

September 2019

# LibGuides as a collection development tool: the case of North-West University, South Africa

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Bangani, Siviwe; Bangani, Siviwe; Masilo, Boitumelo; Kekana, Molly; and Moyo, Mathew, "LibGuides as a collection development tool: the case of North-West University, South Africa" (2019). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 2944.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/2944>

## **LibGuides as a collection development tool: the case of North-West University**

*This paper uses informetrics methods to explore the use of LibGuides to benchmark and select books at the Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University (NWU) in South Africa. The books selected or recommended by librarians in all public university LibGuides were identified and compared with those of NWU Library and Information Services-Mafikeng Campus. A list of all books that were not available at the Campus but conform to the collection development policy of NWU Library and Information Services was sent to the relevant academic departments for selection. The books that were recommended for purchase by the departments were then ordered. This study reports the results of this exercise. The availability of the books at North-West University, extent of their usage, their users and the publishers are determined. Among the findings is that 60.6% of the titles have been checked out in the last six months or so. The check-out rate was 0.93 times per title. Books published by publishers that have a strong local content performed well in terms of check-out rates. Another finding was that undergraduate students were more likely to borrow the books than the other user groups. The results of this study will add to the growing body of literature on the impact of LibGuides in academic libraries. It will also provide a new perspective of how LibGuides are used as a collection development tool in the developing world.*

**Keywords: LibGuides; collection development; collection management; acquisitions, circulation; research guides**

### **1. Introduction**

Collection development is one of the major tasks of academic librarianship (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2001). It involves painstaking processes of analysis and evaluation, benchmarking, selection, and deselection of library resources (Feather and Sturges, 2003). In most cases a good collection can be the difference between great and average libraries. Good library collections are not built through haphazard practices of hit and miss. They require careful planning, consultation, collaboration, and benchmarking with others (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2001). Hibner and Kelly (2010) define benchmarking as a standard way of measuring or judging the collection of a library against other libraries mostly of a similar kind and size. Benchmarking can assist libraries to gauge themselves against their peers, and to justify book purchases to the decision-makers (Masuchika, 2012). It is for that reason that good libraries spend considerable amounts of time in collection development activities in order to ensure that their collections meet most

needs of their users. In the case of academic libraries, those needs mainly involve the curricular and research activities of students and researchers. Due to the explosion of information and shrinking budgets (Kamila, 2011), academic libraries are forced to adopt strategies that will ensure that they use the most efficient and effective means of conducting collection development. To decrease the amount of time it takes to conduct collection development, the 21st century academic libraries have taken advantage of available technologies. LibGuides, described as a content management system (Bernier, 2010), are among the technologies that have a potential to complement available collection development tools (Metcalf, 2013). The use of LibGuides for collection development make it possible not only to develop, but also to evaluate the collection by identifying trends in the purchase of book titles in selected subject areas. LibGuides also assist to ascertain whether the existing collection is at a competing level with collections of peer institutions. According to Metcalf (2013) using LibGuides as a benchmarking and book selection tool can ensure that libraries purchase the most efficient and effective collections as books listed on LibGuides are recommended by librarians. Osorio (2015) also argues that the recommendations made by librarians on the LibGuides is a good parameter for collection development. Bangani and Tshetsha (2018) identified 1166 LibGuides in public universities in South African universities with 796 of these being faculty and department LibGuides. These are large numbers, which translate into a goldmine for benchmarking and book selection purposes.

This paper explores the use of LibGuides to benchmark and select books at the Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University (NWU). It is motivated by the desire to provide a new perspective of how LibGuides are used as a collection development tool in the developing world. Most studies in this area emanate from the developed world (Metcalf, 2013; Dougherty, 2013a, 2013b; Osorio, 2015). Unlike previous studies, however, this study also examines the usage of the books purchased using the LibGuides. Musoke and Mwesigwa (2017) supports the analysis of usage statistics to evaluate the impact of newly acquired books in academic libraries. This study is also unique in that it reports the practical use of LibGuides as a collection development tool while previous studies have focussed on how these platforms can be used as a collection development tool. This study can also be used to provide a rationale for the continued use of LibGuides in academic libraries as well as evidence of their impact and return on investment to the decision-makers. The study is divided into the following sections: definition of collection development and LibGuides, the North-West University Library and Information Services, objectives of the study, literature review, findings, and conclusion.

