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Introduction

This report serves several purposes:

1. Reporting important information to campus constituents so that they have a greater understanding of the services provided by the library
2. Serving as an historical record documenting the growth of the library, tracing its development over time
3. Providing a means for analyzing library activities so that effective strategic plans can be drawn and services improved over time
4. Assessing the value and effectiveness of the services provided by the library

While it can be a time-consuming task, the report is a valuable tool that helps the library not only reflect on the past, but provide important information that contributes to planning the future of the library.

All of the library’s annual reports can be found on the About the Library webpage:

http://www.kent.edu/stark/about-library
Highlights

A theme that runs through this annual report is less reliance and use of printed materials. Given the many ways technology has impacted higher education, let alone academic libraries, this should not be considered a surprise or unanticipated. Although this change has been gradual overall, affecting several aspects of library services, it may be time to incorporate the shift from print to electronic into library planning in more concrete ways. The opening questions to consider are:

- Should lower use of print materials be viewed as a problem? If so, what should the library do to address this problem?
- Should the library try to reduce costs associated with print? If so, how does the library do that?
- Should the library focus on other (non-print related) services?
- Should the library develop strategies to stimulate use of print materials?
- Does this shift in focus from print to online resources redefine the library’s role on campus?
- What are the library’s priorities and how does the library ensure that it is devoting appropriate resources to maintain high priority services?

Ways in Which Print Use Has Decreased
The chart above shows trending for some key library services over the past 7 years. The highlighted trend line clearly shows an average of more than 40% decline across some key library services. A brief description of the following four areas of usage will be addressed:

1. Attendance (the number of people coming into the library)
2. Circulation and ILL Borrowing (the number of items users borrow from other libraries)
3. Collection Development (the amount of money spent on physical items added to the Stark Campus Library collection)
4. In house use of Periodicals

**Attendance**

Libraries had historically been created as print repositories—places where people could go to get printed resources to borrow for any number of information gathering needs. Over the past twenty years or so more and more content has become available online. As more information moves into an online environment, more and better ways for accessing those resources have been developed. As a result, just about everything available electronically while on campus is available while off campus. This has lessened the need for library users to come into the building for services. An informal study described in last year’s report indicated that more users bring in their own devices than use our public workstations on the second floor. While certainly not definitive proof, this does indicate that access to online resources through wireless or cellphone enabled connectivity is now ubiquitous. It is somewhat interesting to note that, while there has been a 30% decline in attendance since its peak in 2009/2010, last year’s attendance is nearly identical to attendance 7-years ago. Although it would appear that attendance has not changed from 7 years ago, it is perhaps better to focus on just the last 5 years, where attendance has dropped by 30%. It should also be noted that online courses became more popular even for students who regularly attend classes on campus. If students can take entire courses without having to set foot on campus, it is not unusual to expect that fewer students would come into the library as well.

**Circulation and ILL (InterLibrary Loan) Borrowing**

Circulation and ILL each have a separate line on the graph above. Circulation has dashes and the line for ILL is dotted. Both have a similar shape and show significant decline in activity. It could be argued that the circulation decrease (particularly in light of decreased spending for the local collection, described below) reflects a less useful local collection. If that were the case, it would be logical to expect ILL borrowing to increase; more users would be compensating for the lacking of a local collection by borrowing more materials from other libraries. However, when comparing the peaks and the lowest points of each line, ILL borrowing activity actually decreased more than circulation. Instead, comparing the two activities, it makes more sense to consider both as additional measures for describing less reliance on physical (mostly print) materials. The library has seen access to electronic journals increase through a host of resources (Kent Campus’ shift from print to electronic journal subscriptions, the growth in the number of available databases—around 400, and the expansion of the OhioLINK Electronic Journal Center). In more recent years, the Kent
Campus library has established a Demand Driven Acquisitions (DDA) program with ebook vendor eBrary. This program allows the library to populate its online catalog (KentLINK) with titles for electronic books that are only paid for when users select and use them to a degree that triggers a purchase. The market place for library book buying will determine whether or not programs such as these are sustainable in the long run. For now, searches in KentLINK are discovering these ebooks and the immediacy and convenient of reading books on a computer or mobile device have the potential of reducing the use (and need) for printed books, either located in a local collection or obtained via ILL.

