



C O N T R A

**Report on Issues Regarding Possible Implementation of Floating Collections in the
Contra Costa County Library**

C O S T A

**William Franklin, Marc Lambert, Brian Light, Eileen Mendez, Nancy Redfield
LIBR 282-10, Instructor Ken Dowlin**

San Jose State University School of Library and Information Science

C O U N T Y

L I B R A R Y



Contents

1.0 Scope of Report	3
1.1 Purpose of Consultation	3
1.2 Data reviewed for the study included	4
2.0 Overview of the Contra Costa County Library system	5
2.1 Current Challenges to the System	5
3.0 Focus on Floating Collections	7
3.1 The Issue of Floating Collections at CCCL	8
3.2 Concerns Raised by CCCL Staff ... and Survey Responses	10
4.0 Synthesis and recommendations	19
Bibliography	24

Appendices

Appendix A: Floating Collection Survey Information and Responses	26
A.1 Contact Attempts with Libraries with Floating Collection	26
A.2 Survey Response from DCPL	27
A.3 Survey Response from FVRL	29
A.4 Survey Response from GCPL	31
A.5 Survey Response from JCPL	33
A.6 . Survey Response from MCL	35
Appendix B: Statistics on Libraries surveyed	37

1.0 Scope of Report

This report is divided into the following segments: a review of the challenges facing the Contra Costa County Library (CCCL) system as it relates to shipping and delivery and a exploration of initiating a floating collection as one possible remedy to the current burden on these services.

The issue of floating collections will also be reviewed as it relates to concerns raised by CCCL staff. These concerns will be listed and responses to these concerns from libraries with floating collections will be provided. A synthesis of these responses and a submission of feedback by the Dogged Retrievers will be offered. Original survey and responses will be provided in Appendix A. As the shipping and delivery system was not the focus of this report, the practices of this system will be only briefly listed in Appendix B, along with those of other libraries for whom information was made available by CCCL staff and through personal observation.

1.1 Purpose of Consultation

The consulting team of the Dogged Retrievers undertook a study of the impact of initiating a “floating collection” at the Contra Costa County Library system. The study was taken with the following objectives:

- To explore the impact of initiating a floating collection on the CCCL system with specific interests on the shipping.
- To explore the questions and concerns of staff as well as possible public concerns that may arise by the initiation of a floating collection.
- To contrast these concerns with recorded outcomes of libraries who have already initiated a floating collection in their system.

- To provide a synthesis and recommendations based on the information we gathered and potential courses of action.

1.2 Data reviewed for the study included:

1. Data received from the Contra Costa County Library

- Report on CCCL outgoing mail
- San Francisco Public Library Delivery Study, conducted by F. Mason and Associates
June 25, 2003
- The Mechanics of Intralibrary Delivery for the Multnomah County Library
- Report on options for changes in shipping/delivery by CCCL staff
- Outcome of branch survey on possible second delivery
- Cress, A., The Latest Wave, *Library Journal*, October 2004
- Collection Handling Action Team (CHAT) Report, September 21, 2004 from Hennepin County Library

2. Review of Data Gathered by Dogged Retrievers

- Information gathered from observation of shipping/delivery
- Information gathered from Alameda County Library shipping/delivery
- Information gathered from CCCL library visits
- Access Over Ownership, *Computers in Libraries* April, 1997
- Information gathered from CCCL staff meeting on floating collections
- Results of survey responses received from the following libraries regarding their experience with floating collections:
 - DeKalb County Public Library (DCPL), Decatur, Georgia

- Fraser Valley Regional Library (FVRL), Abbotsford, BC Canada
- Gwinnett County Public Library (GCPL), Lawrenceville, GA
- Jefferson County Public Library (JCPL), Lakewood, CO
- Multnomah County Library (MCL), Portland, OR

2.0 Overview of the Contra Costa County Library system

Contra Costa County is located in the northern Bay Area and is home to a population of approximately 1 million people (census 2002) and covers nearly 720 square miles. The Contra Costa County Library system, headed by Director Anne Cain, serves as the primary public library system for the county; the Richmond Public Library being the only city library in Contra Costa County. Contra Costa County is composed of 38 cities and the Contra Costa County Library system has libraries in 25 of these cities. The CCCL system anticipates opening 2 additional libraries in the next 2 years for a total of 27 libraries. The system is composed of the main library in Pleasant Hill, CA and 24 branch libraries. The mission statement of the CCCL is, “The Contra Costa County Library brings people and ideas together.”

2.1 Current Challenges to the System

A review of the shipping/delivery services has been conducted and is under review by the CCCL for the following reasons:

- Circulation of materials has increased since 1997 with 78% more audio/video materials and 104% more books
- Number of online holds appears to have increased significantly

- Current vehicles used for shipping, 2 trucks (8 years old) and 1 cargo van (15 years old), may need to be replaced due to age. Further the van is no longer adequate for the purpose of delivering/shipping library materials on its route.
- The addition of a second full time driver has not remedied the need for service.

In order to address these challenges, CCCL has researched and is exploring a number of options including:

- The concept of “floating collections” is under review and its impact on the decision of delivery trucks and staffing is yet unknown. The floating collection would help to both reduce materials shipped and put materials in the hands of patrons sooner.
- The possibility of changing from bags to bins is under consideration. Bins will provide better access making material handling easier and faster. In addition they can be stacked and moved more quickly using a hand truck.
- Exploration of the possibility of a 2nd delivery/pickup. A second delivery would speed delivery of holds to patrons as well as reduce the amount of materials that would be delivered the following morning.
- Sorting the SSV bins on the trucks. This would speed delivery of materials.
- Providing training on shipping procedures. To keep staff informed and make the transition(s) easier.
- Assisting branches with more efficient sorting areas. To speed sorting and help drivers by pre-sorting.
- Exploring a number of scenarios of changes to the number and type of delivery trucks and the number of staff to ship and deliver.

- Collecting data on current volume of delivery types. Data kept on shipping/delivery of materials will help to track the effects of changes on current system.