## **1. Definition of collection development and LibGuides**

The term collection development has its origins from library collections and development. Library collections are books, journals, databases, audiovisuals, theses and dissertations, newspapers, magazines and other resources that the library preserves for current and future users (Feather and Sturges, 2003; Kamila, 2011). The Oxford English Dictionary (2016) defines development as the action or process of bringing something to a fuller or more advanced condition. In simple terms, therefore, collection development is a process whereby librarians improve and advance library collections to meet the current and future users' information needs. Feather and Sturges (2003) observe that the term collection development is often used interchangeable with collection management. Feather and Sturges (2003) and Kamila (2011), argue that there is a distinction between collection development and collection management. While collection development involves the selection and acquisition of library resources, collection management also involves "managing the use of the collection, its storage, its organisation, and accessibility to the users" Kamila (2011:162). This makes collection development a part of collection management. Collection development is defined as a process of planning and building a useful and balanced collection of library materials over a period of years, based on the assessment of users' information needs, constrained by budgetary limitations. Collection development is a dynamic and continuous process that provides room for innovation. It never stops for as long as a library exists. Collection development is guided by the collection development policy of the library concerned (Feather and Sturges, 2003). It not only focusses on the current needs but also ensures that future needs will be met through good stewardship of the collections. According to the Allegheny County Library Association (2012), the purpose of collection development are to:

- Build an efficient and effective up-to-date collection that meets the curricular and research needs of users.
- Preserve information resources for current and future generations.
- Incorporate emerging resources and technologies into the collection.
- Ensure a balanced collection with regards to the types and formats of resources.
- Ensure a collection that meets the varied informational, educational, research, professional, recreational, and cultural needs of academic libraries.
- Ensure that the collection reflects the diversity of the library users in terms of language, social status, physical dis/ability, culture and others.

Kiilu and Kiilu (2014) point out that the most common tools used for collection development, particularly of the books, are Amazon, publishers' websites and catalogues, and other university libraries' catalogues. Other tools include the use of lending and interlibrary loans data (Bangani *et al.*, 2018). Lately, LibGuides are also used (Metcalf, 2013).

LibGuides were introduced to the world of librarianship in 2007 by Springshare (Osorio, 2014). They are defined as content management tools that allow librarians to organize and present library collections to users in a customizable fashion using Web 2.0 applications (Bushhousen, 2009; Bernier, 2010; Osorio, 2014; Bangani and Tshetsha, 2018). Metcalf (2013), and Bangani and Tshetsha (2018) lists some of the purposes of creating LibGuides as to:

- Recommend and market a selection of library collections, resources and services.
- Serve as a guide to users and staff on how to access certain library collections, resources, and services.
- Serve as a homepage where library collections, resources and services are highlighted
- Assist to collect statistics about the usage of certain library collections, resources and services.
- To benchmark and select books, and other resources and services.

As already stated, the last purpose of LibGuides is the subject of this study. However, it is important to understand the context within which a study takes place. Section 3 discusses the contextual framework of this study.

## **2. The North-West University Library and Information Services (NWU LIS)**

The NWU LIS exists to support the information needs of the North-West University community including students, researchers and academics. The University had 72,994 students in 2017, 16,167 of those were postgraduates and 56,579 were undergraduate students while 248 were occasional students (North-West University, 2017). There were 3,660 staff members of which 1,424 were teaching and research staff. In line with the three campuses of the university (Mafikeng, Vaal and Potchefstroom), NWU LIS has three campus libraries that support eight faculties of the university. Those faculties are Economic and Management Sciences (EMS), Education, Engineering, Health Sciences, Humanities, Law, Natural & Agricultural Sciences (FNAS), and Theology. In order to support the curricular and research needs of the University, the library is guided by the collection development and management policy. A policy statement of a library is a framework and set of parameters within which its

staff and users operate (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2001). A policy provides guidance to staff and users in conducting the collection development and management activities (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2001). The NWU collection development and management policy regulates the collection development budget, selection, acquisition, processing, weeding and discarding of all formats of information resources within the scope of the accepted structure of the NWU (Bangani *et al.*, 2018). The policy allows academics and faculty librarians to play a critical role in selecting and recommending information resources (Bangani *et al.* 2018). The collection resources' budgetary process of NWU LIS begins in February and ends in December of the particular year. All resources that were not purchased in the previous budgetary year are cancelled and reordered in the following year if they are still required. The most common practice is that faculty librarians select the relevant book titles using various collection development tools and then forward the lists to the departments for further selection and ratification. After further selection and ratification, the departments then send the lists back to the faculty librarians who do the necessary quality checks before forwarding them to the acquisitions section. The process of receiving the books after they have been purchased, processed and catalogued involves their display in the new book stands for perusal and possible borrowing by users. Katz (1990) and Aloi *et al.* (2007) support the display of new books in order to acquaint users with the new material and as a necessary symbol of the library's collection building. Bangani and others (2018) noticed that NWU LIS has more than one million catalogued items excluding online subscriptions to databases and other items on the institutional repository. Despite the varied collections, NWU LIS continues to develop and manage its collection to ensure that it is relevant and up-to-date.