**Collection Development**

Most of the decrease in spending for monographs (mostly books and videos) is by librarians. That portion of the expenditures is down 77% from what it was 7 years ago. The Faculty spending is down as well by about 1/3. Most of the decrease can be accounted for (as explained in previous reports) by the elimination of many series of print reference continuations that have been replaced by online equivalents. A strategy for replacing these print reference titles developed between the Kent Campus and the Stark Campus had Stark paid for upfront costs for back files (to allow all KSU libraries to discard older print volumes) in exchange for Kent paying ongoing costs to maintain subscriptions. As a result, the Stark Campus budget was relieved of tens of thousands of dollars previously committed each year. This parallels the description of a more gradual shift from print to electronic content. In conjunction with this strategy to replace print reference titles with electronic titles, both faculty and librarians are reducing their spending on print materials overall, recognizing that, in addition to having a reliable ground delivery system for obtaining books from other Ohio academic libraries, more titles that would have been purchased in print are already available electronically, either through packaged deals set up by OhioLINK or by being present in the DDA program described above. An assumption could be made that there is a correlation between buying fewer newer books and less usage of print books.

**In House Use of Periodicals**

It has also been reported in past reports that the use of print journals is decreasing significantly. The following chart tracks this decline over the past 5 years:
As with the trend line on the previous chart listing a decrease is use of several other library services, usage levels for print journals have gone down by about 40%, according to the trend line in this chart, comparing the use of bound and current (not yet bound) periodicals. Translated to costs, the cost per use for a bound journal last year was $625, illustrating that older periodicals are used much less than current ones, since once they are of a certain age they are bound and shelved on the second floor (and therefore somewhat less accessible). The cost per use, when current issues are added to the calculation, goes down to $165. That figure is not too far from the average cost per journal title subscription (around $224). The library is approaching a point where the subscription price results in (on average) a single use per year for each journal title. It also clearly demonstrates that over time periodicals cost an enormous amount to maintain (in terms of their usefulness as they age).

**Strategies for Responding to Decreased Use of Print**

It would seem to be a natural consequence that less use of materials would result in a higher cost per use for those materials. If spending were decreasing at the same rate as use, it would not be an issue. However, particularly in the case of print journals, costs have increased for some titles at a rate higher than inflation and the overall costs for print subscriptions has only decreased through cancellations of titles now available online for free (through the Kent Campus or OhioLINK), creating a greater disparity between reduced spending and decreased use. It is true that spending for monographs has gone down. Calculating that differential is much more complicated, since the library does not have a matrix to counting use of individual titles as it does for subscription based materials.

The connected issues of decreased use of materials and increased cost per use of those materials, suggest two approaches:

1. **Stimulate use of physical (print) materials to lower the cost per use.**
   a. Engage in marketing efforts to make campus constituents (faculty, students, and staff) more aware of the library and the services it offers in hopes that greater awareness translates into greater use.
   b. Educate library users. Although the most important service the library offers is library instruction, increase efforts to train library users.
   c. Increase the library’s online presence to reach those less inclined to come to the library and develop methods to extend our services such that use of physical materials does not necessitate coming to the building.

2. **Reduce the costs for purchasing (mostly print) materials.**
   a. As was accomplished with print reference titles, find ways to allow access for current print journals to be made available online at a lesser cost.
   b. Review the use of print journal subscriptions, particularly for those titles that are expensive, to see if they are meeting the needs of library users and stop subscribing to titles with little impact and value to library users.

Over the course of the next year (and longer), the library should address these approaches in an effort to increase usage and reduce the cost per use for physical materials as a way to manage in a more sustainable manner the transition from print to electronic content.
The following includes a description of some specific highlights of library activities during the academic year 14/15:

**iPad Cart**
After obtaining 4 iPads for faculty to check out and test during the spring of 2014, the Faculty Technology Committee created a proposal recommending purchasing a cart of 30 iPads for use in any classroom on campus, similar to the way the library has been handing a cart of 28 netbooks for the past several years. The proposal was successful and the library now houses, schedules and delivers the cart when needed by faculty teaching classes. To date faculty teaching Nursing, Foreign Languages (Spanish), Geology, Communication Studies, and Biology have requested and used the cart for their classes.

