

Caroline E. Wagner. "One record to bind them all"¹: A Collection Analysis of the Chapel Hill Public Library's Adult and Young Adult Graphic Novel Collections. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. August, 2018. 64 pages. Advisor: Brian Sturm.

For library professionals, the responsibility to facilitate access to information resources includes developing cataloging, labeling, and shelving practices and adapting them to fit new formats added to the collection. As the graphic novel format grows in popularity in public library collections, academic and professional conversations have emerged around the issues of how to catalog, label, and shelve these works.

The Chapel Hill Public Library is interested in supplementing its adult and young adult graphic novel collections and establishing an updated, consistent practice for the cataloging, labeling, and shelf classification of these works. In order to assess the current state of these collections and practices, a list-checking study and a direct collection analysis utilizing shelf lists were conducted. These analyses identified collection gaps, inconsistencies in practice, and major decision points to be addressed in the next stages of the graphic novel project.

Headings:

Collection development in public libraries – North Carolina

Collection management (Libraries)

Graphic novels

Graphic nonfiction

Comic books, strips, etc.

“ONE RECORD TO BIND THEM ALL”: A COLLECTION ANALYSIS OF THE
CHAPEL HILL PUBLIC LIBRARY’S ADULT AND YOUNG ADULT
GRAPHIC NOVEL COLLECTIONS

by
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Introduction

As library and information science professionals, facilitating access to a wide selection of information resources for a variety of purposes is one of our core professional responsibilities. In a public library setting, the responsibility to facilitate access does not end as soon as collection items are received; the issue of access includes the creation of cataloging, classification, and labeling schemes that help patrons find the materials they need. American public libraries have predominantly adopted the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) for their collections, but recent academic and professional discussion has considered the benefits and drawbacks of DDC relative to alternate classification systems, primarily in public libraries (Fister, 2009; Hopkins, 2007; McGrath, 2011; Parrott & Gattullo, 2013) and school media centers (Buchter, 2013; Goldblatt, 2015). Among those practitioners who support the replacement of DDC with alternate methods (or, more conservatively, who support the modification of the standard), one of the core justifications for such a change is that the Dewey Decimal Classification is poorly suited to the unique characteristics of the populations, collections, and institutions in question (Buchter, 2013; Fister, 2009; Hopkins, 2007; Parrott & Gattullo, 2013), whereas other models better support patron needs and better reflect the ways in which patrons search for and select items in the library.

Graphic novel² collections in public libraries are a growing area in which an alternate classification model may facilitate patron browsing and use more effectively than DDC. Comics and graphic novels have exploded in popularity in recent years (Behler, 2006; CBLDF, 2018; Hooker, 2012; Williams & Peterson, 2009) and have been incorporated into grade school (Bitz, 2004; Downey, 2009; MacDonald, 2013; Schwarz, 2002; Seyfried, 2008) and higher education libraries and curricula (Behler, 2006; Downey, 2009; Finley, 2015; Hoover, 2011; Williams & Peterson, 2009) in addition to over 95% of public library collections (CBLDF, 2018; Schneider, 2014). These works are not only appealing to children and teens; adults ages 18-45 comprise a significant portion of their readership (CBLDF, 2018; Schneider, 2014). In order to continue to serve these patrons, public librarians should be attentive to the information needs and browsing patterns of readers of this format.

Despite its widespread use in public libraries, the Dewey Decimal Classification's approach of filing all of these works under the 741.5 call number and then by author is ineffective for shelving graphic novels (Kan, n.d.; Pyles, 2013). This approach is prohibitive to readers for two main reasons:

- Readers of graphic novels do not typically search or browse by author; they have favorite publishers (DC, Marvel, Image, Dark Horse) or characters (Spider-Man, Captain Marvel) that they seek out (Pyles, 2013, para. 12-13). Even readers who are new to the format may be browsing for a popular character.
- It is common for multiple authors to write story arcs for one character, and for story arcs to change writers mid-series. When graphic novels are filed by author's last name, series are split into multiple locations, and all works related to a single

character, such as Batman, are widely dispersed. In other words, the criticism that DDC separates topics that intuitively would be shelved together (Hopkins, 2007; Kaplan, Giffard, Still-Schiff, & Dollof, 2013) holds true for comics as well.

The existing literature on graphic novel cataloging, labeling, and classification identifies several best practices for these collections. For example, Fee's (2013) discussion of cataloging practices emphasizes the importance of shelving items in the proper reading order, creating a top-level bib record that unites all of the volume or item records, and numbering volumes instead of distinguishing them with subtitles. Multiple authors have also suggested shelving graphic novels as a separate format instead of interfiling them with other print collections; labeling and shelving them by publisher, then character or franchise, then year, then volume number (as is common practice in comics shops); and creating nonfiction and biography subsections within the designated graphic novel section, to keep all works of the same format together (Dickinson, 2007; Fee, 2013; Hoover, 2011; Pyles, 2013; Shelf Awareness, n.d.; Uong, 2016). Uong (2016) emphasizes consistency, regardless of the decisions made for a collection or institution. However, these practices have not been widely implemented in public library collections, and there are opportunities for technical services staff and other librarians to make improvements to pre-existing systems.

The Acquisitions and Collections Department at the Chapel Hill Public Library in Chapel Hill, North Carolina is interested in supplementing its adult and young adult graphic novel collections and modifying how these collections are shelved, cataloged, and labeled. Before such a project or reconsideration can be undertaken in a public library's graphic novel collection, a systematic analysis of the collection in its current

state must be conducted. Collection analyses serve many purposes: determining the scope and depth of a collection, determining how a service community uses the collection, identifying collection strengths and weaknesses, providing data for deselection, and identifying problems or inconsistencies in the collection policy or procedures (Evans & Saponaro, 2012). As such, this kind of assessment is an essential part of any selector's job. This paper describes the two-pronged collection analysis of the Chapel Hill Public Library's adult and young adult graphic novel collections prior to undertaking the larger collection project, with the goals of determining the extent to which the cataloging, labeling, and shelving procedures reflect the practices outlined in the literature, identifying gaps in collection or series holdings, identifying inconsistencies in recent practice, and collecting the data that will inform later updates to collection procedures.