It is the concept of floating collections that could have the most profound effect on the system. Floating the collection could result in some of the above options being delayed or unnecessary. Floating collections will require changes to the entire system and has caused the most concern among staff.

3.0 Focus on Floating Collections

“The tenet of floating collections is simple, one system, one collection. Materials ‘float’ freely among system libraries rather than being ‘owned’ by a specific location. When a patron returns a circulating item, it is shelved at the location where it was returned instead of being sent back to the location from which it was checked out. Upon check in, the location is automatically updated in the library catalog to show where it now resides.” (Cress, A., 2004). In essence it eliminates the shipping and delivery of returns of the selected floating collection.

Libraries that have implemented floating collections have seen a significant decrease in materials being shipped between libraries. For patrons this means that materials will be immediately available for check out or to place holds on as they will no longer be “in transit” to the home library. In addition patrons have new materials to browse.

3.1 The Issue of Floating Collections at CCCL

The concept of floating collections is under review at CCCL in order to reduce the number of materials being shipped and delivered and to put materials in the hands of patrons sooner. How floating collections will affect shipping and delivery, changes that must be rendered to library systems, and its effect on individual libraries has been recorded by a few libraries that have already implemented floating collections.

Like CCCL, the Jefferson County Public Library (JCPL) was faced with the decision to purchase additional vehicles and hire more staff in order to meet the growing number of materials that were being shipped and delivered. In addition to looking at a reduction in shipping and delivery, JCPL hoped to make materials available to patrons sooner as well as to provide them with the availability of a constantly changing collection. It was due to these reasons that floating collections were explored and eventually implemented in 1994.

In 2004, using information received from JCPL along with additional intensive research, Hennepin County Library (HCL) started to seriously consider floating their collections. HCL began with a small investigative team, and after ensuring that their current integrated library system was capable of handling a floating collection, they initiated a Collection Handling Team (CHAT) to continue exploring and to eventually implement the process. Both JCPL and HCL have provided a wealth of information for CCCL's administrative team.

According to JCPL's Director Ann Cress, "Whatever an individual library system's unique needs, a basic infrastructure must be in place...a fast delivery system, a convenient request system, a software support from an integrated ILS vendor. Channels for internal

communication among facilities help the process, as does centralization of materials selection, acquisitions, cataloging, and processing.” In addition to addressing many of these same factors, HCL’s CHAT spent a great deal of time understanding their collection. They broke the collection down into subsets rather than looking at the entire collection before determining which parts of the collection would be best to float.

Both JCPL and HCL have benefited from floating collections. However, the changes have not been without their difficulties. Redistribution of materials must be constantly addressed, with JCPL noticing that at times the larger libraries had fewer items on the shelf, a possible result of patrons borrowing materials from the larger library and returning them to smaller libraries. HCL noticed the same trend with a “weekly loss rate of 4% to 8% at the two largest libraries” (Appendix 3: HCL PowerPoint , 2004).

Another hurdle faced by each library that has initiated floating collections has been staff reaction. Despite floating collections emphasizing a shared collection, ownership of branch collections is deeply engrained in library staff and emphasized by Friends groups. HCL’s CHAT found that “strong administrative support” was required to overcome challenges created by individual library ownership.

CCCL is just beginning to understand the implications of floating collections, pitfalls to avoid, and methods to best deal with possible difficulties. They are also helping staff to understand the concept of floating collections and its benefits to both the library system and to patrons. In order to review the concerns raised by initiating a floating collection, the Dogged Retrievers

have gathered information through observation of staff meetings and visiting various libraries. They have gathered information related to staff concerns from these observations. In order to provide a response to these concerns, a survey was directed to the following libraries that currently have floating collections in place:

- DeKalb County Public Library (DCPL), Decatur, Georgia
- Fraser Valley Regional Library (FVRL), Abbotsford, BC Canada
- Gwinnett County Public Library (GCPL), Lawrenceville, GA
- Hennepin County Library (HCL), Minnetonka, MN
- Jefferson County Public Library (JCPL), Lakewood, CO
- Multnomah County Library (MCL), Portland, OR
- Pikes Peak Library District (PPLD), Colorado Springs, CO

Responses were received from all but HCL and PPLD.

3.2 Concerns Raised by CCCL Staff on the Issue of Floating Collections and Survey

Responses

1. How was the process implemented? If in steps, where did you start?

DCPL: Started floating audio books in fall 2004. 5/05 started music CDs.

FVR: First implemented when automated in 1981? Unknown.

GCPL: Books on CD, Children's DVDs, and adult browsing fiction had been floating collections for several years, and we had witnessed their stellar productivity and wanted to expand this performance to all materials. In July 2004 moved the entire collection to floating.

JCPL: Floating collection since 1994. Our pilot involved every library in the system (including the small libraries). We felt this was the only way we could get a handle on the impact the change would make in the system.

MCL: Many of smallest branches are big drop-offs and many items go out on hold from Central. Knew couldn't float whole collection. Only media (CDs, DVDs, Vid) and large print and board books float. Implemented in stages with evaluation at the end of each stage to tweak the system.

2. What types of Coll. Dev. process do you use?

DCPL: FC did not make it imperative to do more centralized collection development but we are starting to move in that direction anyway. Starting with Music CDs with the main goal to provide an adequate number of copies across the system.

FVRL: FVRL started with centralized collection development in 1989. Floating collection had no impact on that decision.

GCPL: Completely centralized selection for more than a decade. Customers now help with determining where items will be browsed most often.

MCL: We already have centralized collection development and a centralized weeding program for branches. In my opinion, libraries who don't do centralized collection development are wasting a lot of taxpayers time and money.

3. How do you handle weeding collections?

FVRL: Weeding remains a branch responsibility -- assistance is provided by centralized collections and centralized systems.