**Reference Area Redesign**
After many years of implementing a strategy for purchasing electronic equivalents for print reference titles and removing more than half of the volumes from the collection on the first floor, the library purchased new furniture to create a leisure reading area with comfortable chairs and couches. In addition, the library moved its collection of Best Seller titles, Book Club selections, popular videos (DVDs) and audio books to this area of the library. Finally, as a way to market this seating area as a place to recharge and relax, a charging station for mobile devices (smartphones, tablets, etc.) was purchased. Along with the library’s existing coffee service, it is hoped that this redesigned space will attract students who just want to take a break in-between classes to relax and socialize. To compliment this side of the redesigned reference area, a proposal was submitted for purchasing a walk up scanning station to help create another space made available nearby, devoted to student research and scholarship.

**Succession Planning**
As presented in the Staff section of this report, there was significant turnover in staffing during the past year. In preparation, since some retirements were announced in advance, the library engaged in succession planning. Each staff member was asked to document the tasks they perform and estimate the relative importance and time necessary to complete the tasks. Although it can be difficult to quantify the many varied ways library staff fulfill their job responsibilities, it was possible to identify some gaps created by staff departures. Reassigning or eliminating those tasks became easier once they were documented. With a few new faces and ever evolving services, succession planning efforts will be a necessary an on-going part of strategically aligning staff with services for the future.
Web Content Management

Although the date for migrating from the university’s old content management system CommonSpot to the new one, Drupal, was delayed, the library did move its content in the middle of the spring semester. The look and feel is quite different but the library was able to maintain and incorporate all of the functionality it offered in the old system. In planning for this migration, the library also decided to move some of its content from CommonSpot into Libguides. The Reference, Ask a Librarian, and requests for the iPad and netbook carts webpages are all now Libguides.

Summer Renovation

The library continued its renovation to the heating and cooling system and installation of a new fire alarm through the end of the summer of 2014. This resulted in moving some activities out of the library for the entire summer. Math classes normally held in the lower level were moved to other buildings. In addition, the library had been hosting First Step sessions (for incoming students and their parents) in the teaching area. Instead, the library moved a set of 24 netbooks to Main Hall room 203 and helped set up and break down the netbooks for those sessions. That was a more convenient alternative to transporting the netbook cart back and forth a couple of times a week. It is unknown at this time when future phases of this renovation project will be conducted. There are no renovation projects planned or underway for the library during the summer of 2015.

Discovery@Kent State

This past year was the first full year of having the Discovery@Kent State service. All instructional sessions included at least a mention of the service, while some sessions were entirely devoted to its use. Although Discovery@Kent State has some drawbacks, it does not include all licensed resources available to Kent State University libraries and search results (hit counts) are often inaccurate (mostly due to deduplication complexities), the service offers an alternative to selecting individual databases by executing search strategies across multiple databases with a single search. Over the next few years it will likely develop into a robust, one stop search engine and content provider/connector, much the way the world at large views Google. A drawback for traditional library instruction has been educating students to take the time to conduct research through multiple resources and re-executing search strategies over and over again. As with Google, having a single source for conducting a single search will make competition with Google easier to communicate to students, and, hopefully, will improve the quality of student research.
Staff

The following individuals were members of the library staff during the 14/15 academic year:

- Rob Kairis, Library Director (Professor)
- Maureen Kilcullen, Reference Librarian (Associate Professor)
- Roger Davis, Serials Librarian (Assistant Professor)
- Melissa Bauer, Online Learning Librarian (Assistant Professor)
- Mary Birtalan, Cataloging and Interlibrary Loan (Library Associate)
- Jeanne Hawley, Acquisitions (Senior Library Assistant)
- Barbara Potts, Circulation/Student Worker Supervisor (Senior Library Assistant)
- Samantha Lee, Circulation/Student Worker Supervisor (Senior Library Assistant)
- Robin Clarke, Temporary Senior Library Associate

