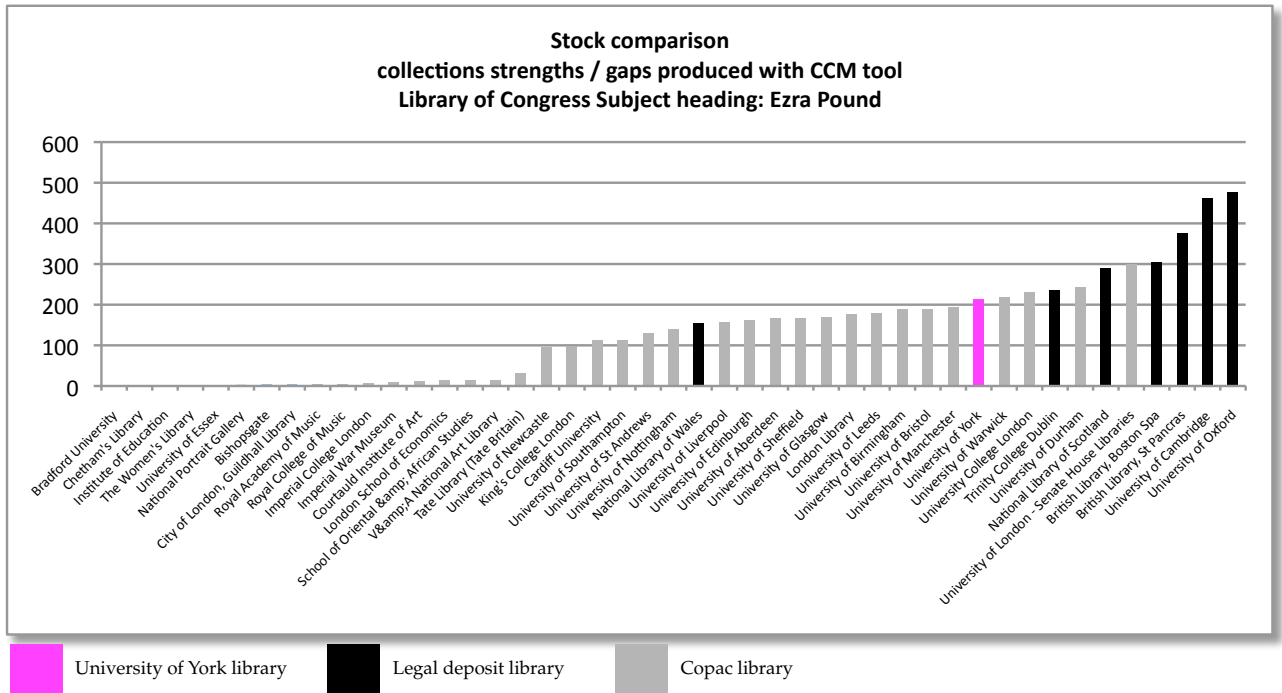


Fig. 4 Stock comparison: collection strengths / gaps produced with CCM tool

Additional relevant information is included in the CP to give a more complete and contextual analysis of the collection.

Example of additional information included in report

Analytics / Measure	Notes
Inter Lending Requests	Annual statistics
Major gift collections	Including background, subject areas and size
Digitisation requests	Year on year growth
Print book stock also accessible as e-book	

Fig. 5 Example of additional information included in report

DISCUSSION OF FEEDBACK

The library has now completed five CPs, plus additional gap analysis work for two departments interested in identifying potential titles to support new areas of teaching. The feedback to the gap analysis work and the CPs has been very positive from library staff and departments.

'It is really useful information that we never have time to find for ourselves, but we desperately need it to inform our decisions and give us more confidence when discussing with departments.'
Humanities subject librarian A, University of York Library, March 2013

'[The Dept] were very interested in the Collection Profile and wondered if it might be possible to produce a report of all books purchased in 2011 and not borrowed by 2013 ... just so they can try to improve their selection of books?'

Humanities subject librarian B, University of York Library, June 2013

'... saw your WONDERFUL PowerPoint for the department which was just forwarded to all staff. I have never seen anything half so good or informative from the library. Would you be available for a short one-t-one?'