GCPL: Branch managers report having a new perspective on weeding, feeling empowered to weed materials previously owned by other branches. As managers of newer branches see older materials showing up on their shelves, they are reminding everyone to keep current with weeding. We have two subcommittees (comprised of branch managers and materials staff) look at how to handle conversions and weeding older editions of circulating/reference items. When a new edition arrives, materials staff places a hold on the older edition with a pickup location for a virtual weeding branch that we set up in Horizon specifically for communicating about weeding. We are fine-tuning our weeding procedures.

4. How did this impact the ability to do reference, specifically with regards to readers advisory?

GCPL: Reference and magazines do not float. Customers expect reference items to be in the building. Also the popular interest magazine collection does not float.

JCPL: Three small branch libraries were afraid that their circulating collections which they relied on to answer reference questions (pre-Internet) would be depleted. These libraries were also afraid of being stripped or inundated with materials. Since we were trying to move the entire system along we let the 3 small libraries opt out. They have since joined the shared collection and all is well.

5. What about the depleting of subject collection areas? Does it happen? How do you compensate for it? How do you deal with limited shelf space?

DCPL: The branch that traditionally housed a large percentage of A/V collection has fewer audio books and CDs. Some branches -- usually smaller ones -- periodically need to take some audio books and send them to that branch. Smaller branches say they have more titles available.

GCPL: As branch staff occasionally notice too many materials accumulating in a particular category, they are communicate with staff at other branches to redistribute materials around the county.

JCPL: Automated redistribution program that adjusts for any tendency for materials to concentrate too heavily at one or two branches to the detriment of others.

MCL: We did discover that we had to eliminate our Library Outreach Service from floating large print. We simply exempt large print from that location from floating. We found that too much of their collection did end up out in the branch libraries and they were having to place holds to get it back to fill requests from their patrons. This was counter productive for our efforts to limit workload.

6. What about special collections?

FVRL: We have “permanent collections” that do not float. Often purchased by special funds.

GCPL: Reference materials and magazines do not float.

JCPL: Multi-volume sets (e.g. circulating encyclopedias) do not float. This was done at the request of staff who did not know what to do if they ended up with vol. M of World Book and nothing else.

MCL: See previous answer.

7. Are there downsides for different types/sizes of branches? How were different groups affected/were different groups affected differently? Imbalances - Does FC effect different parts of the collection in different ways? Does it benefit certain groups more than others?

GCPL: No difference in how branches have been affected. We have been pleasantly surprised to hear from branch managers with more diverse populations and lower circulation figures that floating collections have had a positive impact. With floating collections their customers get to see a wider variety of titles and topics. Customers are experiencing decreased wait time. On customer surveys, convenience has been stressed so floating collections are an excellent way to address this major issue.

8. Friends groups and foundations - How did these groups react? Did the FC change the dynamic in which Friends groups donate money to the libraries?

DCPL: We opted to exclude from floating setup any audio books purchased for a particular branch with Friends money.

FVRL: Materials purchased by special funds received from FOL or private donors are part of “permanent collections” that do not float.

GCPL: No Friends group.

JCPL: We did not have a Friends group at the time. Patrons who made donations were informed that the donation was to JCPL. It was painted as an access to a broader range of materials. Friends dominance over local libraries is the reason we disbanded Friends

groups in our system for about 10 years. We now have one group for the system, which works quite well.

MCL: Not an issue for us, since we have one big Friends group for the whole system, not individual branch Friends groups.

9. What group did you experience the most resistance to the Floating Collection model from (i.e. Librarians, friends, patron, other)? Have they changed their minds over time? How did you sell them the idea? Are patrons concerned/pleased/indifferent about the availability of materials since the change was implemented?

DCPL: Some circulation staff were concerned that it might make it difficult to track items that were reported as missing or billed to the patron as lost. Also hesitation from staff because this was so different.

GCPL: It was not necessary to sell the concept. They observed it first hand.

MCL: Central Library reference staffs were most resistant. They were sure their collection would be decimated. Much of the public never even notices. Those that do like seeing more high-demand items on the shelves at their local branch, and things that are different from what they were finding before.

10. Where did the FC reduce costs? How were these costs tracked?

DCPL: No studies-were interested in reducing the number of items that our couriers had to transport each day. Felt floating music CDs would lessen damage to jewel cases.

FVRL: This was an old decision. Believe it was to save shipping costs. No data available.

GCPL: One instead of two couriers. We will also be monitoring turnover rates to see if they increase over time. Obvious savings from eliminating a courier route and the costs of the courier. There as been a decrease of 10.3% in items checked in. That is an average of about 160 less items to check in per branch per day.

MCL: We did not do it directly as a cost reduction measure, but rather as a work-saving measure.

11. What was the impact on staff?

DCPL: Prior to FC our A/V branch sent rotations of new titles to other branches on a regular basis -- now discontinued, saving some staff time. Save staff time with tasks that are more simpler. No staff reduction, but provide more time for direct patron service.

GCPL: There as been a decrease of 10.3% in items checked in. That is an average of about 160 less items to check in per branch per day.

MCL: Initially we got about a 20% reduction in return crates through our delivery system as a result of shared collections. This was enough to help keep us from having to add staff in that area, at least for the first couple of years.

12. Item damages, how do you track damages and who do you get to pay for this?

GCPL: We stopped floating popular juvenile DVDs to try to curb a theft problem. We charge customers for missing components of A/V (CDs for example, missing from an audio book) or the entire book, if damaged substantially.

JCPL: There is less wear and tear on the items because they spend less time in delivery. If a patron returns an item damaged, the circulation staff at the desk where the item is returned handles the transaction.

13. Do items regularly change status?

GCPL: No

14. Are there limits on the number of holds that patrons can place?

GCPL: Adult browsing fiction -- no holds allowed. The limit on holds is technically 9,999 holds.

15. Any concepts that you were not prepared for that you would want to warn a county considering the practice about?

DCPL: Has been positive so far. Not yet applied to our largest collection or to print materials.