There was significant turnover during the course of last year. In the fall Barbara Potts completed her Master’s degree in Library and Information Science and accepted a position at Liberty University in Virginia. Congratulations Barbara. After a successful search, Samantha Lee, a former student worker, replaced Barbara. At the end of the fall semester two long-time Stark Campus librarians, Maureen Kilcullen and Roger Davis retired. It would be difficult to express the many ways Maureen contributed to the library and made it a much better place, due to her knowledge and commitment. She was extremely well regarded by students and faculty and will be remembered fondly. Roger began as the campus media specialist in the 1980s and transitioned into the position of Serials Librarian in the early 1990s, where he remained until retirement. As a means to cope with the loss of staff during the spring semester, the library hired Robin Clarke, a recent Stark Campus graduate, to take on some paraprofessional responsibilities while a search was conducted for a new librarian. A search conducted in the spring resulted in the hiring of Theodore Guedel, a new Reference and Instruction Librarian. He will start in July 2015. Finally, after having the opportunity to hire School of Library and Information Science graduate students as student workers, the library crafted a new Graduate Student Assistant (GSA) position. That search will begin in July with an anticipated fall semester start date for the new GSA.
Interlibrary Borrowing and Lending

In last year’s report a 50% drop in borrowing was noted. At the time some reporting irregularities were discovered. A spreadsheet used for counting monthly activity was being written over each month instead of being retained on a separate sheet. With a concern that the student worker entering the data was not following established procedures, it was possible that the significant drop in borrowing was a result of faulty record keeping. However, this past year saw only a 10% rise in borrowing. It is hard to attribute the decrease reported last year to incorrect statistics gathering. Instead, it does appear that, although activity increased last year, borrowing is now at a much lower rate than in past years. It has long been the assumption that over time, there would be less reliance on the physical (mostly print) items borrowed from other libraries due to increased accessibility of electronic (online) resources. The expectation was that it would be a more gradual transition that the one experienced over the past two years. One element that has remained fairly consistent is the ratio between materials obtained from other libraries and materials borrowed from the Stark Campus Library. The ratio averages about 60:40. Last year 65% of the materials borrowed were from other libraries.

* These figures exclude course reserve and laptop circulation
Borrowing

The graph above clearly shows the sharp drop two years ago in materials borrowed. Although there was a previous dip in activity in 2006/2007, this latest reduction shows that borrowing is down by slightly more than half from 10 years ago. If the proliferation of online resources is finally correlating to the decrease in usage of print materials, this may be the new norm for both interlibrary borrowing and local circulation of the Stark Campus collection.

Lending

There is not much to report in terms of lending Stark Campus materials to other libraries. While it is true that lending is down by around 35% from a peak in activity in 2007/2008, the decline has been more gradual than the decline in borrowing, with the exception of the major dip in activity in 2008/2009. Past reports have described how changes to the OhioLINK algorithm for choosing a lending library would affect individual library statistics. Those changes have not had the dramatic impact they had in the past. Again, the assumption is that more use of online resources have lessened the need for print materials across the entire state.
Information Literacy

The chart below shows that the library did see a 26% decrease in library instruction classes last year. As reported in the Staff section of this report, 2 of the 4 librarians retired midyear. In addition, a third librarian was on extended leave. That left 1 librarian and a temporary paraprofessional to teach information literacy classes during the first part of the spring semester.

Requests for instruction in the spring did drop. The assumption is that teaching faculty may have decided not to schedule classes for library instruction because of the reduction in librarians to teach information literacy. Also, the Stark Campus Library has grown its instructional efforts through its individual connections between librarian and teaching faculty. It should be expected that reducing the size of librarians (although temporarily) would have an effect on the number of instructional sessions. As the library continues to track the number of enrolled students coming in for library instruction, the decrease in classes last year resulted in the five year average lowering from 49% to 47%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Enrollment</th>
<th>4112</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classes Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136.8 2756.8</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-45   -827.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91.8   1929.76</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Last year, with a previously established goal of instructing half of enrolled students well within reach, the library upped its goal to 60% within the next 3-5 years. Last year’s reduction still makes that goal feasible. Still, specific strategies will be needed to increase instruction during that time period.
Spending for monographic materials went down by 10% last year:

In reviewing the library’s spending over the past 10 years, it is clear that purchases of print materials have decreased dramatically. While the portion spent by faculty has gone down, the average over the 10 year period is about $20,000. The bigger change is with the spending by library staff. It averaged $47,000. Last year the library portion of the budget was only about 35% of the average. In fact, for the first time, faculty spent more than librarians. As presented in last year’s report, there are several reasons for the decrease. The major reason, which is consistent with the decrease of other library statistics related to the use of print materials, is the prevalence of online resources. The costs for those resources are not included in the chart above. In addition, cooperative ventures within the Kent system as well as with OhioLINK, have reduced the need for print resources, particularly serials publications, which over the years have been duplicated online allowing the library to discard and stop purchasing their print equivalents. Those costs have always been recorded as library staff purchases, and resulted in the dramatic decrease in that portion of the budget. Since a significant part of library spending involves faculty and since spending by library staff has significantly decreased, strategic efforts need to be made to both increase faculty and library staff involvement in collection development.
Library Usage

This section focuses on three areas of usage:

1. Head Count
2. Circulation
3. Periodicals Usage/Cost per Use

Head Count

There were fewer users in the building counted each hour the library is open than the previous year. The number went down by 17%.

![Attendance Chart]

Although there has been a steady decline since 2009/2010, when attendance peaked at just under 89,000, the number of users counted is nearly exactly the same as 7 years ago. One issue that could have slightly contributed to the decrease is the fact that the library was closed on Saturdays in the spring. Attendance on Saturdays has always been low. Even though the library is open 6 hours on Saturdays and only 4 on Sundays, attendance on Sundays has typically exceeded attendance on Saturdays. Last year the campus stopped offering Saturday classes (or scheduled classes were canceled due to low enrollment). Other departments stopped offering services on Saturdays over the past few years. In the fall, the library was the only remaining department open on Saturdays. As a result, in the spring the library stopped offering hours on Saturdays with the expectation that if Saturday classes resumed or other campus activities were regularly planned for Saturdays, the library would consider resuming Saturday hours.

In terms of attendance based on location within the library, little has changed over the past 7 years. With more users coming into the library with their own computing devices...
(laptops, netbooks, tablets, and smart phones), an informal study was conducted by comparing the number of people using their devices to the number of people using our public workstations on the second floor. On random days at random times, those data were collected. The interesting outcome is that in every case, there were more people using their own device than were using the library’s public computers. The study was too informal to draw informative conclusions or develop specific plans. Still, future plans for public workstations and for providing better services (such as printing) for those who bring their own devices to campus should consider the results of this informal study.

![Attendance by Location](chart1.png)

**Circulation**

For the fourth straight year, circulation statistics (the number of times Stark Campus Library materials checked out) decreased:

![KentLINK Checkouts](chart2.png)
Once again, the theme of less reliance on print materials is the expected influence on these declining statistics. With more information available online and available from off campus, there is less need for users to come into the library to conduct their research. Another component of future strategic plans should be initiatives to bring more users into the building. Although the expectation for future attendance should be that online resources will make coming to the library less of a necessity as in the past, the library should create opportunities that make attendance in the library an attraction for users (particularly students); students should want (instead of need) to come to the library.

Periodicals Usage/Cost per Use

In recent years the library began tracking the use as well as the cost per use for both bound periodicals and current issues for subscriptions. With other measures of usage no longer tracked (reference transactions and database usage), usage of periodicals has now been added to this report (and presumably for future reports). Once again the concept of lower use for print materials appears with regards to print serials. While the overall costs for print journals has remained consistent (mostly because many subscriptions have been canceled over the years as journal titles become available online through repositories such as the OhioLINK Electronic Journal Center), the use of print journals has gone down significantly. Conversely, one obvious consequence is that the cost per use for print journals has skyrocketed.

