Consortial Book Circulation Patterns: The OCLC-OhioLINK Study
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Abstract
The OhioLINK consortium and OCLC Research collected and analyzed circulation data for libraries within the consortium. The study, which examines the circulation of 28,475,701 items from more than 100 academic libraries, is the largest and most diverse compilation of academic usage data for books ever collected. The authors outline the study methodology, analyze the data, and offer insights into the consortium wide collection usage. Circulation patterns analyzed include subject and language usage, as well as scattering, obsolescence, and duplication. The study results and conclusions offer valuable insights for library collection planning including library purchasing, storage considerations, and future usage prediction.

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Of the three libraries involved in this study, more than 24% of the University of San Francisco’s collection is unique within LINK+, while Loyola Marymount and Santa Clara University each hold between 16 to 17% of the unique titles. Compared to traditional interlibrary loan, most of our patrons organically discover that LINK+ exists via links in our library catalog, thus increasing our ILL borrowing activity, especially for undergraduates. Over 90% of our total interlibrary loan traffic for books is via LINK+, which makes it plausible to use this data to assess the unmet demand for all patrons...

Consortial book circulation patterns: The OCLC-OhioLINK study. College & Research Libraries, 75(6), 791–807. 139 Charleston Conference Proceedings 2016. A 1977 study of book circulation at Columbia-Green Community College showed that only 35 percent of the books circulated in a fifteen-month period (Ettelt, 1978). Attempts to leverage the large investment in these collections and expand access to local patrons through interinstitutional borrowing privileges for faculty and graduate students or through interlibrary loan (ILL) were useful steps but represented a negligible increase in use compared to local borrowing. OhioLINK is not alone in discovering the increased cost effectiveness of sharing printed books rather than purchasing them. Unlike OhioLINK, these consortial members do not share a common automation system and must operate across state lines.