FVRL: One is the need to have, in place, a workable redistribution system. This is difficult. Branch staff want HQ to maintain a redistribution collection (i.e. a place to send the materials they want to redistribute), but this requires space and time to house and work with the collection. We have had a lot of discussion about redistribution, and the issues are not resolved. Another problem is that you cannot provide specialized collections in certain communities if the materials must float. We have libraries in 15 different municipalities. Some municipalities are asking for specialized collections, or larger collections, or specialized media collections, etc. What tends to happen is that the medium sized libraries (libraries in communities that serve about 15,000-30,000)

tend to become fairly mediocre looking - a little of this, a little of that. The staffing levels are too small to work with the collection on a regular basis to maintain a high quality collection on site (everything from the other branches can be ordered online and delivered to the branch of choice, so it's not essential to service to maintain the collection in the branch) We are going to look into how to modify the system to offer some options for specialized collections.. Other than that, I don't think there's a staff member in our system that would have anything other than a floating collection. The benefits greatly outweigh the problems.

GCPL: No. Once you decide that a shared collection philosophy works for your library and have determined that your ILS is capable of handling the circulation aspects of floating collections, don't spend too much time thinking about details. Just move ahead to floating collections and reap the benefits.

MCL: Our biggest current issue is getting staff to deal with the overflow of some shared materials in their locations. Our staff is very busy, very overworked, and in a lot of cases they'd rather just put the overflow back into a delivery crate and send it back to the location it originally came from rather than dealing with it on the spot (by weeding, shifting, etc). This becomes completely counterproductive to the sharing process, so that is what we are working on right now.

16. How did the Floating Collections model impact your shipping department?

HCL: Uses tubs for shipping. Initiated floating collection on VHS materials. Saw a reduction of 75% in VHS materials being shipped.

JCPL: In the first year saw a reduction of 77% in delivery services. “Floating JCPL’s collection alleviated the need for an additional driver and vehicle, an expense the library system was had been contemplating before the conversion”.

4.0 Synthesis and recommendations

General Synthesis

In our investigation of the FC model, we found that librarians seem to have a strong reaction against the concept. Most librarians that we talked with, who were not in a county that uses an FC model, saw the FC model as detracting from their ability to control their collections. These librarians felt that the ability to develop and weed their collections would be fundamentally damaged by the FC because they would no longer be able to create a collection focused on their local patrons. This was true of almost every librarian that we talked to, regardless of the age or type of patrons that they most often worked with. Interestingly, when we asked these same librarians how they felt about the possibility of floating A/V collections, the resistance level dropped dramatically, and nearly all librarians that we spoke with were willing to experiment with a floating A/V collection.

In county systems that already use the FC model in their libraries, the response was very different. All of the librarians and administrators that we talked with felt that the FC model was a great way to get new materials on their shelves. These librarians felt that their patrons were being served a little better through the rotation and variety of materials that their library had access to. All of the libraries that we contacted also mentioned that their patrons were either unaware of, or unconcerned by, the FC model.

Dogged Retrievers

The biggest problem that was reported to us was that individual branch shelves could become inundated with too many materials and items would need to be shipped to other branches on a regular basis. This issue cropped up in several of the groups we talked with, and any FC model will need to include a way for individual libraries to ship materials elsewhere when their shelves are overflowing.

Friends groups were a topic that generated a considerable amount of concern when we started looking into the FC model. Libraries that have strong Friends groups would be even more hesitant to move to an FC model for fear of alienating this constant source of support. In the counties that we surveyed where an FC model is already in place, there was a surprising variety of ways in which the Friends issue had developed. In one county, there was no Friends group to speak of so this was not an issue at all. In other counties, money and materials given by Friends groups was not included in the collection that floated. In the most surprising model, one county had changed from Friends groups that supported individual libraries to a Friends group for the entire county.

The CCCL system has several special collections, and many employees have mentioned concern about the possibility of these collections floating throughout the CCCL system. Our research and questionnaire showed that many systems that use the FC model have collections of materials that do not float. Thus, it seems that there is precedent for special collections being separated from the collections that float. In fact, our research shows that many systems that use the FC model float only a portion of their collections. A few of the systems started with one particular section or another and slowly expanded from there, however there were some systems that chose to float only a specific collection and seemed to be comfortable with that choice. Following up on these systems in a couple of years could be quite enlightening to the

CCCL system as it looks at the progression of how library systems are changed by the introduction of a FC model.

Recommendations

The Dogged Retrievers have performed their research with the goal of assisting the CCCL library in making an informed decision about the possibility of introducing the FC model into its system. After a careful review of the literature, answers from other libraries that float their collections, and some discussion with librarians and staff within the CCCL system, the Dogged Retrievers have concluded that a Floating Collections (FC) model could be quite effective for the CCCL system. We think that the FC model could significantly reduce some stress that increased circulation has placed on the delivery situation of the CCCL. In addition, the FC model should help to create a more diverse selection of materials on the shelves of the CCCL system.

The Floating Collections Model has helped several counties throughout the country in reducing their shipping and delivery workloads. With the increases over the past couple of years that the CCCL has experienced in this area, we believe that an adaptation of the FC model could seriously reduce workload issues in the shipping department. For this reason, we sincerely believe that a limited FC model could be extremely beneficial to the CCCL system.

We do not at this time believe that the entire collection should be set to floating. The time and expense of changing the entire collection, as well as the inherent dangers involved, would create too much resistance among the current staff and library employees of the CCCL system. However, in order for the CCCL to see and be able to calculate the benefits of the FC

model, a large enough collection within the system will need to be floated. If too small a collection is floated, then little or no impact will be found in shipping or purchasing. Likewise, if a large collection that is un-popular or relatively unused is selected, there will be little noticeable change in workload.

In order to achieve a successful change from the current system to an FC model, we would recommend that the entire A/V collection, with the exception of special collections, be designated as a pilot program into the FC model. There are several reasons for this recommendation. First of all, the A/V collection, especially DVD's, are highly used throughout the CCCL system. These items are hand sorted by the delivery crew at each stop, constituting a great deal of additional work load every day. These two factors alone mean that immediate benefits should be quantitative if the FC model is implemented. The amount of labor will drop in the shipping department, potentially meaning that less time is spent on the road for the drivers. Additionally, individual locations should see a regular rotation in their DVD collection. Another reason that the A/V collection is a likely candidate for the CCCL to use as an introduction to the FC model is the fact that several of the CCCL's own librarians who were resistant to the concept of the FC model were willing to accept their A/V collections being used in this manner. Thus, the A/V collection is a prime candidate for the FC model because it is large enough to quantitatively relieve workload issues and the employees of the CCCL seem willing to buy into it with little of the hesitation that they will show for a floating book collection.