Research Questions, Goals, and Contributions

This master's paper intends to expand upon field experience work conducted during the Fall 2017 semester at the Chapel Hill Public Library in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Prior to revising and updating the practices for the cataloging, labeling, and shelf classification of the adult and young adult graphic novel collections, a two-pronged collection analysis (a list-checking study and a direct collection analysis utilizing shelf lists) will be conducted to identify gaps in the collection and areas in which changes can be made to make professional practice more consistent, and to determine what would be required to bring the procedures for handling graphic novels more in line with the practices outlined in the literature. To guide this research, and to provide insight that will inform the later stages of this project, the following research questions are proposed:

- To what extent do the CHPL adult and young adult graphic novel collections contain the titles recommended by established core collection lists? What gaps in the collection can be identified?
- To what extent do the adult and young adult graphic novel collections reflect consistent cataloging, labeling, and classification practices?
- To what extent do these collections reflect the recommended practices for graphic novel cataloging, labeling, and classification as defined by the academic and professional literature?

- What recommendations can be made to bring the current collection policies and procedures in line with established best practices?

To address these questions, two distinct collection analysis methodologies will be applied to the adult and young adult graphic novel collections at CHPL to identify gaps in the collection, make recommendations for supplementing the collection with new materials, identify areas in which the existing cataloging, labeling, and classification practices can be made more consistent, and determine what would be required to bring the collections into alignment with the practices outlined in the academic and professional literature.

This project offers multiple contributions to the literature and practice. It documents the process of applying multiple collection analysis methods to a public library graphic novel collection, and it may provide guidance and insight into the process for practitioners interested in undertaking a similar project. It contributes to the small body of research on graphic novel collections in public libraries, and on the particulars of determining cataloging, labeling, and classification systems that fit these collections; it will also extend the discussion of alternate classification systems, which has focused on public library fiction and nonfiction collections and school library collections, to the relevant context of graphic novels. Finally, in the immediate present, it provides the data necessary to inform both the larger graphic novel reorganization project at the Chapel Hill Public Library and future selection decisions.

Literature Review

The academic and professional literature on graphic novel cataloging, classification, and labeling is relatively limited, but four relevant bodies of literature were identified to frame this project. This literature review will be divided into four sections to reflect these areas of study. The first section will discuss the implementation of classification systems in school and public libraries that provide alternatives to the Dewey Decimal Classification. The second section provides an overview of the research on browsing as a finding technique, and the need for classification systems that support this behavior. The third section addresses broad trends related to graphic novel collections in a variety of library and educational settings, and the final section highlights unique characteristics of graphic novel collections for selectors and catalogers and identifies the recommended practices for handling them in library settings.

Alternate Classification Methods for Library Collections

In recent academic, professional, and popular literatures, there has been discussion of ways in which public libraries are adopting service models similar to those found in bookstores. One such change is the adoption of classification methods other than the Dewey Decimal Classification that make more sense for the nature of the items in the collection and the ways in which patrons use those collections. These methods have taken a variety of forms. Several public libraries, including the Perry Branch Library in Maricopa County, Arizona (Fister, 2009), the Butterfield Memorial Library in Cold

Spring, New York, and the Albany Public Library System in Albany, New York (McGrath, 2011) adopted systems adapted from the BISAC subject categories employed by the book industry. Genre classification for fiction collections has been implemented at the Red Hawk Elementary School in Colorado (Buchter, 2013), at the Beaumaris Branch Library in the City of Bayside, Melbourne (Hopkins, 2007), and the Wedgewood Middle School in Fort Worth Independent School District (Moreillon, Hunt, & Graves, 2013); these systems typically divide the collection into genres and identify each genre with colored tape or labels on the book spines. Similar classifications of nonfiction collections, such as the system used at the Beaumaris Branch Library in Melbourne, have divided works into popular subject areas (i.e. “Places”, combining language and travel books) that unite related topics that the DDC would separate (Hopkins, 2007).

Hybridizations of DDC and other categorization schemes, designed to keep the specific shelf locations and layers of specificity of Dewey but address the issues of difficulty of browsing and separation of like subjects, are also possible (Fister, 2009; Parrott & Gattullo, 2013). Most of these conversations revolve around the appropriateness (or lack thereof) of Dewey for public and school library fiction and nonfiction collections.

Readers’ Browsing and Book Selection Behavior

The central argument made by proponents of these changes is that the new systems better reflect the ways patrons browse the collection and conceptualize how like things should be grouped together. Gordon (2013, p. E2) echoes this focus, encouraging library professionals to ask, “How can librarians maximize accessibility and use of their

library collections to accommodate user characteristics, purposes, and needs?” Many studies have confirmed that fiction and leisure readers rely primarily on two search strategies for finding new books to read: known-item searching, in which the title or author being sought out is known, and serendipitous browsing of bookshelves, displays, and carts of recently returned items to find an interesting book to read. Library catalogs serve users relatively well with respect to known-item searches, but less well for browsing (Mikkonen & Vakkari, 2012; Mikkonen & Vakkari, 2016; Oksanen & Vakkari, 2012; Saarinen & Vakkari, 2013); Oksanen and Vakkari (2012, p.199) state that “[t]raditionally library catalogs have supported accessing novels if the reader knows the name of the author or the title of the novel. It is known that about half of the fiction borrowed is found by browsing, half by known item search. This indicates a need to develop systems supporting other fiction search tactics than known item search.” In addition to catalogs themselves, public library layout and shelving systems can facilitate or inhibit browsing practices, and this is particularly pertinent for graphic novels.

Popularity and Settings of Graphic Novel Collections

Despite historical stereotypes of graphic novels as pulp fiction not worthy of serious literary consideration, these works have exploded in popularity - and perceived literary legitimacy - in school, public, and academic libraries in recent decades (Hooker, 2012; Williams & Peterson, 2009). Graphic novels span a variety of genres and subject matter, including nonfiction and biography, in addition to familiar superhero and fictional narratives (Behler, 2006), and are “one of the fastest growing categories in publishing and bookselling” (CBLDF, 2018, para.1). Numerous resources and core lists have been

developed to assist collectors who are new to the medium, including those provided by the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, Behler (2006), Downey (2009), and Finley (2015).

