

Conclusion

Over the past decade, a growing interest in electronic content has resulted in a greater emphasis on e-book collection development, which has required evaluations of new business models, license agreements, and collection assessment methods. In this digital environment, information needs surpass available resources, and librarians are required to justify purchases or requests for budget increases with quantitative evidence. Now more than ever, it is essential for librarians to demonstrate data-based collection development decisions or evaluate current holdings to identify areas where resources can be shifted to support the teaching, learning, and research needs of a user community.

The evolving nature of electronic resources, particularly in regard to e-books, provides challenges in developing standardized methods of conducting quantitative analysis. The abilities to calculate cost per use, identify usage trends, document how funds are allocated to acquire materials, and provide evidence for collection development decisions are essential components to developing e-book collections that address “just in case” and “just in time” information needs. However, training opportunities in this area of library work are still in development and not always widely available. By sharing methods currently used within the professional community, opportunities for experimentation, feedback, and standardization become available.

This issue of *Library Technology Reports* demonstrates the steps that I took to develop quantitative analysis skill sets and an evaluation framework for e-book collections at Columbia University Libraries.

The methods that I developed and used are based around local and external data sources that are widely available to all libraries. All the examples of quantitative research discussed in this report were conducted using Microsoft Excel, and projects were completed through independent work or collaboration with small teams. Based on the data sources and resources that supported my work, I am confident that the methodologies described can be implemented at most libraries, regardless of size or staff or equipment budget.

The reality that the e-book landscape is constantly evolving was factored into decisions regarding the overarching analysis framework guiding described studies. Research designs were created so that they can be replicated regardless of how e-books evolve in the coming years. Because the designs are flexible and adaptive in nature, they promote continued assessment, evaluation, and strategic planning as a regular component of e-book programs.

The methods discussed in this report are not meant to be an end point but rather a springboard for future analysis activities and, ultimately, development of standardized practices across the information profession. I am excited to find out what the future holds for e-book collection development practices and to learn more about the quantitative analysis methods that are developed and implemented at libraries across the country.

Thank you for taking this journey through quantitative analysis methods with me. I look forward to growing with and learning from colleagues across the information profession in the years to come.