With regard to the Friends of the Library groups, we have a limited recommendation. We have found that the CCCL system has a strong Friends support network. Some branches have considerably more support than others and this has some un-balancing effects. However,

it would be short-sighted and detrimental to the libraries mission to try and dissuade these groups from supporting their home branches. With this in mind, we feel that it would be best to follow the lead of some of the other counties that we talked to and not float the materials that Friends groups purchase for the library. So, the branches of the CCCL should encourage these groups to purchase materials that do not fall into the purview of any FC model that the CCCL adopts. In the long term, we think that the CCCL should explore the idea of creating a single Friends group for the entire CCCL system. While this will undoubtedly cause complications, achieving this would eliminate the need to exclude friends support, and it would assist in balancing the needs of all of the CCCL libraries.

Bibliography

References Cited in this Report

Cress, A. (2004). The latest wave. *Library Journal*, 129 (16), 48-50.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2004). *United States Census Factfinder, 2004*. Retrieved May 8, 2005, from

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFPopulation?_sse=on&_lang=en&_state=04000US06&_cityTown=contra%20costa%20county&_county=contra%20costa%20county&_zip=.](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFPopulation?_sse=on&_lang=en&_state=04000US06&_cityTown=contra%20costa%20county&_county=contra%20costa%20county&_zip=)

Sources reviewed

Billings, H., (2000). Shared collection building: constructing the 21st century relational research library [presented at the 2000 University of Oklahoma Conference]. *Journal of Library Administration* v. 31 no. 2 p. 3-14

Bridges, W. (1991) *Managing transitions: Making the most of change*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing.

Contra Costa County Library. (exact date not known)*Delivery/shipping services*. Unpublished Report.

Contra Costa County Library. (exact date not known)Input regarding possible second delivery in the afternoon. Unpublished Report.

Cummings, K. (1997). Access over ownership: Shared collection of Jefferson County Public Library and its branches. *Computers in Libraries*, 17 (4), 24-26.

Curl, M. W., & Zeoli, M. (2004). Developing a consortial shared approval plan for monographs. *Collection Building*, 23(3), 122-128.

Dougherty, R.M. (1988). A conceptual framework for organizing resource sharing and shared collection development programs [based on the RLG conspectus; revised version of paper presented at the RASD meeting at the 1987 ALA conference in San Francisco]. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 14, 287-91

- Hennepin County Library. (2004, September). *Collection handling action team report*. Unpublished Report.
- Lawrence, G. S. (2004). Radical change by traditional means: Deep resource sharing by the university of california libraries. *Serials*, 17(2), 119-125.
- Mason, F., F Mason & Associates, (with Apte, U.). (2003, June). *San Francisco Public Library delivery study*. Unpublished Report.
- Multnomah County Library, (exact date not known) *The mechanics of intralibrary delivery for the Multnomah County Library*. Unpublished Report.
- Nelson, S., Altman, E., & Mayo, D. (2000) *Managing for results: Effective resource allocation for public libraries*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Pinnell-Stephens, J. (1994): Shared futures: cooperative collection development and management in Alaska. *Collection Building*, 13 (2-3), 57-61.
- Schottlaender, B.E.C., (2004). "You say you want an evolution...": The emerging UC libraries shared collection. *Library Collections, Acquisitions, and Technical Services* v. 28 no. 1 p. 13-24
- Shelton, C. (2004). Planning a prospective shared print journal collection at the University of California. *Against the Grain*, 16(3).
- Shilstone, M. (2004). CTW: Early exploration and new directions. *Against the Grain*, 16(3).

Appendix A: Floating Collection Survey Information and Responses

A.1 Contact Attempts with Libraries with Floating Collection

4/20/05: Follow-up questions to Ann Cress, Director, JCPL.

4/22/05: Questionnaire sent to Mabel Anne Kincheloe, Division Director, Materials Management, GCPL.

4/22/05: Questionnaire sent to Amy Ryan, Director, HCL.

4/22/05: Questionnaire sent to Beth Barrett, Associate Director for Support and Outreach, PPLD.

4/22/05: Reply received from Ann Cress, Director, JCPL.

4/25/05: Reply from Mabel Anne Kincheloe Division Director, Materials Management, GCPL.

4/27/05: Questionnaire sent to Cindy Gibbon, Access Services, MCL.

4/27/05: Questionnaire sent to Robert O'Brennen, FVRL

4/27/05: Questionnaire submitted to DCPL website.

4/28/05: Reply from Cindy Gibbon, Access Services, MCL.

5/2/05: Reply from Robert O'Brennen, FVRL.

5/2/05: Reply from David C. Tucker, Collection Management Coordinator, DCPL.

A.2 Survey Response from DCPL

This is from David C. Tucker, Collection Management Coordinator

DeKalb County Public Library, 3560 Kensington Road, Decatur, GA 30032

Telephone (404) 508-7190, x23; Fax (404) 508-7184

Date: Mon, 02 May 2005 13:23:13 -0400
 From: "David C. Tucker" <TuckerD@dekalblibrary.org>
 To: "Willy Franklin" <wefranklin@sbcglobal.net>
 Subject: Re: Survey Responses

My answers on behalf of DeKalb are below. Hope this is helpful.

1) How were Floating Collections implemented? If in steps, where did you start?

We began by floating one collection (audiobooks) in fall 2004. Just this month, we added a second collection (music CDs).

2) When you first implemented your Floating Collection, who was most resistance to the idea? What were the strongest reasons against the change?

Some circulation staff were concerned that floating might make it more difficult to track items that were reported as missing, or billed to the patron as lost, etc. There was also some hesitation just because this was so different from anything we'd done before.