The majority of the academic literature on graphic novels focuses on their value as a pedagogical tool with elementary and secondary students. Graphic novels have been found to be more accessible than prose for many reluctant readers and visual learners, to help teach English to ESL students, to meet Common Core standards for unorthodox learning materials, and to support the development of multiple literacies across subject areas (Bitz, 2004; Downey, 2009; MacDonald, 2013; Schwarz, 2002; Seyfried, 2008). Behler (2006, p. 17) reflects this perspective, stating, “The graphic novel’s rise in popularity and sophistication has also grabbed the education community’s attention. Educators recognize that today’s students are constantly visually stimulated by the media and have a strong impatience for sitting down and wading through dense text. Graphic novels cater to young people’s growing affinity for the visual rather than written media. It is no wonder, then, that graphic novels are often cited as wonderful tools to help get the “reluctant reader” into books”; Downey (2009) also mirrors this statement. They have also been used in after-school literacy programs, such as the Comic Book Project in New York City, which helped urban youth with limited English proficiency develop their reading, writing, vocabulary, and art skills while telling their own stories through self-created comic books (Bitz, 2004).

Recent literature has also addressed and advocated for the inclusion of graphic novels in academic libraries, further cementing perceptions of the medium’s legitimacy as ‘real’ literature with pedagogical relevance; Behler (2006, p. 16) notes that the “fact that academic librarians are paying attention to the form simply strengthens the argument

that this particular type of reading experience has far exceeded its day as a boyhood pastime (if indeed that perception was ever true).” Studies have argued for further development of graphic novel collections in community and junior colleges, to serve the leisure reading needs of their students, increase circulation, attract reluctant readers, and support curriculum and instruction needs (Finley, 2015); and in academic libraries with juvenile and young adult collections that support teacher education and library science programs (Downey, 2009; Williams & Peterson 2009). Hoover (2012) makes similar arguments for their usefulness for librarians who provide research and information literacy instruction. These studies acknowledge the variety of possible uses for graphic novels in higher education; Downey (2009, p. 182) states that “[a]cademic libraries should carry graphic novels in their collections for pleasure reading by students and faculty, to serve as examples of modern art and graphic design, and for historical value; but they should also be included in subject-specific curriculum and instruction collections for education majors preparing for practicum and developing lesson plans.” Although the literature focuses on meeting literacy objectives for primary and secondary school students, graphic novels have also been successfully used in adult literacy courses; a partnership between public libraries and community colleges in California, led by Morgan Pershing, incorporated graphic novels related to the immigrant experience into classes for adult English language learners (VaterKrieg, 2014). O’English, Matthews, and Lindsay (2006) identify several indicators that graphic novels are being taken more seriously in the academic community. They highlight specific university English departments that include graphic novels in their curricula, as well as trends in scholarly

writing and criticism of these works and their inclusion in academic library collections for both recreational reading and study.

Academic studies and popular media have noted that graphic novel collections have become extremely widespread in public libraries in the United States; Schneider (2014, "Conclusion" para. 1) notes that "comic books have become an ingrained part of public library holdings in the United States. While it is not impossible to find a library with no comic books or graphic novels, this is now the second study to show that upwards of 97% of public libraries have them in their collections." (The first survey cited was conducted in 2005 by the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, or CBLDF.) Similar to school libraries, public library graphic novel circulation continues to grow rapidly, with circulation being far disproportionate to the percentage of the collection that graphic novels comprise (MacDonald, 2013). However, MacDonald (2013) also notes that collections of graphic novels for adult readers are less common than those for children and teens. Reasons for this lag include space and budget concerns, fear that purchases will not circulate well, and difficulty determining how to classify or shelve these works.

Unique Challenges and Best Practices for Library Graphic Novel Collections

Most public libraries shelve their collections - and as a result, their graphic novels - using the Dewey Decimal Classification; this puts all graphic novels under the 741.5 call number, organized by author (Kan, n.d.). However, this is not intuitive for graphic novel readers, nor does it reflect the ways in which these readers browse for titles - by publisher (DC, Marvel, Image) or by character (Batwoman, Captain Marvel, Thor) (Pyles, 2013). This is complicated by the fact that large franchises, like Batman or

Spider-Man, have numerous writers writing that character. Sorting by Dewey Decimal number and author's name would divide such franchises into multiple locations on the shelf. Pyles (2013, para. 10) identifies the resulting information need more directly than most, stating, ““In addition to a lack of materials available to some users in many library systems, another concern for this user group is the lack of library classification for graphic novels. In Library of Congress classification, all graphic novels are in the call number area PS or NC and those that use Dewey classification, place all graphic novels in the call number 741.5. Graphic novels are not sorted by author, publisher, character, or in any way that is appealing to the user or makes them easy to find.”

Discussions regarding cataloging and shelving approaches for graphic novels center around two initial questions: 1) should they be cataloged under the 741.5 Dewey Decimal number, or by another identifier, and 2) should they be shelved together as a format (similar to how audiobooks or DVDs or print fiction are shelved together), or interfiled with the fiction and nonfiction collections based on call number (Dickinson, 2007)? This is often described as the question of whether graphic novels are considered a genre or a separate format (CBLDF, 2018; Hoover, 2011; Shelf Awareness, n.d.), and most scholars and professionals writing on this question agree that they should be considered a format. Hoover (2011, p.176) reflects this perspective, arguing that “[t]reating graphic novels as a format or medium, on par with more established and respected media such as print-only texts and film, is a good first step towards unlocking their full potential”. Graphic novels may also be separated by age, into collections for adults, teens, and children (CBLDF, 2018).

Suggestions for better cataloging and shelving systems for graphic novels to facilitate browsing and improve circulation have drawn on successful organizational systems in bookstores and comic shops (Fee, 2013; Kan, n.d.; Pyles, 2013; Shelf Awareness, n.d.). These suggestions include:

- Shelving graphic novels in a separate, visible area to attract attention, instead of interfiling them with the fiction and nonfiction collections;
- Labeling and shelving graphic novels by publisher, then character or franchise (a reader expects all of the Iron Man comics to be together), then year, then volume or issue number in the story arc; and
- Creating additional subsections for nonfiction and biographical works within the designated graphic novel section to keep all graphic works together as a format.

