

Optimizing Library Services – Are the Top Institutions in the U.S. Acquiring Diverse Content?



By Ms. **Caroline Campbell** (Director of Author Services, IGI Global) <ccampbell@igi-global.com>

and Ms. **Brittany Haynes** (Sales and Marketing Coordinator, eBook & eJournal Collections, IGI Global) <bhaynes@igi-global.com>

Column Editor: **Mr. Nick Newcomer** (Senior Director of Marketing and Sales, IGI Global) <nnewcomer@igi-global.com>

Diversity and Inclusion. These two words seem to be everywhere, from the news headlines around the most recent shootings to higher education institutions noting their commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. However, for many, these words have truly come to the forefront over the past year due to factors including the COVID-19 pandemic, social unrest, and civic rights movements (#BLM, #MeToo, Pride Month, #StopAsianHate, etc.). In the previous issue of *Against the Grain*, we discussed exactly how libraries and publishers can collaborate in encouraging diversity and inclusivity through partnering together on acquisitions efforts and through diversified and comprehensive e-Collections.

This included providing opportunities to acquire research on DEI, as well as research being produced by underrepresented groups and developing countries, providing OA opportunities to underfunded departments, accessibility of resources, and more. Based on these solutions and the argument noted in our previous article, we wanted to dive deeper into libraries' holdings to review the breadth of diversity in single title acquisitions and continue the discussion of how e-Collections enable institutions to increase diversity in their holdings.

The Problem: What Are the Barriers to Producing Truly Diverse and International Research?

According to a report completed by UNESCO Institution for Statistics, from 2009 to 2017, the overall global spending in research and development grew by more than 40% percent with the United States and China dominating nearly half of this spending. ExLibris (a ProQuest Company) and Researcher Professional expounded on the above report and statistics in their "Global Funding Trends" report and found that, unsurprisingly, the larger economies are the largest funders of research, development, and higher education with increased gross-domestic product from private institutions and governmental initiatives in support of public and private research. The majority of the countries that are increasing their funding included regions throughout the United States, European Union, China, and isolated countries in Asia (including Japan, South Korea, etc.) (Bisson, Robin, 2020, p. 2).

Through this, naturally, more research output is coming from these regions as they have more resources for scientific advancements. However, this result can cause a vacuum throughout the academic landscape, where only developed countries are funded in research, scholars from these regions have the most recognition, and publications/research coming from these regions have the highest reach.

One of the direct ways that publishers can contribute to the resolution of this issue is to not only put together coalitions to combat this but also publish quality research coming from developing nations. This will in turn support not only the individual researcher but provide additional opportunities to the institution through the researchers' efforts. Oppositely,

when libraries assist and acquire research from these areas, it increases the overall citation impact of the titles, helps support publishing the research, as well as provides additional potential collaborations between researchers from developed and developing nations. To review if libraries are actively acquiring research from diverse nations, we reviewed the top 15 prestigious United States institutions that are currently acquiring IGI Global reference books (print and electronic format).

The Analysis: Are Institutions Acquiring Titles from Underrepresented Research?

For context, IGI Global has been an international academic publisher for over 30+ years, and we work directly with over 100,000+ authors and editors to publish the latest, peer-reviewed research across 11 core subject areas, including:

- Business and Management
- Computer Science and Information Technology
- Education
- Environment and Agriculture
- Government and Law
- Library and Information Science
- Media and Communications
- Medicine and Healthcare
- Science and Engineering
- Security and Forensics
- Social Sciences and Humanities

Through these content areas and our vast network of authors and editors, we have been able to publish over 6,000+ reference books and over 175+ scholarly journals represented both individually and through our e-Collections that contain research from nearly every country across all continents, including North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, etc.

Through our steadfast pledge to put the research community and underrepresented research concepts before profit, we also ensure that there are diverse perspectives in every title that we publish with a deep regional diversity in our edited publications, as well as diversity in the reviewers that are conducting the double-blind peer review process. Understanding the current limitations of many serials' budgets, this analysis was conducted reviewing our current reference book customers. Annually, we are publishing up to 600 titles across the noted regions above, and the diversity of our editor- and authorship is noted as the following:

- 20% of titles are edited/authored by researchers in North America.
- 10% are edited/authored by researchers in South America.
- 20% are edited/authored by researchers in Europe.

- 10% are edited/authored by researchers in Eastern Europe.
- 15% are edited/authored by researchers in the Middle East and Africa.
- 15% are edited/authored by researchers in Asia and China.
- 10% are edited/authored by researchers in Oceania (Australia and New Zealand).
- < 1% Other or Not Identified

Through analyzing the 15 institutions' holdings, each institution has acquired on average 200 titles of our overall reference book collection with most of their holdings spanning across 2005-2021 copyright years and across all of our 11 subject areas. Utilizing the noted regions above, find in *Table 1* the percentage breakdown of the acquisitions of the libraries in correlation to the regions of the leadership of the publications acquired.