3) Are there any parts of your collection that started as non-floating but later changed? If so, can you tell us briefly why?

As noted above, we just recently began floating music CDs, after successfully floating audiobooks for several months.

4) Has there been any noticeable impact on the shelving space of certain Library branches? Have certain branches been unfairly affected?

We have a branch library that has traditionally housed a large percentage of our audiovisual collections. That branch now has fewer audiobooks and CDs on the shelves than before, because of floating. Mostly we see this as a positive thing, in that the collections are being shared countywide. Some other branches, mostly smaller ones, find that periodically they need to take some audiobooks that have floated to them, and send some back to that branch with the most A/V material. Smaller branches mostly say that they have more titles available on the shelf than in the past, which they like.

5) Have any Friends groups lobbied to keep items bought with their contributions out of the Floating Collection?

No, but we opted to exclude from the floating setup any audiobooks that were purchased for a particular branch with Friends' money.

6) Has the move to a Floating Collection necessitated centralized collection development and weeding? If so, has this been a smooth transition?

It hasn't necessarily made it imperative to do more centralized collection development, but we are starting to move in that direction anyway. With music CDs, we recently began selecting them centrally, with the main goal being to provide an adequate number of copies across the library system. They can then "float" to whatever branch where particular artists or genres are popular.

7) Where did the FC reduce costs? How were these costs tracked?

Haven't made a specific study of this. We were interested in reducing the number of items that our couriers had to transport each day, though. We also felt that "floating" music CDs would provide less chance for jewel cases to be broken in transit. Before we began floating audiobooks last year, the staff of our A/V branch sent rotations of new titles to other branches on a regular basis. This was discontinued once floating took effect, saving some staff time.

8) What has the general response of the public been?

Has been largely invisible to them. They do seem to have noticed a better variety of materials in branch libraries, which they like.

9) How has this impacted your staff? Have you been able to reduce staff in some areas, or has this created a more shuffling effect?

We have been able to save some staff time with tasks that are now simpler, but have not reduced staff. We have just taken the opportunity to have them provide more direct patron service.

10) What, in your experience, are the downsides to the floating collection model?

Has been positive for us, with no real problems. However, we have not yet applied it to any of our largest collections, or to print materials at all.

A.3 Survey Response from FVRL

Subject: RE: Floating Collection questions
 Date: Mon, 2 May 2005 16:09:15 -0700
 From: "Rob O'Brennan" <robert.obrennan@fvrl.bc.ca>
 To: "Willy Franklin" <wefranklin@sbcglobal.net>

1) How were Floating Collections implemented? If in steps, where did you start?[Rob O'Brennan] I have no idea how it was implemented. I am guessing this happened when we first automated in about 1981.

2) When you first implemented your Floating Collection, who was most resistance to the idea? What were the strongest reasons against the change?[Rob O'Brennan] I don't know

3) Are there any parts of your collection that started as non-floating but later changed? If so, can you tell us briefly why?[Rob O'Brennan] It system has not changed since I came on staff in 1988.

4) Has there been any noticeable impact on the shelving space of certain Library branches? Have certain branches been unfairly affected? [Rob O'Brennan] We have a very active "redistribution" system. If one branch gets overloaded they send extras to other locations. If the shelves get too picked over in a branch, staff often order materials in.

5) Have any Friends groups lobbied to keep items bought with their contributions out of the Floating Collection?[Rob O'Brennan] We have "permanent collections" that do not float. They go out to other locations when reserved, but when returned they go back to their "home" branch. This material is often purchased by special funds received from FOL, or private donors.

6) Has the move to a Floating Collection necessitated centralized collection development and weeding? If so, has this been a smooth transition?[Rob O'Brennan] FVRL started with centralized collection development in about 1989. The floating collection had no impact on the decision to move in this direction. Weeding remains a branch responsibility - assistance is provided by centralized Collections and centralized Systems.

7) Where did the FC reduce costs? How were these costs tracked?[Rob O'Brennan] This is an old decision. I believe it saves shipping costs because there is no need to return materials to the lending library. There is no data available.

8) What has the general response of the public been?[Rob O'Brennan] It's an old decision - I don't know the answer.

9) How has this impacted your staff? Have you been able to reduce staff in some areas, or has this created a more shuffling effect?[Rob O'Brennan] No data.

10) What, in your experience, are the downsides to the floating collection model?[Rob O'Brennan] There are a couple of downsides. One is the need to have, in place, a workable redistribution system. This is difficult. Branch staff want HQ to maintain a redistribution collection (i.e. a place to send the materials they want to redistribute), but this requires space and time to house and work with the collection. We have had a lot of discussion about redistribution, and the issues are not resolved.

Another problem is that you cannot provide specialized collections in certain communities if the materials must float. We have libraries in 15 different municipalities. Some municipalities are asking for specialized collections, or larger collections, or specialized media collections, etc. What tends to happen is that the medium sized libraries (libraries in communities that serve about 15,000-30,000) tend to become fairly mediocre looking - a little of this, a little of that. The staffing levels are too small to work with the collection on a regular basis to maintain a high quality collection on site (everything from the other branches can be ordered online and delivered to the branch of choice, so it's not essential to service to maintain the collection in the branch) We are going to look into how to modify the system to offer some options for specialized collections.

Other than that, I don't think there's a staff member in our system that would have anything other than a floating collection . The benefits greatly outweigh the problems

A.4 Survey Response from GCPL

Questionnaire about Floating Collections

By: The Dogged Retrievers – Library Students assessing the uses of the Floating Collection for the
the
Contra Costa County Public Library System

Starters

How was the process implemented? If in steps, where did you start? GCPL's Directors' Exchange (administrative shared leadership team) decided early in 2004 to move to floating our entire collection (except Reference and Magazines) in July 2004, at the beginning of the fiscal year, to save courier time and reduce customer wait time. Books on CD, children's DVDS, and adult browsing fiction (no holds allowed) had been floating collections for several years, and we had witnessed their stellar productivity and wanted to expand this performance to all materials. However, just after we migrated from Dynix Classic to Horizon at the end of March 2004, we decided to streamline some Acquisition procedures and fix a customer hold pickup issue by moving immediately to floating the entire collection.