As relatively new formats are added to public library collections and substantial collections are built, technical services librarians and catalogers need to make decisions about how best to catalog, label, and shelve these items. They may also need to make changes later, after the introduction of the collection, to adopt new practices as the new formats gain greater recognition in literature and practice. Graphic novel collections in public libraries provide a context in which issues surrounding retail-based classification models, cataloging, and labeling for relatively new formats can be further discussed. These collections benefit from a classification and shelving system modeled after retail practices in comic book stores, which is more effective for patron browsing and use than the traditional Dewey Decimal Classification system. This project undertakes the collection analysis that will inform changes to the current adult and young adult graphic

novel collections at the Chapel Hill Public Library and the development of such a cataloging, labeling, and shelving system.

Methods

Collection Analysis Overview

Numerous methodological approaches exist for collection analysis, and these can be classified according to two dimensions: collection-centered vs. use-centered, and quantitative vs. qualitative (Johnson, 2009). The American Library Association's 1989 *Guide to the Evaluation of Library Collections* distinguished collection analysis methods on the basis of collection- and use-centeredness (Evans & Saponaro, 2012). Collection-centered methods, sometimes called materials-centered methods (Baker & Lancaster, 1991) may examine the size, depth, breadth, variety, and coverage of library materials against an external standard of some kind; these methods include list-checking against bibliographies, catalogs, or collection standards; comparisons against the catalog holdings of peer institutions with comprehensive collections in the relevant subject area; or the solicitation of an expert opinion (Evans & Saponaro, 2012; Johnson, 2009). In contrast, use- and user-based approaches examine questions related to who is using the materials, how often they are being used, whether the materials are meeting user needs, and what user expectations are for the collection (Johnson, 2009). Studies using these approaches may analyze circulation, in-house use, citation, and interlibrary loan statistics, and may also employ user opinion studies (Evans & Saponaro, 2012).

The second dimension by which to classify collection analysis methods is whether the method is quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative methods count things, such as titles

in a collection, circulation transactions, interlibrary loan requests, materials budgets, or electronic transaction logs that count the number of 'hits' on a site (Johnson, 2009).

Qualitative analysis compares measurements over time within a library and with other libraries, and depends on the opinions of selectors and users. Qualitative measures include list-checking, direct collection checking, collection mapping with Conspectus levels, user opinion surveys, and focus groups (Johnson, 2009). Regardless of how a method is classified, each has strengths and weaknesses when applied to particular collections, and the analysis should always take into account the objectives of the institution and the collection, as well as the questions driving the analysis (Baker & Lancaster, 1991).

List-Checking Study Methodology

Around 1900, librarians began using selected bibliographies or lists against which individual library holdings were checked. These lists were prepared by the ALA and its divisions, authoritative librarians, and subject specialists...Libraries also checked references and bibliographies in scholarly works against library holdings. List checking was the primary method of collection analysis until the middle of the twentieth century. (Johnson, 2009, p. 232)

The first component of the analysis was a list-checking study of the adult and young adult graphic novel collections. List-checking is historically one of the most popular, well-established methods of collection analysis (Johnson, 2009). It is classified as a collection-centered method that blends quantitative and qualitative elements, because the development and selection of the list are subjective decisions, but the result of a list-checking analysis is a statistical report of the number of titles in a particular collection that an institution holds (Johnson, 2009).

To conduct a list-checking analysis, the selector “compares lists of titles appropriate to the subject area being analyzed against the library’s holdings” (Johnson, 2009, p. 241), and a wide variety of types of lists can be used for this purpose: the holdings of peer institutions, specialized lists or bibliographies, core collection lists published by professional or technical organizations, lists of award-winners, annual subject compilations, course syllabi, publisher catalogs, or lists of frequently cited works (Baker and Lancaster, 1991; Comer, 1981; Johnson, 2009; Northwestern University, 2018a; Northwestern University, 2018b). The goal of the study is to calculate the percentage of the titles on the list that the institution in question holds, assuming that a collection that holds a higher percentage of the listed titles is a more complete, ‘better’ collection (Comer, 1981; Evans & Saponaro, 2012), and that the selected list or lists reflects the goals of the institution and its collection. List-checking studies offer the benefits of being relatively easy to apply and appropriate for small libraries, subject area collections, and library consortia; in addition, many lists are available that meet the needs of a variety of institutions, and these lists can be used as purchase guides to fill gaps and weaknesses found in the collection (Baker & Lancaster, 1991; Evans & Saponaro, 2012).

One of the challenges inherent in list-checking studies is the need to locate or develop a core collection list or bibliography that is both comprehensive and up-to-date, while still appropriate to the scope and scale of the project; the Northwestern University Library notes that “it is becoming more difficult to find such works that are both excellent and updated” (2018b, para.1). Since no single list exists that meets these requirements for a public library graphic novel collection, a composite graphic novel collection list and a composite manga collection list were created from established core

lists available at no cost online. The following lists were compiled to produce the two final composite lists⁴:

1. The Graphic Novel Reporter site, one of several websites maintained by The Book Report Network, compiles graphic novel reviews, interviews with creators, and core lists “specifically designed for bookstores, libraries and other outlets seeking to feature comics.” Core lists are available for adult graphic novels, teen graphic novels, adult manga, and teen manga; the most recent list available is from 2015. All four core lists were incorporated into the final list. The curators of the lists remove titles from the list once they are out of print in order to provide the most useful information to selectors (Graphic Novel Reporter, 2018).
2. The Diamond Bookshelf website, designed by Diamond Comic Distributor for educators and librarians, is another popular online resource that supplies graphic novel reviews, professional articles related to collections and programming, and additional resources for librarians and educators interested in building graphic novel collections. Some of these resources are their core collection lists for multiple age groups, which are “compiled taking into account literary quality, entertainment value and age group suitability” (Diamond Comic Distributors, 2018d). The Perennial Core Lists for adults (18+), older teens (16+), and young adults (13+) were incorporated into the composite lists to supplement the GNR lists (Diamond Comic Distributors, 2018a-c). The Diamond Bookshelf also releases biennial core title lists for each age group;

however, only the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 biennial lists are currently posted to the website, and an email exchange with the Diamond Bookshelf staff revealed that most of the biennial lists created between 2015 and 2017 were not archived. As a result, the biennial lists were not used on account of the gaps in coverage.