From the chart, individuals can see that the highest percentages of acquisitions across all institutions include titles coming from North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, with the lowest percentages being reported for China, Latin and South America, and Oceania (New Zealand and Australia).

Understanding that this is a smaller data set, it is important to note that one of the factors that can affect the data is that this analysis includes both our authored and edited reference books. Our edited reference publications have chapters that have been contributed to by various scholars around the world to provide a diverse perspective. For example, for institution one (1), the majority of their reference book acquisitions are titles that are edited by researchers from the Middle East and Africa, but upon a deeper dive into the titles that they are acquiring, over 50% of the contributions of the titles are coming directly from North America and Asia (including China, Japan, and South Korea).

Although these percentages may not correlate directly to the report noted above, it is clear through these holdings specific regions are more largely represented through single title acquisitions. Therefore, it is important for libraries to analyze their overall collections for true diversity and inclusion through their individual title acquisitions, perhaps by looking more closely at e-Collections acquisitions options.

The Opportunity: How Can More Institutions Ensure That They Can Acquire Underrepresented Research?

Librarians Rhonda Kauffman, from University of Connecticut, USA, and Martina S. Anderson, from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, explain in their open access chapter, "Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice in Library Technical Services," how librarians are able to review their collections for diversity and inclusion and work directly with their staff to promote diversity not only within their outreach programs but also their acquisitions. Kauffman and Anderson explained (2020):

In 2020, MIT libraries created a task force to review and implement DEI values through their archives, technical services, preservation, scholarly communications, and collections strategy staff. Through this, they create definitions for diversity, inclusion, and equity to provide a common understanding of these terms within their institution. Additionally, they did a review of how this institution directly correlated with:

1. **The scholarly publishing and academic library marketplace:** exploring ways in which our actions can affect changes on the academic library marketplace that has increasingly seen intrusions of the market and corporate values that are in conflict with library missions and goals of advancing equitable access to knowledge and social justice.
2. **Representation of marginalized perspectives:** exploring ways in which libraries and archives can expand the breadth of information resources to include voices that have been historically marginalized.
3. **Community inclusion and outreach:** exploring ways to more accurately reflect the diversity and connect more genuinely with the communities we serve.
4. **Building organizational infrastructure for diversity, inclusion, and social justice:** exploring ways in which library staff at all levels, and especially administrators, must allow time and provide support to effectively shift to a DISJ framework (p. 221).

Additionally, they created a questionnaire to instill thinking about these topics in their staff ranging from "Do my current workflows favor one ethnic group, perspective, language, or type of resource over another?" and "Can I use vendors that represent local, smaller, family-, minority- or women-owned businesses" (Kauffman & Anderson, 2020, p. 222)? Through these initiatives, MIT libraries were able to critically review their holdings and find gaps in their literature as well as acquire additional resources to ensure that representations are widely applied.

Various reports and studies have been completed by the academic community at large on ways to increase overall diversity in collections and acquisitions. Tactics include task forces, like the MIT libraries, as well as "diversity audits" (reviewing the cultural backgrounds of authors and editors in a sample or the full collection and cross-referencing with the United States census) have

Table 1: Regional Breakdown of Acquired IGI Global Reference Books for 15 Top United States Institutions

Region	North America	Asia	Latin & S. America	The Middle East & Africa	Eastern Europe	Europe	India	China	Oceania
Institution 1	19%	6%	1%	20%	11%	14%	24%	4%	1%
Institution 2	33%	8%	1%	17%	10%	20%	8%	1%	2%
Institution 3	39%	6%	1%	18%	9%	17%	6%	1%	2%
Institution 4	32%	3%	3%	14%	5%	6%	19%	3%	9%
Institution 5	14%	6%	1%	17%	19%	15%	17%	3%	2%
Institution 6	19%	7%	1%	19%	13%	11%	11%	4%	6%
Institution 7	16%	6%	6%	11%	11%	16%	14%	2%	6%
Institution 8	23%	8%	2%	21%	8%	13%	4%	2%	4%
Institution 9	35%	2%	2%	13%	6%	12%	10%	0%	4%
Institution 10	26%	5%	0%	10%	0%	24%	7%	0%	5%
Institution 11	29%	5%	3%	8%	7%	21%	15%	2%	7%
Institution 12	25%	0%	4%	0%	7%	11%	4%	0%	7%
Institution 13	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Institution 14	29%	0%	5%	5%	3%	15%	18%	0%	3%
Institution 15	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%

been implemented (Mortensen, 2019). However, one of the large barriers to acquiring additional titles and fully enacting these initiatives is overall library resources, including staff, time, and money.