Humanities academic A, University of York, November 2013

Some of the information presented in the CP may have already been available to staff within the library. But its presentation in a clear, contextual and comparative framework has now been more readily understood. As a result, it engages library staff, who can then interpret and present the data in the most effective manner. The profile has proved to be a prompt to both library staff and academics to evaluate how hard the stock is working, and to stimulate ideas relating to library analytics.

Collection Profiles can also fulfil the additional role as a contributor to a 'knowledge base' for a specific subject area. Although the tools don't help in themselves, keeping collection management information year on year does and additional factors (e.g. when a new department opened; stock becoming less accessible through use of an offsite store) can be noted. By using the CP as a 'log' or the 'memory' of the subject collection, information that could easily be lost or forgotten over time can be retained, giving context and understanding to the history of the collection.

CPs also help newly appointed subject librarians and academic library representatives by acting as a starting point from which to explore the collection resources.

However, it must be realised that the CP is primarily designed to indicate trends and give context to stock use, rather than to focus on fine detail.

REFINEMENTS

As all library professionals are aware, the escalation in e-resource spend and use has an impact on print resources. It is essential to assess e-usage data to provide context for patterns of print purchasing and use. In York, we face the same

challenges as colleagues elsewhere for the successful assessment of e-usage impact and value, and have made first steps in this direction, but there is much to address yet. This is a priority area that we need to explore more thoroughly.

As a member of the LAMP (Library Analytics and Metrics Project) Community Advisory Group, we anticipate that there will be outcomes of the LAMP project that can inform future development of Collection Profiles.

The University of York Library is an early adopter of Alma, the library management system being developed by Ex Libris, and York staff are currently exploring the potential of Analytics to feed into future CP and collection management projects.

COLLECTION PROFILES AND STRATEGIC DRIVERS

The CP work contributes towards shaping the strategic focus of library activities at York in the short to medium term.

The profiles can

help to improve and enhance the student experience by

- identifying and providing access to appropriate resources for users
- improving our understanding of the collections
- strengthening collections
- safe-guarding long-term access to niche or specialist items / collections
- reducing print collections, enabling cost-effective space management and the freeing of space for flexible research and collaborative space in the library and for resources that are still available only in physical form
- allowing real savings in both staff time and effort, which can be invested in alternative areas

support research excellence by

- ensuring the retention of the 'last copy' nationally
- ensuring national research collection is maintained
- providing the opportunity to identify and develop unique and distinctive collections (potential to promote to prospective students and researchers)

build engagement with academic departments and in the wider university by

- building trust with departments through decision-making based on factual information
- developing a better understanding of individual departments' specific requirements
- demonstrating explicit assessment, evaluation and accountability for purchases
- enhancing the library's professional standing and reputation within the university by participating in major projects that contribute to national debate on the preservation of a national research collection

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Following the initial case study in 2012, the concept of CP is now embedded in the five-year strategic plan for content management at York and will be rolled out in 2014 to all academic departments. The library intends to collaborate with departments on the annual reviews of library collection management in order to prioritise the needs of departments and ensure that collections are most appropriate to user requirements. The CPs will be a key element of the reviews, and will be reappraised in response to feedback and suggestions from librarians and departments. We anticipate that the work will also contribute to our Customer Service Excellence submission in 2014.

CONCLUSION

There is constant pressure on academic libraries to develop their range of services and to build and maintain collections that are as closely aligned to our customer needs as possible. Through the exploitation of information accessed through the local LMS and the CCM tools, York has adopted a more evidence-based approach to collection management. CPs have contributed to facilitating positive discussions regarding the effective evaluation of stock selection, stock use and its impact on the user experience. This has given an improved basis for prioritisation and decision-making across a broad range of library activities. Through this process, content management decisions are made more transparent, which leads to increased understanding and acceptance by the academic community.

REFERENCES

<http://jisclamp.mimas.ac.uk/about-lamp/> [accessed 12 December 2013]

<http://ccm.copac.ac.uk/> [accessed 12 December 2013]