3. The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association, publishes annual lists of Great Graphic Novels for Teens (YALSA, 2018). Both a Top 10 list and an overall annual list are released, and selectors often use these “best of” lists when making purchase decisions. The titles from the Top Ten lists from 2007-2018 (the 2007 list is the earliest available) were added to the composite list to provide a cross-check against the Graphic Novel Reporter and Diamond Bookshelf teen lists, and to help fill in the gap in coverage of 2016-2018 titles.

The sources used to create the composite core collection lists are summarized in table 1 below:

Table 1. Core collection lists utilized in composite lists for list-checking analysis.

Source	Area(s) of Coverage	Most Recent Coverage
Graphic Novel Reporter	Adult Graphic Novels Adult Manga Teen Graphic Novels Teen Manga	2015
Diamond Bookshelf Perennial Core Lists	Adult Graphic Novels Adult Manga	2018

	Older Teens (16+) Graphic Novels Older Teens (16+) Manga Young Adult (13+) Graphic Novels Young Adult (13+) Manga	
YALSA Top 10 Great Graphic Novels for Teens Lists	Teen Graphic Novels Teen Manga	2018

Each of the lists was copied as appropriate into a graphic novel spreadsheet and a manga spreadsheet in Google Sheets for ease of manipulation, sorted alphabetically by title, and checked by hand to remove any duplicate entries for titles appearing on multiple core lists. In addition to the title and creator fields derived from the original list documents, additional fields were added to the spreadsheet to identify the original publication date, publisher, genre (fiction, property, nonfiction, biography or memoir, comic strip collection), whether the title is a series or monograph, whether the title is held in the collection, and (if the title is a series) if the holding is complete. The distinction between fiction series and properties relates to the ownership of the characters and intellectual property. Properties refer to characters created for and owned by a corporation, such as DC, Marvel, Dark Horse, or Valiant. The most easily recognized of these are the DC and Marvel superhero comics, and graphic novel spin-offs of movies and television series (unless a creator-owned series came first and was later optioned for film or television, such as Robert Kirkman's *The Walking Dead*). Fiction series refer to creator-owned content and characters. Series completion was determined by first entering the ISBN of each unit in the series into the Goodreads database to confirm the unit level of the holding (e.g., volume, book, omnibus edition), and then using the series function in

Goodreads to check the holdings against a list of all units in that series. Because individual libraries or selectors make subjective judgments about whether a title is shelved in an adult section, young adult section, or both, the composite lists for graphic novels and manga were not further subdivided by audience age. In the case that a particular volume of a series was listed on one of the core lists consulted for the composite list, the full series was included as one entry on the composite list. If a series not related by a continuous plotline was included in one of the core lists (e.g., Campfire Classics and Graphic Classics, both series of graphic adaptations of classic works of literature), it was not included in the composite list. The final graphic novel list and manga list consisted of 521 entries and 184 entries respectively.

For each title on the composite lists, title searches were conducted in the Chapel Hill Public Library's OPAC, Bibliocommons. If a title search did not yield any results, an author search was also conducted to confirm the presence or absence of the title or series in the collection. If the title of a series was located in the OPAC, the ISBNs of the volumes listed were searched in the Goodreads database to determine whether the units listed were trade paperback volumes, books, or omnibus editions⁴, and the data were added to the spreadsheet. After the data were compiled, the following statistics were calculated:

- The overall percentage of graphic novel and manga holdings relative to the composite core lists
- The percentages of graphic novel and manga holdings by genre category (fiction, property, nonfiction, bio or memoir, comic strip collection)

- The percentages of graphic novel and manga holdings by format (series or monograph)
- The percentages of graphic novel and manga series holdings that are complete

Direct Collection Analysis Methodology

...[W]hen one or more individuals - subject specialists, librarians, or scholars - thoroughly examine and evaluate the collection. Ideally, this is done after the specialist becomes familiar with the library's mission, its collection development policies, and any statistical data that have been gathered... The specialist then physically examines the collection and the shelf list (since the most frequently used materials may be checked out). This type of evaluation is entirely subjective, but it is valuable if done by individuals with sound knowledge of various subject areas and, more important, of the literature. (Baker & Lancaster, 1991, p. 41)

The second component of the collection analysis was a direct collection analysis that addressed specific cataloging, labeling, and shelving practices applied to graphic nonfiction and biography works, series, and properties (primarily DC and Marvel). Johnson (2009, p. 242) describes this method as a systematic process in which a librarian or scholar "with knowledge of the literature being analyzed physically examines the collection" and draws conclusions about it; this method is most practical and effective when the collection in question is small, or when the subject area can be narrowly defined. One variation of direct collection analysis is to work from a shelf list rather than the physical stacks of books (Johnson, 2009), and this approach was utilized here. The shelf lists provide several advantages, as the person studying the collection may gain access to catalog or circulation data, and their analysis will not accidentally exclude items that are checked out at the time of the study. In order to mitigate the inherent subjectivity of such an analysis, and to narrow the study, the evaluator will typically define certain

criteria of focus, such as the number of volumes in a collection, chronological coverage, periodical coverage, or series completion (Baker & Lancaster, 1991).

At the request of the Chapel Hill Public Library's Acquisitions and Collections Department, this direct collection analysis specifically examined the graphic nonfiction and biography collections, the fiction series, and the properties in the adult and young adult collections. The department is considering making some of the changes suggested by the academic literature, such as shelving all graphic format works together instead of interfiling nonfiction and biography/memoir works and changing the cataloging and labeling practices for fiction and superhero property series; as a result, data must be gathered about the current practices and state of the collection to inform this process.