### **3. Objectives of the study**

The main purpose of this study is to find out the use of LibGuides as a collection development tool at the North-West University. In order to respond to this purpose, the study has been divided into four objectives. Which are to:

- Analyse books listed on LibGuides in South Africa and confirm their availability at the North-West University.
- Determine the usage of books purchased using LibGuides.
- Identify the main publishers of those books.
- Determine the users of those books.

#### **4. Literature review**

The literature review has been divided into two subsections, which are the usage of new books in libraries, and studies on LibGuides as a collection development tool.

##### **5.1 Use of new books in libraries**

Musoke and Mwesigwa (2017) contend that books that are not used are not good for the collection no matter their quality. All libraries collect material with the sole purpose that they will be useful to their current or future users. It is for that reason that libraries use circulation statistics to evaluate the usefulness of their collections (Danielson, 2012; Kiilu and Kiilu, 2014). Adams (2008) argues that an analysis of recent acquisitions is necessary for the improvement of future collection development practices. Adams (2008) analysed the circulation of books purchased at the Swain Hall Library and noticed that the circulation of books also differ based on publishers. There were 303 books purchased from Springer, followed by 100 from World Scientific, and 94 from Kluwer Academic. Prentice-Hall books circulated more than 12.4 times on average, followed by Chapman & Hall/CRC at 10, and Wiley at 8.9 times on average. The American Institute of Physics had the lowest circulation average at 1.3 times followed by Astronomical Society of the Pacific at 2 on average. The usage of older books was higher at 7.1 on average for books published from 1995 or before, and 8.7 on average from 1996-2000. Jobe and Levine-Clark (2008) compared the circulation and non-circulation of books from outstanding academic titles, choice reviewed titles, and general books. They found that 44.89% from the outstanding academic titles, 50.69% of books from the choice review titles and 68.64% from the general books, never circulated. Danielson (2012) studied the usage of the collection of two campuses of the B. L. Fisher Library in the United States and determined that on average 37% of all new monographs acquired for Kentucky and 30% of all monographs acquired for Florida between 2003 and 2008 were checked out at some time. Kiilu and Kiilu (2014) conducted a study to determine the usage of new books purchased two and a half years earlier at the Egerton University Library and found that approximately 39% of the books do not show evidence of ever having been used. Chen-Gaffey and Getsay (2015) compared the circulation of e-books against print books from 2011 till 2015 at the Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. They found that the circulation statistics for print books fell over the 5 years from 6.1% in 2011 to 3.0% in 2015 for HV (section included social pathology, social and public welfare, and criminology) and from 5.9% in 2011 to 5.2% in 2015 for ML-MT (section included music literature, musical instruments, and study). The circulation

of books titles also decreased from 233 out of 4,459 titles in 2011 to 131 out of 4,731 in 2015. Musoke and Mwesigwa (2017) were interested in the usage of books purchased using the Carnegie Corporation of New York's donation at Makerere University. The authors report that 4,489 books out of the 11,811 were used in four weeks. In terms of the category of users that made use of the books, 38% were level 2, followed by level 1 (35%), level 3 (17%) and level 4 (9%). Staff only formed 0.1% of users that borrowed the books. Franks and Dotson (2017) noticed that there were differences in the preferred publishers in theses and dissertations among disciplines. Wiley was found to be the number one publisher by citations on Civil Engineering and Physics theses and dissertations while Springer led in Mathematics and Computer Science. The rest of the top five publishers across all subjects whose books were cited were published by international publishers like Springer, Pearson, Oxford University Press, Cambridge, Pearson and others.

## **5.2 Role of LibGuides in collection development**

Several studies have been conducted on the possible role of LibGuides in collection development. Those studies include Stankus and Parker (2012), Metcalf (2013), Dougherty (2013a), Dougherty (2013b), Van Dyk (2015), Osorio (2015), and Johnson and Johnson (2017).