What was the impact on staff? Staff were extremely supportive of the move to floating collections. They asked questions about procedural changes, but they have been very patient as subcommittees of Branch Managers and members of the centralized selection team have developed a mechanism for branches to take responsibility for frozen-in-time snapshots to facilitate weeding and conversions.

Questions involving groups/perceptions:

What types of Collection Development process do you use? Gwinnett County Public Library has had completely centralized selection for more than a decade. We have been collecting what was needed for the whole county and then spent time trying to predict where items would be browsed most often. Customers are helping us with those branch distribution decisions now. As branch staff occasionally notice too many materials accumulating in a particular category, they are communicating with staff at other branches to redistribute materials around the county. Branch Managers are communicating about collection issues, more than before this change. They report having a new perspective on weeding, feeling empowered to weed materials previously owned by other branches. As Managers of newer branches see older materials showing up on their shelves, they are reminding everyone to keep current with weeding.

How do you handle weeding? We had two subcommittees (comprised of branch managers and materials staff) look at how to handle conversions and weeding older editions of circulating/reference items. When a new edition arrives, Materials Staff place a hold on the older edition with a pickup location for a virtual Weeding Branch that we set up in Horizon specifically for communicating about weeding. Then, whenever a branch staff member checks in an item that is routed to this Weeding Branch, they know to weed that older edition. We have revised our Weeding Manual to reflect these changes. We are fine tuning our weeding procedures; we plan to publish a third edition of our Weeding Manual to coincide with PLA National Conference 2006, where we will also participate in a concurrent session on Centralized Weeding.

Do you keep some collections from floating? If so, what are the reasons? We decided to float everything except Reference and magazines. Reference items only circulate overnight, and customers expect Reference items to be in the building. GCPL has popular interest magazine collections (multiple copies of very popular titles with all issues available for checkout). To assure that each branch has a chance at a good variety of magazines, we decided not to float the magazine collections. Subsequent to implementing floating collections, we also stopped floating popular juvenile DVDs to try to curb a theft problem.

- Have certain branches been unfairly affected? No. If so, was this because of size or demographic?
- We have been pleasantly surprised to hear from branch managers with more diverse populations and lower circulation figures that floating collections have had a very positive impact. With floating collections, their customers get to see a wider variety of titles and topics.
- How have your friends groups responded to the Floating Collection? Did the FC have any changes on the way in which the friends groups worked with their libraries? N/A.
- What group did you experience the most resistance to the Floating Collection model from (i.e. Librarians, friends, patrons other)? The model has been positive for everyone involved.
- Have they changed their minds over time? No. How did you sell them on the idea? Not necessary to sell it; they observed it first hand.
- Are patrons concerned/pleased/indifferent about the availability of materials since the change was implemented? Customers are experiencing decreased wait time. On customer surveys, convenience has been stressed so floating collections are an excellent way to address this major request.

Selling the entire idea/money:

- Where did the FC reduce costs? One instead of two couriers. We will also be monitoring turnover rates to see if they increase over time. How were these costs tracked?
- In addition to obvious savings from eliminating a courier route and the costs of the courier, there is savings in staff time at the branches:

Check Ins for year previous to Floating Collection: 6,964,321

Check Ins for first year of a Floating Collection: 6,248,636

That's a decrease of 10.3%, or 715,635 items. That is an average of about 160 less items to check in per branch per day.

Details/not so essential questions:

- Item damages, how do you track damages and who do you get to pay for this? Visual inspection at check-in. We charge customers for missing components of A/V (CDs, for example, missing from an audio book) or the entire book, if damaged substantially (wet book, example).
- Do items regularly change status between floating and non-floating? No.
- Are there limits on the number of holds that patrons can place? Yes, technically. The limit is 9,999 holds.
- Were there any (unwelcome) surprises which you might warn another library about? No. Once you decide that a shared collection philosophy works for your library and have determined that your ILS is capable of handling the circulation aspects of floating collections, don't spend too much time thinking about details. Just move ahead to floating collections and reap the benefits.

A.5 Survey Response from JCPL

-----Original Message-----

From: Marc Lambert [mailto:mlambert@slis.sjsu.edu]

Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2005 8:44 PM

To: Ann Cress

Cc: blight@library.berkeley.edu; edu@slis.sjsu.edu

Subject: RE: floating collections

Thanks for your offer: we accept! Our group (the Dogged Retrievers) has put together a questionnaire, based on visits we've made to several branches and on riding the shipping routes.

Most of the questions have been answered by your very informative article and presentation. But a few remain, so here goes:

--Your article didn't address this, but your presentation indicated you have shared and non-shared collections still. Could you describe which collections are still not shared and why?

We had three libraries that are much smaller than the other libraries in the system and these libraries were afraid that their circulating collections which they relied on to answer reference questions (pre Internet) would be depleted. These libraries were also afraid of either being stripped or inundated with materials. Since we were trying to move the entire system along we let the 3 small libraries opt out. They have since joined the shared collection and all is well.

The only other material we have removed from the shared collection is multi-volume sets (e.g. circulating encyclopedias). This was done at the request of staff who did not know what to do should they end up with vol. M of World Book and nothing else.

--Your article said patrons "were unaware threat, collection management practices had been altered" yet "were pleased with the increased number of 'new' books on the shelves." Were your Friends group(s) apprised of the change about to happen and what was their reaction (this seems to be a hot one in our area)?

Dogged Retrievers

We did not have a Friends group at the time but we did have members of the public who wanted to donate materials to their local library. We did explain that the donation was to Jefferson County Public Library and the material would start out in their local branch but it would be available to anyone who had need of the material as all of our items are. Basically, we painted it as a positive for the community - access to a broader range of materials, etc. I can see where Friends groups could be sticky - actually Friends dominance over local libraries is the reason we disbanded Friends groups in our system for about 10 years. We now have one group for the system which works quite well.