Using the "Create Lists" function in Sierra, the Chapel Hill Public Library's ILS, two lists (one each for adult collection items and teen collection items) were created for graphic nonfiction and biography titles. These lists included all records with the format code for graphic novels, location codes for adult or teen collections respectively, and content codes for nonfiction, and excluded titles that were coded as withdrawn or to be withdrawn. Each list was exported to a Microsoft Excel file, and then the title, author, and current call number fields were copied into the Google Sheets workbook used for the rest of the project. Both lists were manually checked for duplicate entries, which resulted from multiple copies of a single title being held. A "number of copies" column was added to the spreadsheet to reflect cases in which multiple copies were held, and duplicate entries were then deleted. Deleting duplicate records resulted in lists of 98 unique titles in the adult nonfiction and biography collection and 29 unique titles in the young adult collection. Each title was searched in the library's OPAC and in the Goodreads database

to obtain the information to fill in additional spreadsheet fields that detailed the genre (nonfiction or biography/memoir), shelf location (shelved in the graphic novel collection areas or interfiled with the print nonfiction and biography collections), whether the title would need to be moved if the decision were made to unite all graphic format works, and whether the title would need to be relabeled on account of the relocation. Once these data were compiled, the completed spreadsheets were used to answer the following questions posed by the Acquisitions and Collections Department for both the adult and young adult collections:

- How many unique titles are there? How many volumes are there, if duplicate copies are accounted for?
- How many graphic nonfiction, biography, autobiography, and memoir titles are currently shelved in the GN section?
- How many graphic nonfiction, biography, autobiography, and memoir titles are currently interfiled in the nonfiction and biography stacks?
- How many volumes would need to be moved to unite graphic format works in each collection?
- How many would need to be relabeled with changes to the call number?

For the direct collection analysis of fiction series and properties, the process of identifying the relevant records for analysis was not as simple. It was necessary to focus on those subsets of the adult and young adult graphic novel collections, but it is not possible in Sierra or in the Bibliocommons OPAC to filter out monographic works; this must be done manually. (Because inconsistency in the use of a single bib record for an entire series vs. distinct bib records for each individual volume was one of the data points

tracked, even if it were possible to pull serial records that contained multiple item records for series volumes, it would have excluded many relevant records from the search.)

Using the “Create Lists” function again, lists were created of all of the graphic format fiction records in the adult and young adult collections, restricting the list to the format code for graphic novels, the collection location code to adult or young adult, respectively, and the content code for fiction, excluding records coded as withdrawn or to be withdrawn. This produced a list of 718 records in the adult collection and a list of 1,193 records in the young adult collection. The lists were exported to a Microsoft Excel file, and the title, author, and current call number fields were again copied into new spreadsheets in the Google Sheets workbook for the project. The ISBN for each item record was searched in the Goodreads database to identify which records were non-property series and which were properties and marked “yes” or “no” in respective series and property columns. The sheet could then be sorted by each of the two columns, and the relevant records in each case copied from the full shelf list to a new sheet and manually checked for duplicates to ensure that only one row in each spreadsheet represented a series.

For graphic format fiction series (excluding the properties) each OPAC record was checked and each ISBN copied into the Goodreads database, and the title, author, current call number, number of volumes held, number of total volumes in complete series, gaps in series holdings, record type (whether each volume had its own bib record, or whether item records for each volume were compiled under one umbrella bib record for the entire series), whether the records would require consolidation if the decision was made to compile volume records in this way, and any other catalog notes or anomalies

were recorded in spreadsheets for adult and young adult fiction series, respectively. These data were then used to answer the following questions:

- How many unique series are held?
- Of the series held, how many are complete?
- Which volumes are missing from the series that are not complete?
- In how many cases are the series volumes cataloged with individual bib records (i.e. which, and how many, series have records that would need to be consolidated if the decision were confirmed to make this the practice of choice?)
- In how many cases are the series volumes cataloged with item records for each volume, under an overarching bib record?
- In how many cases is a series labeled by the author name?
- In how many cases is a series labeled by the series title or franchise character?
- Are there occasions where the words used to describe a work in a series (i.e. volume, book) could be misleading to a patron looking for a unit of that series?
- Are there occasions where the volumes of a series are separated to multiple shelf locations (i.e. split between adult and young adult collections, or split on account of labeling some with the series title and some with the author) on account of inconsistency in cataloging or labeling practice?

The same data were collected and questions answered for the titles on the properties spreadsheet, with a few additions that are particular to those works. Additional fields were added to the spreadsheet for the name of the character (e.g., Captain Marvel, Wonder Woman) and for a potential modified call number with an additional descriptor

line that distinguishes that story arc or series from others featuring the same character.

The following question was added to those outlined for series data collection:

- In how many cases does the label provide information to help a reader distinguish between story arcs or series that feature the same character?

Results

Collection Analysis, Part 1: List-Checking Study/Collection-Centered Study

After the composite core list was created and the data collected from the library's OPAC, the percentages of the titles held from the core list could be calculated in several ways. First, the total number of titles listed and the total number of titles held from the graphic novel and manga core lists, respectively, were tallied, and the overall percentage of titles held from each list was calculated. (Note: at this stage in the calculations, if a series on the core list was partially held but not complete, it was counted as "held".)

These percentages are shown in table 2.

Table 2. Overall percentage of holdings from core collection lists.

List	Total # of Titles	# Held	# Not Held	% Held
Graphic Novel	521	265	256	50.86%
Manga	184	54	130	29.35%

Of the 521 titles on the graphic novel core list, 265 are held in the collection, which translates to 50.86% of the core titles. This percentage was significantly higher than the percentage of manga holdings; only 54 of the 184 listed titles, or 29.35%, were held in the collection. Based on this overall statistic, it is evident that both the graphic novel and manga collections are deficient relative to the two composite core lists, the manga collection much more so than the graphic novel collection. Should the selectors

responsible for the adult and young adult graphic novel and manga collections have the resources to supplement the collection, there is clearly room for improvement, and the composite core lists may provide guidance with respect to titles to evaluate for purchase.

The second set of calculations further breaks down the graphic novel and manga holdings by genre category. Within the graphic novel core collection, titles may be classified as fiction, property, nonfiction, biography or memoir, and comic strip collections. Fiction is the largest category, accounting for 348 of the 521 core titles (66.79%). Properties account for 67 of the list titles (12.86%), followed by 54 biography and memoir titles (10.37%), 43 nonfiction titles (8.25%) and 9 comic strip collection titles (1.73%). Of these categories, the strongest holdings are in nonfiction and biography/memoir. 26 of the 43 nonfiction core titles were found in the collection (60.47%), as were 32 of the 54 biography and memoir titles (59.26%). Property holdings, with 34 of the 67 core titles found in the collection (50.75%), were on par with the percentage of overall holdings. Fiction holdings and comic strip collection holdings were comparatively weaker areas in terms of holding percentage than the overall total; 169 of the 348 fiction titles were held (48.56%), as were 4 of the 9 comic strip titles (44.44%).