Stankus and Parker (2012) compared nursing LibGuides in the United States, and highlighted the type of resources covered in these including books. They determined that forty-six of the fifty LibGuides listed individual electronic books or book collections. There were 526 print and electronic books recommended by librarians in those LibGuides. Among those titles, there were 442 unique titles. This shows that there is very little consensus between the nursing librarians of different institutions on the most important books recommended for nursing. There were a few titles, however, that were mentioned on different LibGuides including the American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association 2010) which was mentioned on twenty-one different LibGuides. Other leading titles included Drug Facts and Comparisons (Facts & Comparisons, Inc. 2012), Davis's Drug Guide for Nurses (Deglin, Vallerand, and Sanoski 2010), and Mosby's Nursing Drug Reference (Skidmore-Roth 2012). Stankus and Parker (2012) further mention Lippincott Manual of Nursing Practice (Nettina 2010), Mosby's Medical, Nursing & Allied Health Dictionary (Mosby, Inc. 2009), and Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary (Dorland 2012) as accounting for 46 of 526 print and electronic books recommended. Stankus and Parker (2012) found no marked differences between schools that offer only undergraduate programs and those that offer postgraduate programs. The authors

also noticed a tendency to feature print book covers even where electronic titles were recommended presumably to attract the attention of the users.

Metcalf (2013) used LibGuides for benchmarking sociology information resources of other institutions with those of the Hunter Library of the Western Carolina University. The author used a sample of 96 sociology LibGuides with 469 reference titles. It was established that 21 sociology reference titles were recommended on at least 10 LibGuides and these were determined as the core sociology titles. More than 50% of the titles were listed on only one LibGuide. Like Stankus and Parker (2012), Metcalf (2013) found very little consensus between the sociology librarians in terms of the books they recommend on the LibGuides. Metcalf (2013) concluded that some of the reasons for the high number of titles listed on only one LibGuide was a result of the high number of reference materials available to the sociology librarians or as a result of the librarians' different personal preferences.

Dougherty (2013a) studied forty geography LibGuides in the United States and found that almost all the LibGuides linked to either individual titles of books or ebooks packages. This study also found little consensus with regards to the top Geography books among the LibGuides owners. Of the 464 titles recommended on LibGuides, 403 or 86.9 percent, were unique titles. The CIA World Factbook (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 2012) was the most popular title as it was listed on eleven LibGuides followed by Sage's Encyclopedia of Human Geography (Warf 2006) which was mentioned on eight LibGuides. Other titles include the Mayhew's Dictionary of Geography (2010), Statistical Abstract of the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2012) which were both mentioned six times. The Oxford's Atlas of the World (Oxford University Press 2012) and the Columbia Gazetteer of the World (Cohen 2008) were mentioned on four LibGuides. Dougherty (2013a) also noticed a tendency of smaller libraries to list more books than bigger libraries. This was attributed to the fact that the smaller libraries offered more undergraduate introductory courses.

Dougherty (2013b) studied forty Geology LibGuides in the United States and determined that the Geology librarians had recommended 698 books. Like in other studies (Stankus and Parker, 2012; Metcalf, 2013; Dougherty, 2013a) this study found very little consensus between the librarians on the top titles in Geology. Eleven of those LibGuides recommended the Oxford Companion to the Earth (Hancock and Skinner 2000), followed by the Elsevier's Encyclopedia of Volcanoes by Sigurdsson (2000) and the McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science & Technology (1997). The American Geosciences Institute's Glossary of Geology (Neuendorf,

Mehl, and Jackson 2005) and the USGS's Minerals Yearbook (1933) were recommended in six of the LibGuides each. There were six other titles recommended in at least five LibGuides.

Van Dyk (2015) studied thirty-seven theology LibGuides from thirty-three United States libraries and four others from Canada, Australia, and South Africa. There were 315 print or electronic books recommended to users. Two-hundred and sixty eight titles of those were unique titles meaning that they were recommended only once. Of the thirty-three titles recommended by more than one LibGuide, only eight were recommended from at least three LibGuides meaning that twenty-five were recommended only twice.

Osorio (2015) was interested to know the recommended resources on Electrical engineering LibGuides. Osorio selected a sample of 48 Electrical engineering LibGuides and came up with a list of books selected by the Electrical engineering librarians. Osorio (2015) argues that the annotated list of resources may assist other librarians in collection development.

Johnson and Johnson (2017) studied 45 Physician Assistant's LibGuides and found that they listed 1,053 total books at an average of 23.4 books per LibGuide. Of the one thousand and fifty-three titles, 624 were unique appearing only once. From the 428 titles that appear in more than one LibGuide, six book titles were mentioned more than 10 times.