--Did your three-month pilot in 1994 only involve one branch, or several?

Our pilot involved every library in the system (including the small libraries). We felt this was the only way we could really get a handle on the impact the change would make in the system.

--How do you track damages to items that are shipped?

I'm not sure what you are asking here. There is less wear and tear on the items because they spend less time in delivery. Since delivery among libraries is done by JCPL staff, if something happens to a bin we can find out what happened quickly and easily. If a patron returns an item damaged, the circulation staff at the desk where the item is returned handles the transaction and adds the info to the system.

Again, thank you for your willingness to provide information for our project. As you might guess, we are trying to get a report out in less than three weeks (professor's deadline), so would appreciate your prompt

A. 6 . Survey Response from MCL

This is from David C. Tucker, Collection Management Coordinator

DeKalb County Public Library, 3560 Kensington Road, Decatur, GA 30032

Telephone (404) 508-7190, x23; Fax (404) 508-7184

Date: Mon, 02 May 2005 13:23:13 -0400
 From: "David C. Tucker" <TuckerD@dekalblibrary.org>
 To: "Willy Franklin" <wefranklin@sbcglobal.net>
 Subject: Re: Survey Responses

My answers on behalf of DeKalb are below. Hope this is helpful.

1) How were Floating Collections implemented? If in steps, where did you start?

We began by floating one collection (audiobooks) in fall 2004. Just this month, we added a second collection (music CDs).

2) When you first implemented your Floating Collection, who was most resistance to the idea? What were the strongest reasons against the change?

Some circulation staff were concerned that floating might make it more difficult to track items that were reported as missing, or billed to the patron as lost, etc. There was also some hesitation just because this was so different from anything we'd done before.

3) Are there any parts of your collection that started as non-floating but later changed? If so, can you tell us briefly why?

As noted above, we just recently began floating music CDs, after successfully floating audiobooks for several months.

4) Has there been any noticeable impact on the shelving space of certain Library branches? Have certain branches been unfairly affected?

We have a branch library that has traditionally housed a large percentage of our audiovisual collections. That branch now has fewer audiobooks and CDs on the shelves than before, because of floating. Mostly we see this as a positive thing, in that the collections are being shared countywide. Some other branches, mostly smaller ones, find that periodically they need to take some audiobooks that have floated to them, and send some back to that branch with the most A/V material. Smaller branches mostly say that they have more titles available on the shelf than in the past, which they like.

5) Have any Friends groups lobbied to keep items bought with their contributions out of the Floating Collection?

No, but we opted to exclude from the floating setup any audiobooks that were purchased for a particular branch with Friends' money.

6) Has the move to a Floating Collection necessitated centralized collection development and weeding? If so, has this been a smooth transition?

It hasn't necessarily made it imperative to do more centralized collection development, but we are starting to move in that direction anyway. With music CDs, we recently began selecting them centrally, with the main goal being to provide an adequate number of copies across the library system. They can then "float" to whatever branch where particular artists or genres are popular.

7) Where did the FC reduce costs? How were these costs tracked?

Haven't made a specific study of this. We were interested in reducing the number of items that our couriers had to transport each day, though. We also felt that "floating" music CDs would provide less chance for jewel cases to be broken in transit. Before we began floating audiobooks last year, the staff of our A/V branch sent rotations of new titles to other branches on a regular basis. This was discontinued once floating took effect, saving some staff time.

8) What has the general response of the public been?

Has been largely invisible to them. They do seem to have noticed a better variety of materials in branch libraries, which they like.

9) How has this impacted your staff? Have you been able to reduce staff in some areas, or has this created a more shuffling effect?

We have been able to save some staff time with tasks that are now simpler, but have not reduced staff. We have just taken the opportunity to have them provide more direct patron service.

10) What, in your experience, are the downsides to the floating collection model?

Has been positive for us, with no real problems. However, we have not yet applied it to any of our largest collections, or to print materials at all.

Appendix B Statistics on Libraries we Contacted

Multnomah County Library
 801 S.W. 10th Avenue
 Portland, OR 97205
 503.988.5123
<http://www.multcolib.org/>

1. Number of libraries: 17
2. Mileage of the entire county: 435 square miles
3. Population: 677,813
4. Checkout policy: A patron may have a total of 15 items on hold at one time. All items may be returned to any branch.

Fraser Valley Regional Library
 34589 Delair Rd.
 Abbotsford, BC
 Canada V2S 5Y1
 (604) 859-7141
<http://www.fvrl.bc.ca>

1. Number of libraries: 23
2. Mileage of the entire county: 5,000 square miles
3. Population: 600,000
4. Checkout policy: Maximum items checked out at one time is 60.

DeKalb County Public Library
 3560 Kensington Road, Decatur, GA 30032
 Telephone (404) 508-7190, x23; Fax (404) 508-7184
<http://www.dekalb.public.lib.ga.us/yourlib.htm>

1. Number of libraries: 23
2. Mileage of the entire county: 268.3 square miles
3. Population: 665,865
4. Checkout policy: There is no limit on the number of books that you can borrow, but there are limits for the following high demand materials:
 Videos - Five (5); DVDs - Two (2); Audiobooks - Five (5); Music CDs - Five (5) Any borrowed item may be returned to any DeKalb library. Patrons may have up to 15 holds pending at one time. Patrons have six days to pick up items from the time the item becomes available.

Dogged Retrievers

Jefferson County Public Library
 10200 W. 20th Ave.Lakewood, CO 80215
 Telephone (303) 232-7114
<http://www.jefferson.lib.co.us/>

1	Number of Libraries	10 Plus a Bookmobile
2	Mileage of the entire community	778.06
3	Population	527,056

Gwinnett County Library
 1001 Lawrenceville Highway Lawrenceville, GA 30045
 Headquarters phone: (770) 822-4522
<http://www.gwinnettpl.org/>

1	Number of Libraries	12
2	Mileage of the entire community	436.72
3	Population	588,448