Only fiction and biography titles were present in the manga core list, and fiction titles (182/184) were overwhelmingly dominant. 52 of the 182 fiction titles were held (28.57%), approximately equal to the overall proportion of manga core titles held, and both of the biography core titles were found in the collection (100%).

Table 3. Percentage of holdings by genre category.

List	Category	# of Titles	Percentage of Total	# Held	% Held
Graphic Novel	Total	521	100%	265	50.86%

	Fiction	348	66.79%	169	48.56%
	Property	67	12.86%	34	50.75%
	Nonfiction	43	8.25%	26	60.47%
	Bio/Memoir	54	10.37%	32	59.26%
	Comic Strips	9	1.73%	4	44.44%
Manga	Total	184	100%	54	29.35%
	Fiction	182	98.91%	52	28.57%
	Nonfiction	0	0	0	0
	Bio/Memoir	2	1.09%	2	100%

The third set of calculations subdivides the graphic novel and manga core lists and holdings into series and monographs; these data are displayed in table 4. In the graphic novel core list, 248 of the 521 titles (47.60%) are series, and the remaining 273 are monographs (52.40%). The library's collection includes 110 (44.36%) of those core series titles, and 155 (56.78%) of the core monograph titles. In the case of the graphic novel collection, monograph holdings are stronger compared to the core list than series holdings, and stronger compared to the overall total percentage; it is more probable to find a core monograph title in the collection than a core series title.

The opposite is true for manga holdings with respect to series and monographs. 163 of the 184 titles on the core list are series (88.59% of the core titles), of which 49 are held (30.06%). This is slightly higher than the overall percentage of manga holdings. Only 21 of the core manga titles are monographs (11.41%), of which 5 are held (23.81%). Although the comparison is unequal given the relative numbers of series and

monograph titles on the manga core list, the series holdings are stronger than the monograph holdings in this library's collection.

Table 4. Percentage holdings by series/monograph format.

List	Type	# of Titles	% of Total	# Held	% Held
Graphic Novel	Total	521	100%	265	50.86%
	Series	248	47.60%	110	44.36%
	Monograph	273	52.40%	155	56.78%
Manga	Total	184	100%	54	29.35%
	Series	163	88.59%	49	30.06%
	Monograph	21	11.41%	5	23.81%

The final set of calculations from the list-checking study focused specifically on the series named on the graphic novel and manga lists. Until this stage in the statistical analysis, if at least part of a series was held, it was counted as a title held. However, it is also useful to know how many of those series are held in their entirety and how many are incomplete, whether there are gaps due to lost volumes that need to be replaced, or whether more recent volumes have been published that have not been acquired and the holdings are not up to date. For graphic novel series and manga series, respectively, the number of complete series was tallied and compared to the number of series held and the number of series titles on the core list. These findings are summarized in table 5. Of the 248 series titles on the graphic novel list, 110 were partially or completely held, and 59 of those were complete. This translates to 53.64% of the series titles held being complete holdings, and only 23.79% of the series titles on the core list being complete. Of the 163 manga series titles listed, 49 are partially or completely held, and only 12 series holdings

are complete. These 12 complete holdings represent 24.49% of the series held, and 7.36% of the series from the core list. Although ongoing series can become significant investments over time for selectors, there are significant gaps in series completion in both the graphic novel and manga collections. Slightly over half of the graphic novel series titles held are complete holdings, and nearly one-quarter of the manga series holdings; filling in these gaps to provide readers with complete storylines would be a task worthy of selector attention.

Table 5. Percentage of series for which holdings are complete.

List	Type	# of Titles	# Held	% Held	# Complete	% of List Complete	% of Held Complete
Graphic Novel	Series	248	110	50.86%	59	23.790%	53.64%
Manga	Series	163	49	30.06%	12	7.362%	24.49%

Collection Analysis, Part 2: Direct Collection Analysis

Graphic Nonfiction, Biography, and Memoir

The Acquisition and Collection Department's focus with respect to the graphic nonfiction, biography, and memoir works in the collection (henceforth referred to as the graphic nonfiction collection, for brevity) was the shelf location, specifically the extent to which these works were shelved in the designated graphic novel section or interfiled with print nonfiction and biography, the extent to which this practice was consistent, and what would be required to move the interfiled titles to a unified graphic format section in accordance with the recommendations of Fee (2013) and Hoover (2011). These results are summarized in table 6 below.

Table 6. Graphic nonfiction collection overview.

List	Total Volumes	Unique Titles	Titles in GN Section	Titles Interfiled
Adult	116	98	3 (5 volumes)	95 (111 volumes)
Young Adult	32	29	7 (7 volumes)	22 (25 volumes)

The adult graphic nonfiction collection consists of 116 volumes, representing 98 unique titles. Although the practice has not been completely consistent, 95 of the titles (96.94%) in the adult collection have been interfiled with the print nonfiction and biography collections, for a total of 111 volumes. Only three graphic nonfiction titles (3.06%) were shelved in the designated graphic novel section: *The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui, *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant* by Roz Chast, and *The Life-Changing Manga of Tidying Up* by Marie Kondo. It was noted that of these three, two are memoirs and one is a graphic adaptation of a nonfiction title, although all are labeled as if they were fiction works in the graphic novel collection. Given that these may not be the only nonfiction volumes labeled incorrectly, it would be prudent to double-check each of the other graphic nonfiction works before relabeling them. If the library were to choose to shelve all of the graphic format nonfiction works with the rest of the graphic novel collection going forward, and to bring the existing collection in line with that decision, shelf space would need to be made available for these 111 volumes, the "GN" descriptor would be added to the call numbers for these volumes, the call numbers would be updated in the catalog records for those titles, and the volumes would be relabeled accordingly.

The young adult graphic nonfiction and biography collection consists of 32 volumes, reflecting 29 unique titles. Less consistency is evident in the shelf classification

practice for the young adult titles; nearly one quarter (7 of 29 titles, 24.140%) of the nonfiction and biography titles were shelved with the other graphic novels. The remaining 22 titles (75.86%), which account for 25 volumes on the shelf, are interfiled with the print nonfiction and biography collections. If the library were to decide to shelve all young adult graphic format works together in the Teen Room, there would need to be shelf space for these 25 additional volumes, and cataloging and labeling changes would be made as described above for the adult collection.