## **5. Methodology**

This is a quantitative study that uses informetrics methods. Informetrics are concerned with studying the quantitative aspects of information (Feather and Sturges, 1997). Two Excel spreadsheets were used to collect data. The first spreadsheet was meant to collect book titles on LibGuides in South Africa and to determine their availability at NWU. It had the following columns: title, author, year, university (where the book on the LibGuide is listed), Faculty (where the books belongs based on the NWU faculties), Availability at NWU (Y/N), and Availability at Mafikeng Campus (Y/N). The aim of the first spreadsheet was to collect data for benchmarking purposes. It responded to the first objective of this study. The second spreadsheet was meant to answer the last three objectives of the study. It was divided into eight columns which are: author, title, publisher, usage/circulation, current status (checked in or out), user category (if it has been checked out), availability on other NWU campuses, and notes. The notes column allowed the researchers to write any interesting facts about the books such as times renewed, out on ILL or intercampus resources sharing, lost, and other facts about the

circulation of books that were found to be relevant for purposes of this study. The Sierra circulation system of the library was used to determine the usage/circulation, current status, and user category. The spreadsheets were then sorted according to different columns for analysis purposes. The results are presented in tables and graphs.

## 6. Findings and discussions

This section presents the findings of the study as well as the discussions thereof. These are presented according to the objectives.

### 7.1 Books listed on LibGuides in South Africa and their availability at NWU

It was noticed in this study that owners select and publish titles on their LibGuides for different purposes. The selections range from new books, prescribed and recommended books, reference books, research and writing books, to general librarians' recommendations. Table 1 depicts the number of university LibGuides, the number of books listed, and their availability at NWU.

**Table 1: Number of LibGuides, books listed by librarians, and the availability of those books at NWU**

Name of University	Number of LibGuides	Number of books listed by librarians	Number of books available in NWU LIS	Average number of books per LibGuide	Percentage of books available at NWU LIS
Cape Town	121	1793	454	14.82	25.32
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	71	438	132	6.17	30.14
KwaZulu-Natal	63	177	62	2.81	35.03
Western Cape	51	198	100	3.88	50.51
Rhodes	75	481	138	6.41	28.69
UNISA	125	501	268	4.01	53.49
Pretoria	84	236	90	2.81	38.14
Free State	16	77	45	4.81	58.44
Central University of Technology	7	28	8	4	28.57

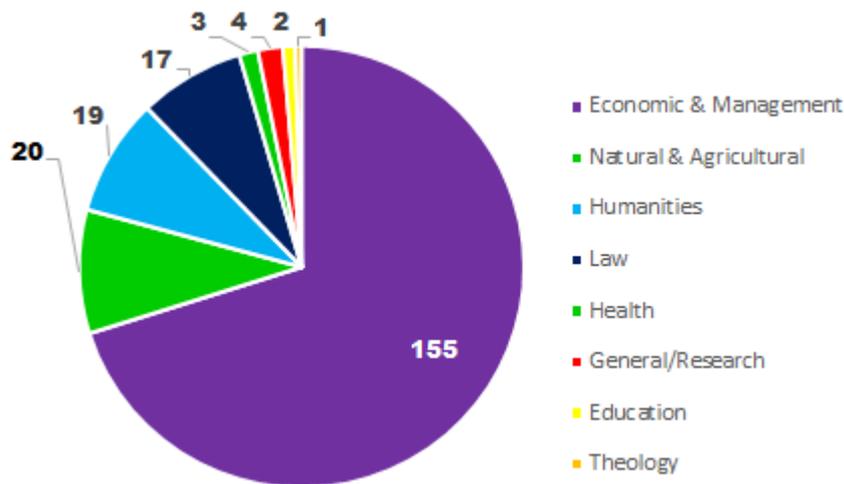
Venda	9	10	9	1.11	90
Fort Hare	20	41	30	2.05	73.17
Durban University of Technology	83	305	164	3.68	53.77
Stellenbosch	89	93	39	1.05	41.94
Johannesburg	118	160	81	1.36	50.63
WITS	178	306	135	1.72	44.12
North-West	58	113	113	1.95	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1168</b>	<b>4957</b>	<b>1868</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>37.68</b>