The chart below illustrates the vast difference in costs between print and online journal articles. It has become nearly impossible to accurately determine both what constitutes an online article and the costs associated with its use. Given those limitations, costs have been estimated for online articles at (very roughly) around 37 cents per use. In comparison, more accurate information indicates that (according to the chart below) the cost for bound print volumes is about $625 per use. If use of current issues is included, the cost goes down to about $165 per use. From a purely business perspective, the library needs to assess the continued value of print subscriptions for journals that are rarely used.
Academic Year 15/16

Walkup Scanning Station
This past spring the library made a proposal for purchasing a scanning station. The proposal outlined several reasons for the purchase:

- It would provide a cheap or free way for users to get copies of printed materials.
- It would be faster and less frustrating for users than the older photocopy machines currently available.
- Scanning from above will preserve library materials; users would not have to risk damage to book spines to get a good quality image.
- Students enrolled in programs requiring portfolios could create a digital alternative.
- Faculty preparing reappointment, tenure, or promotion files would have a quick and easy method for digitizing printed materials.

Although its main purpose would be for public use, the library also plans to digitize its internal paperwork (invoices, for example). The proposal was accepted and the station is planned for installation during the coming fiscal year.

Marketing Library Services
With the declining use of library materials and attendance discussed in the Highlights section of this report, the library is making plans to implement marketing initiatives to stimulate greater awareness and use of library services. One effort will be targeted towards faculty by meeting with them one-on-one, providing them with information about how the library can support their teaching and research needs. The other initiative will be to promote more general, perhaps less academic services (like the coffee service), to students and other campus constituents.

Collection Shifting
Except for canceled serials, it has been a long time since the library weeded, inventoried, or shifted its print collection on the second floor. A concerted effort to identify serial subscriptions that are either online in a reliable repository or available in a sustainable fashion for older volumes (JSTOR maintains historical online content but does not carry current issues) was made so that individual serials titles would be allocated only the amount of space needed to maintain the subscription. The extra shelf space created by this serials project will be used to shift the general collection, which is becoming increasingly crowded, particularly in certain call number ranges.

A project of this scale is likely to take much if not all of the fall semester to complete. Another related project, resulting from a donation of music CDs by the Kent Campus Performing Arts Library, involves moving all of the music CDs to the first floor, creating more space for DVD videos, another collection in need of room for expansion.
Libguides Migration

Libguides have been a great asset for the creation of online content. They are easy to use, provide a wide range of technical capabilities, and can be managed internally by the library staff without needed support from information technology, educational technology, or network services staff. All library staff have the ability to create online Libguides but most of the content has been created by the Stark Campus librarians. This summer the library began the process of migrating from the current version to version 2 of Libguides. In an effort to make the Libguides look as much like our other web content created in Drupal, the Kent Campus helped customize the header and footer design. The rest of the preparation, which was quite extensive, was handled locally by the library’s Online Learning Librarian, Melissa Bauer. The migration is planned for early to mid-August.

Graduate Student Assistant

The library has a history of hiring graduate students enrolled in the Masters of Library and Information Science program at Kent State as student workers. These have been somewhat informal arrangements. This past year the library proposed creating a detailed description of a Graduate Student Assistant (GSA) position with clearly articulated paraprofessional job responsibilities. The goal of this position is to give a soon-to-be graduate of the program valuable experience to help her/him obtain a professional position after graduation. With previous Stark Campus Library student workers choosing this path, the job description included consideration for those applicants with a prior relationship with the Stark Campus. The position was approved and a GSA will be hired and start working in the fall of 2015.

Digital Commons

One of the responsibilities assigned to a new GSA will be to help Stark Campus faculty with creating and maintaining a profile of their research in KSU’s Digital Commons. The “Selected Works” component of this online service allows faculty to create profiles of their research and upload articles, presentations, etc. In addition, another component of the Digital Commons allows for the creation of conference proceedings. The library has already begun work to add presentations from the Stark Campus Student Conference held each spring. The library is making a strategic effort to support both faculty and student research and the Digital Commons is a natural vehicle for creating, maintaining, and promoting research. Other similar initiatives will be investigated for inclusion in the Digital Commons in the future.