Through this, e-Collections provide a streamlined opportunity to acquire fully diverse research and partnering directly with the publisher provides a streamlined opportunity to ensure that collections are focused on DEI. Companies including EBSCO, ProQuest, and Gale provide a “Diversity and Inclusivity” e-Collection to help streamline the process of diversity audits by cultivating research from multiple perspectives and backgrounds. These collections are specially curated by LIS professionals to assist in streamlining collection development and acquiring inclusive content. Additionally, IGI Global specifically offers their e-Book and e-Journal Collections, which provide opportunities to acquire all of our research from the above regions to enhance current e-Collections, which is especially pertinent with the recent shift in demand for electronic resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through these e-Collections, libraries cannot only ensure that diverse backgrounds, international perspectives, and research on the topic of diversity and across all core subject areas are acquired, but it also provides cost savings to enable them to acquire resources at a fraction of the individual list price.

For example, IGI Global’s average title costs are US\$ 250; whereas, in our e-Book Collection it is as low as US\$ 8. Taking the analysis above as an example, each of the institutions has acquired over 200 of our titles, which would average to over US\$ 50,000. Whereas, the institutions could have invested in the e-Book Collection for a better overall value with a much larger number of titles for the same or lesser price (when considering credits) and had all regions fully represented through the research. It is also important to note that through having a larger pool of research available to institutions and libraries more readily acquiring underrepresented research through e-Collections, there is a larger opportunity for the research to be utilized and cited, which drives the indexing of publications and, as we know, the overall advancement of that research and their research. Comprehensive e-Collections also cover a more diverse ground in research topics, ensuring institutions’ researchers in niche or underrepresented areas have more options in access to resources they can utilize for course development, research, professional development, and more.

It can also pave the way for additional open access funding for institutions through models like IGI Global’s OA Fee Waiver (Read and Publish) Model that matches the libraries’ investment in any IGI Global e-Collection to go towards 100% OA APC Waivers and support OA publishing for researchers. Through this, we have seen libraries be able to assist in funding underrepresented groups in their institutions to publish under OA, as well as utilize the funding to go towards departments that are underfunded.

In a CHOICE webinar (2019) on creating an inclusive collection, Ellen Bosman, Head of Technical Services of New Mexico State University, stated, “If we [libraries] only purchase the popular materials we are just going to encourage publishers to ignore the niche topics within GLBT and also authors from underrepresented groups, so if we [librarians] can push back through our purchasing options that will reinforce our commitment to the publishers for diversity and will increase the likelihood that diverse voices will be published and have a place in the long-term scholarly record” (Doherty, Anne, Bosman, Ellen & Jonson, Timothy, 2019).

Through this mindset, it is important for publishers and libraries to work together to ensure that international research as well as research from underrepresented groups continue to be published and accessible. This can be attained through open collaborations between libraries and publishers of varying sizes to have deeper conversations about the content and comprehensive e-Collections that promote the use and representation of this research.

Publisher Note: To learn more about how libraries can support diversity and inclusivity through e-Collections and publisher collaborations, view our last column in Against the Grain. Additionally, for libraries interested in our e-Book Collection (6,600+ e-books), featuring international research across 11 subject areas, including business, computer science, education, and social sciences, visit: www.igi-global.com/e-resources/e-collections/e-book-collection/. All of our electronic content is hosted on our advanced InfoSci platform, which provides accessible features including no DRM, no embargo of content, remote access options, and more.

References

- Bisson, Robin. (2020). *Global Funding Trends: Insights and analysis on the patterns that have shaped global funding over the past decade*. Research Professional News. <http://online.fliphtml5.com/qetge/qcwn/#p=3>
- Doherty, Anne, Bosman, Ellen & Jonson, Timothy. (2019, May 21). *Creating an Inclusive Collection: Selecting and Evaluating Diverse Resources*. Choice. <https://www.choice360.org/webinars/creating-an-inclusive-collection-selecting-and-evaluating-diverse-resources/>
- Kauffman, Rhonda & Anderson, Martina. (2020). Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice in Library Technical Services. In Stacey Marien, *Library Technical Services: Adapting to a Changing Environment*. Purdue University Press. https://www.opencommons.uconn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1070&context=libr_pubs
- Mortensen, Annabelle. (2019). Measuring Diversity in the Collection. *Library Journal*. <https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=Measuring-Diversity-in-the-Collection>

Recommended Readings

- Berg, G. A., & Venis, L. (Eds.). (2020). *Accessibility and Diversity in the 21st Century University*. IGI Global. <http://doi:10.4018/978-1-7998-2783-2>
- Management Association, I. (Ed.). (2021). *Research Anthology on Empowering Marginalized Communities and Mitigating Racism and Discrimination*. IGI Global. <http://doi:10.4018/978-1-7998-8547-4>
- Management Association, I. (Ed.). (2019). *Scholarly Ethics and Publishing: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice*. IGI Global. <http://doi:10.4018/978-1-5225-8057-7>
- Jeffries, R. (Ed.). (2019). *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity in Contemporary Higher Education*. IGI Global. <http://doi:10.4018/978-1-5225-5724-1>
- Swayze, Susan, editor. *Optimizing Data and New Methods for Efficient Knowledge Discovery and Information Resources Management: Emerging Research and Opportunities*. IGI Global, 2020. <http://doi:10.4018/978-1-7998-2235-6> 🌱