The number of LibGuides in South African public universities has slightly increased since Bangani and Tshetsha (2018) conducted a study on their impact and deployment which concluded that there were 1166 LibGuides. Those LibGuides list 4957 books of which 1847 fall under humanities, 1152 fall under the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, 808 under Economic and Management Sciences, 326 under Health Sciences, 215 fall under Engineering, 159 under Law, 157 under Education, 49 under Theology, and 244 fall under research and general. On average, each public university LibGuide lists 4.24 titles of books. This average is lower than the ones found by Stankus and Parker (2012) (10.5), Metcalf (2013) (4.9), Dougherty (2013a) (11.6), Dougherty (2013b) (17.5), Van Dyk (2015) (8.5) and Johnson and Johnson (2017) (23.4). This suggests that South African LibGuides lists a lower number of books than those at the United States of America. Only 35.4% of books listed in other universities' LibGuides are also available at NWU. Studies by Stankus and Parker (2012), Metcalf (2013), Dougherty (2013a), Dougherty (2013b), Van Dyk (2015), Osorio (2015), and Johnson and Johnson (2017) also found very little consensus on what was listed on LibGuides. It is possible that the reason for the little consensus could be the non-availability of the books in other libraries. The lack of consensus, therefore, is not only on the listing of the titles but also on the availability of the titles at the NWU library. The fact that more than 64% of books listed in these platforms are not available at NWU makes them an attractive platform for collection development purposes.

## 7.2 Analysis of books purchased using LibGuides and their usage or circulation

The second objective of this study seeks to analyse the books purchased using LibGuides as well as their circulation. **Figure 1** shows the faculty representation of titles purchased using LibGuides at NWU while **Figure 2** shows the circulation of those books in the last few months.

### **Figure 1: Faculty representation of titles purchased using LibGuides**



**Figure 2: Circulation of books purchased using LibGuides**



**Figure 1** shows that there were 257 titles from the LibGuides that were recommended for purchase by the librarians and the faculty. Out of the 257 titles, nine were ordered as electronic books. 20 are still on order. Five are “in process” meaning that they are still being processed in the Cataloguing section. Two titles were already out of print by the time they were ordered. These thirty-six titles were excluded in the analysis of the circulation statistics as they had no chance of circulating. Danielson (2012) also excluded all books listed as “on order” or on the want list in analysing the usage of books at the B. L. Fisher Library in the United States. Interestingly, eighty-one of the titles selected were available in either the Vaal or Potchefstroom Campus of NWU. Twelve of those are also prescribed in those two campuses. Another interesting fact is that two of those twelve titles are also prescribed in Mafikeng but were not available. Two books were lost with one “lost and paid” while the other has a status

of “lost and billed” meaning that it has not yet been paid. A further three titles were overdue and “billed”. The number of books selected does not necessarily reflect the amount of books listed under a faculty. **Figure 2** indicates that more than 60.6% (or 134 of 221) titles have already seen the outside of the library. The 134 books circulated for 205 times when discounting the 26 renewals that they underwent. On average, each title circulated for 0.93 times. This is very impressive given that these books have only been in the library for just more than six months. This not only confirms LibGuides as an effective collection development tool but it also supports the display of new books (Katz, 1990; Aloï et al., 2007) by librarians at the North-West University. The displays give the new books the necessary exposure for the users to peruse and borrow them (Katz, 1990; Aloï et al., 2007). Forty-one books were checked out by June/July 2018, the period when this study was conducted. Out of the 41 books checked out, three were part of interlibrary loan requests from the Universities of: Kwazulu-Natal, Pretoria and South Africa. One was out on intercampus resource sharing at the Potchefstroom Campus. The fact that these books have been requested via interlending services further supports the use of LibGuides in collection development. These books may also be considered for purchase by the libraries that requested them from the Mafikeng Campus (Bangani *et al.*, 2018). The results of this study seem somewhat similar to those of Kiilu and Kiilu (2014) who found that 61% of titles purchased at Egerton University Library circulated. A crucial difference, however, exists in the circulation period of the books. The books at the Egerton University Library had two and a half years of circulation compared to just more than six months for the current study. Based on the circulation period it can be argued that the books purchased using LibGuides at the North-West University will outperform those of Egerton University Library in the long run. The results of this study appear to differ with Musoke and Mwesigwa (2017) who determined the usage of new books purchased using the Carnegie Corporation of New York’s donation at Makerere University to be 0.4 times on average over a four week period. However, the books at Makerere University did not have enough time to circulate by the time the authors conducted their study. Though, Adams’ (2008) study indicated a better circulation of books than the current study, it is possible that the books in the current study will reach some of the levels reported by Adams in a few years’ times. That is if the books continue to circulate at the same rate in the upcoming six months’ periods. The usage of the books at the North-West University is already much better than Jobe and Levine-Clark (2008), Danielson (2012), and Chen-Gaffey and Getsay (2015). Jobe and Levine-Clark (2008) determined that 50.69% of books from the choice review titles and 68.64% from the general books never circulated. Danielson (2012) found the check-out rate to be 37% and 30% at the

