

# BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY MAXIMIZES SPACE AND REVENUE WITH COLLECTIONHQ AND BETTER WORLD BOOKS.

## OVERVIEW

**Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL), Maryland**, has been serving the community since 1948. Today BCPL hosts 19 branches and serves a population of over 780,000.

**Better World Books (BWB)** is the world's largest socially responsible used bookseller which saves waste and improves literacy by selling over multiple online channels and investing proceeds in literacy programs worldwide.

**collectionHQ** is the world's leading collection improvement software which provides libraries with evidence-based action plans to manage their collections more efficiently and improve collection performance.

## THE CHALLENGE

Before May 2009, BCPL was faced with 3 main challenges:

### Space Constraints

Previously, the library managed ongoing book sales at every branch location which resulted in limited shelf space; a constant storage problem of whether books were in the public areas waiting to be sold or in the back room waiting to be moved out to the floor; and a difficulty to keep the shelves looking tidy and professional.

### Inconsistent Weeding Processes

Weeding had often felt like a precarious activity that was influenced by weighing circulation; local history and demographics; regional availability; personal attachment; and numerous other factors. Without an efficient weeding program, this task was often irregular and inconsistent across the branches.

### Limited Staff Time

Managing and selling sales books was proving to be an inefficient use of staff time and drawing focus away from other important tasks. Weeding, without a regular and evidence-based method, was also to prove time-consuming which contributed to the irregularity of this practice.

## THE SOLUTION

To overcome those challenges, BCPL required 2 solutions: a platform to facilitate evidence-based weeding and a turnkey discards and donations service.

### collectionHQ

The introduction of collectionHQ at BCPL in 2010 has helped the library implement regular weeding through the delivery of evidence-based weeding action plans at a branch and system-wide level. collectionHQ highlights both overused and non-moving items which need to be removed from the shelf, making the weeding process more efficient.



## KEY BENEFITS

Thanks to partnering with collectionHQ and Better World Books, BCPL has achieved:

- More regular weeding
- Staff time savings
- Better shelf allocation
- Increased revenue

### BetterWorldBooks

In May 2009, BCPL opted to partner with BWB on its no cost Donations and Discards Program for libraries to free up valuable space for self-service reserves. The program helps libraries manage their surplus books by selling them on over 50 marketplaces and sharing the proceeds with the library and a nonprofit literacy program of their choice.

Together collectionHQ and BWB have offered BCPL a comprehensive solution to make wise weeding decisions, limit the resources required to manage this material, and maximize the revenue generated from the library's surplus books.

### THE RESULTS

*Thanks to collectionHQ -*

**Staff are weeding the right materials** – “Before collectionHQ people would weed with (ILS) reports or with best bets and it's not that they weren't weeding but we were no sure they were weeding the right thing.”

**Weeding is regularized** – Jamie's team have been able to implement a “calendar” of weeding across the library system thanks to regular, user-friendly and comprehensive collectionHQ weeding action-plans “so everyone is weeding the same thing at the same time.”

**Staff time is saved** – Between 2011 and 2012, staff time spent on weeding dead stock dropped by 57 hours with the help of collectionHQ “that's an entire staff person saving.”

**Easier identification of items to be discarded** – Prior to collectionHQ, staff had no evidence to show what “dead” items would perform better at another branch “there was a lot more shuffling around of material rather than just getting rid of stuff that is dead.” With collectionHQ transfer reports, items worth transferring are highlighted which means that items not on the plan can be removed from the collection and directed to BWB.

*Thanks to BWB -*

**Better Shelf Allocation** – BCPL's partnership with BWB has provided the library with greater shelf space thanks to the removal of book sales. To maximize that new space, Jamie and team introduced a “shelf allocation” project based on the assumption that the percentage of shelf space allocated to the collection should be relative to circulation. This project has evolved with the support of new collection insight and trends delivered by collectionHQ.

**Increased Focus on its Core Mission** – By partnering with Better World Books, BCPL saved more than 40% in staff time which used to be directed to book sales, improved the visual appearance of branch libraries, and reinforced the library's role in being good stewards of taxpayer's money.

**Increased revenue** – In Fiscal Year 2011, BCPL made a total of \$90,000 from BWB book sales. With collectionHQ weeding programs fully implemented, Fiscal Year 2013 is on track to beat this total with \$82,000 achieved in just the first 3 quarters! In addition to funds generated for the library, another \$72,000 was raised through the program for the Baltimore County Public Library Foundation.

### CONCLUSION

Using collectionHQ in conjunction with BWB's Discards and Donations program has made BCPL weeding processes both efficient and rewarding by providing a reliable and effective toolset to maximize the process, all while increasing revenue for the library and its literacy partner.

“It feels better that the books you have are going somewhere good and that we're getting some return on them, rather than just going out into the ether somewhere.”

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