Kentucky and Florida Campuses, respectively, of B. L. Fisher Library in the United States. In the case of Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, Chen-Gaffey and Getsay (2015) determined that only 6.1% of the HV books circulated in 2011 while there were 3.0% in 2015. There were 5.9% circulation of books in the ML-MT section in 2011. This figure decreased to 5.2% in 2015. The Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania and B. L. Fisher Library's figures, however, included books ordered for purposes of stewardship. In the case of the books ordered using the LibGuides only the books with the potential for current usage were targeted.

### 7.3 Main publishers of books purchased using LibGuides and their circulation

To respond to the third objective of this study, the publishers of the books were grouped and counted. Table 2 presents the main publishers of the books purchased using LibGuides.

**Table 2: The main publishers of the books purchased using LibGuides at NWU**

<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Pearson</b>	<b>McGraw-Hill</b>	<b>Cengage</b>	<b>LexisNexis</b>	<b>OUP*</b>	<b>Wiley</b>	<b>Routledge</b>	<b>Juta</b>	<b>Van Schaik</b>
<b>Number of books</b>	30	26	23	17	17	12	12	11	9
<b>Circulation</b>	23	13	20	37	7	3	26	12	11
<b>check-out rate per title</b>	0.77	0.5	0.87	2.18	0.41	0.25	2.17	1.09	1.22

\*Oxford University Press

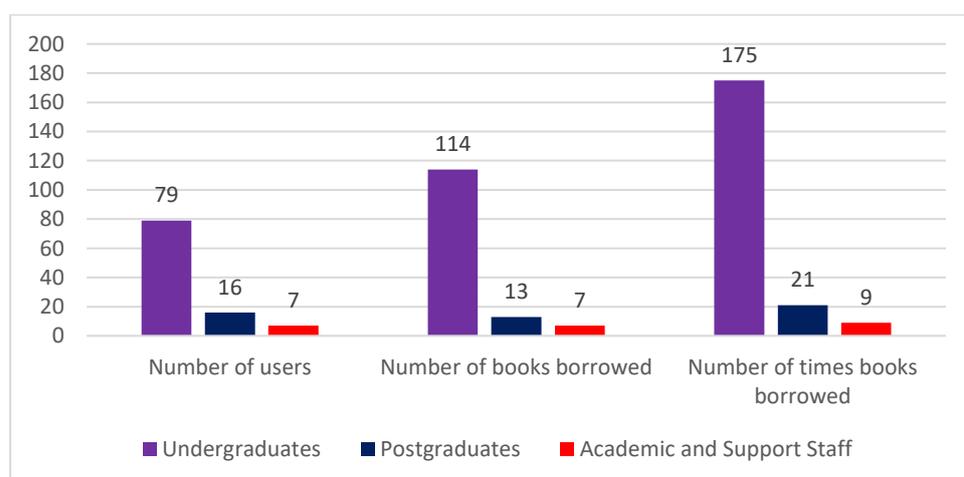
There were 39 different publishers of the books purchased using LibGuides. The majority of those publishers did not provide more than five titles. Publishers with more than five titles on the list were further analysed to determine their influence. The top nine publishers by the number of books purchased provided 157 books that circulated 152 times at an average of 0.97 per title. Though this average is slightly higher than the general average, Wiley, Oxford University Press, Cengage, McGraw-Hill, and Pearson performed way below the average. The good performance of the legal publishers, LexisNexis and Juta, could be attributed to the fact that the two titles on the LibGuides list that were found to be prescribed at the Mafikeng Campus are published by those two publishers. The performance of these two publishers, Van Schaik, and Routledge could also be attributed to the fact that their books have a strong local content that is popular with students and researchers. Routledge's performance was also assisted by some specialised research titles which circulated more than the average. These results differ with Adams (2008) who found Prentice-Hall books circulated more than 12.4 on average, followed by Chapman & Hall/CRC at 10 and other major international publishers

following thereafter. These results partly differ with Franks and Dotson (2017) who determined that the most cited books by postgraduate students were published by the big international commercial publishers. These results may point to a difference in usage of books between the developed world and the developing world. In the case of the developing world, books with a local content seem to perform far better than the “international ones”. LexisNexis, Juta, Van Schaik, and Routledge African Studies series are known for their strong local content. In fact, the majority of prescribed books in Law in South African universities are published by LexisNexis and Juta (University of the Witwatersrand, 2018). In Franks and Dotson (2017), Wiley was found to be the number one publisher by citations on Civil Engineering and Physics theses and dissertations while Springer led in Mathematics and Computer Science. There are, however, some similarities with Franks and Dotson (2017). Oxford University Press, Cambridge, and Pearson, some of the largest book publishers (Milliot, 2016), are the common top publishers by number of books purchased in this list and those of Franks and Dotson (2017).

#### 7.4 Users of books purchased using LibGuides

The last objective was to determine the users of the books purchased using LibGuides. **Figure 3** represents the type of users of the books.

**Figure 3: The different user groups of books purchased using LibGuides at the North-West University.**



**Figure 3** demonstrates that 102 different users used the books purchased using LibGuides so far at the North-West University. More than 77% of those users were undergraduate students followed by postgraduates who make just less than 16%, and then lastly staff who make less

than 7% of the users. Though undergraduates make up just more than 77% of the users of the books, they tend to borrow the books repeatedly than other groups as they have borrowed 114 or more than 85% of the 134 books. Given that some of the titles are prescribed at undergraduate level at NWU, the repeat usage of the books by undergraduate students is not surprising. Musoke and Mwesigwa (2017) also found that core-textbooks at the Makerere University have higher than normal circulation rates. Postgraduates, who form just less than 16% of all borrowers, borrowed close to 10% of the books, followed by staff who borrowed just more than 5% of the books. Another noticeable trend with staff and postgraduates is that they were more likely to renew books than the undergraduates as they are responsible for 15 of the 26 renewals alluded to earlier. The results of this study show a similar tendency as those of Musoke and Mwesigwa (2017) who determined that staff and senior students are not the biggest users of books. There are three possible reasons for the low number of postgraduate students who borrowed these books. Postgraduates and staff are unlikely to conduct research in the same areas hence they tend to consult different titles. Secondly, postgraduate students tend to make more use of journals (Pouris and Pouris, 2015) and conference proceedings than books. Lastly, NWU has low numbers of postgraduate students compared to undergraduate students (North-West University, 2017).

## **8. Limitations of the study**

This is the first study on the actual use of LibGuides for collection building and the analysis thereof. Current studies only conduct benchmarking and examine the possible use of LibGuides for collection building. As such, no direct comparison could be made with other similar studies as they do not exist at the moment.

## **9. Conclusion**

Collection development is a critical component of any library. The relevance of a library to its body of users is to a large extent dependant on the library's ability to meet the needs of its users. Much as collection development in academic libraries is a joint responsibility between the librarian and faculty, the former holds more stake in the equation. The librarian has to be not just proactive in collection development, but also creative and innovative as a way to ensure that relevant collections are acquired for the good of the user. Various collection development tools such as vendor websites and catalogues, have to be used to develop impressive book collections. This study has successfully argued that LibGuides can be used as useful tools for collection development in academic libraries. Based on the study findings, it can also be concluded that undergraduate students rely more on books than their postgraduate counterparts

who are believed to rely more on the electronic journals. The study findings further reveal that benchmarking of collections through LibGuides positively impact collection development as the books acquired were highly active in terms of their circulation to users. From the study findings, it can be further deduced that users preferred books from publishers with focus on local content, to publishers with a general focus.

This study has implications for academic libraries in South Africa and other countries. It shows that LibGuides should be considered as one of the collection development tools in libraries. These results also point to an incidental impact of LibGuides in academic libraries that can also assist to prove their value to the powers that be. Further, these results can be used to show the capability of librarians to recommend relevant material to the users. These results also support the collaboration between librarians and academic departments in book selection as shown by the high usage of the books selected through LibGuides.

As a recommendation, it is suggested that the development of LibGuides, should be encouraged at all university libraries as it has proved to be a useful tool in aiding collection development. Since this study focussed only on one campus of the North-West University, a study of a large number of universities including the entire NWU is recommended with a view to establish trends and impact of LibGuides as tools for collection development.

### **Acknowledgements**

The role of Vuyo Ngayeka, Louw Venter and Nomzingisi Madikane in the data collection for this study is greatly acknowledged. This paper was developed from a poster presented at the annual conference of the Library and Information Association of South Africa. The authors were not funded by any organisation or company to conduct this study.

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