Graphic Fiction Series

For the fiction series in the adult and young adult collections, data were collected about series completion, cataloging practices, labeling conventions, and examples of inconsistencies in the cataloging and labeling practices within a series. Table 7 contains the findings with respect to series completion.

Table 7. Series completion percentages for fiction series, excluding properties.

List	Series Held	Series Complete	Percent Complete
Adult	135	43	31.85%
Young Adult	224	70	31.25%

As indicated in the list-checking study, low rates of series completion are an issue deserving of attention; in both the adult and young adult collections, slightly less than one-third of the series held are complete. The adult collection includes 135 unique series, of which there are complete holdings for 43 (31.85%). Of the 224 unique series held in the young adult collection, 70 of them (31.25%) were complete. The data collection spreadsheet notes exactly which volumes are missing from each of the remaining series, which may be considered for replacement if those volumes are still in print and available to purchase, and if they meet the evaluation criteria for new collection purchases.

Table 8. Catalog records for series with multiple volumes held.

List	# Series w/ Multiple Vol. Held	# with Multiple Bib Records (%)	# with Single Bib Record (%)
Adult	44	23 (52.27%)	21 (47.73%)
Young Adult	133	23 (17.29%)	112 (84.21%)

Table 8 above summarizes the findings related to the practice for catalog records for series. Here, the focus is on series of which multiple volumes are held, and multiple bound units are identified as part of the series. This excludes those series where the volumes held are compiled in a single omnibus edition, resulting in only one unit being cataloged for that series. In the adult collection, 44 series fit this description, and the cataloging practice is split almost 50-50. Of those, 23 series (52.27%) are cataloged with individual bib records for each volume held and would need to be consolidated under a single bib record if the decision were made to catalog all graphic novel series in this way in accordance with Fee's (2013) recommendations, and 21 series (47.73%) are already cataloged with item records for each volume under an overarching bib record with the series title. In contrast, the practice for cataloging young adult series has overwhelmingly been to consolidate the item records for each volume held under an overarching bib record for the series. Of the 133 relevant series in the young adult collection, 112 (84.21%) have been cataloged in this way, and only 23 (17.29%) are cataloged with separate bib records for each volume in the series and would need to be consolidated.

Table 9: Labeling practices for fiction series, excluding properties.

List	Total Series	# by Author (%)	# by Series (%)	# Split (%)
Adult	135	128 (94.82%)	7 (5.19%)	0 (0%)
Young Adult	224	217 (96.88%)	7 (2.68%)	1(0.45%)

Table 9 displays the results with respect to labeling conventions in the adult and young adult fiction series (excluding properties), specifically whether series were labeled by the author's last name or by the series title. It was also noted if there was a labeling inconsistency that resulted in the volumes of one series being separated to multiple shelf locations. In both the adult and young adult collections, almost all of the fiction series were labeled by the author's last name. 128 of the 135 adult series (94.82%) and 217 of the 224 young adult series (96.88%) were labeled in this way. Seven of the adult titles (5.19%) were labeled by the series title; these series are *AX: Alternative Manga*, *Best American Comics*, *Fables*, *Flight*, *The Graphic Canon*, *Snow Piercer*, and *Will Eisner's The Spirit Archives*. It was noted that three of these are anthology titles without a single author, and that labeling Bill Willingham's *Fables* series by the title separated that series from Willingham's other works, including the *Fairest* series and several standalone works set in the *Fables* world, which are labeled with his name. In the adult collection, no series were found that were unintentionally split by labeling inconsistencies.

Seven of the young adult series (2.68%) were labeled by the series title instead of the author, including *Dead Boy Detectives*, *Lumberjanes*, *Magic Knight Rayearth*, *My Boyfriend is a Monster*, *The Sons of Liberty*, *Spectacle*, and *Tiger & Bunny*. Noelle Stevenson's *Lumberjanes* series was noted to have been split by inconsistent labeling practice. Volumes 1-5 of the series are labeled by author name (GN Stev), but volumes 6-9 and the recent bonus volume of short stories are labeled by the series title (GN Lumberjanes). As a result, the series volumes are shelved in two different shelf locations, making them harder for patrons to locate. If the decision is made by the library staff to label consistently by the author's last name, the relatively small number of volumes

associated with the 14 series labeled by title would need to be relabeled and updated in the OPAC.

Finally, each series record and call number was checked to determine if there were any occasions where the words used to describe a unit of a series could be misleading to patrons; as discussed previously, the distinction between a volume and a book is important in cataloging and labeling graphic novels in order to accurately describe the library's holdings. Two examples of this kind of confusion are the library's holdings of Brian K. Vaughan's *Ex Machina* and Robert Kirkman's *The Walking Dead*. Vaughan's *Ex Machina* series consists of ten trade paperback volumes, but the series has also been released in five "books", each of which compile two volumes of the series as well as additional bonus content. The catalog record in the library's OPAC indicates that the library holds volumes 1-5 of the series, and this record makes it appear that the library only has the first half of the series on the shelf. The library's holdings are actually volumes 1-3 and books 4-5. Book 4 collects volumes 7-8, book 5 collects volumes 9-10, and the library is missing volumes 4-6 of the series. This is a distinction peculiar to graphic novels to which selectors and catalogers might be alerted.

Kirkman's *The Walking Dead* presents a slightly different issue. The catalog record indicates that the library's holdings include volumes 1-14, plus the most recent volume, volume 29. As a patron looking at this record, I might think that the library is missing almost half of the series, and that I would need to go to another library to borrow the rest of the volumes. In reality, the entire series is available on the shelf in the adult collection, but books 1-14 are held, and then volume 29. Each book collects two volumes in the series, so book one compiles volumes 1 and 2, book two compiles volumes 3 and 4,

and so forth. In addition to these two examples in the adult collection, the *Bitch Planet*, *Preacher*, and *Rocketeer* series in the adult collection and the *Junior Braves of the Apocalypse* and *The Sixth Gun* young adult series require similar attention to their labels and catalog records. (This issue was not found in the adult or young adult franchise/property series.) It may be possible, and less confusing to patrons, to change the spine labels and catalog records on the books in question to say “v. 1-2, v. 3-4, etc.”, as has been done with several manga series with collected editions of multiple volumes.

Properties

For the property series in the adult and young adult collections, similar data points were collected about series completion, cataloging practices, labeling conventions, and examples of inconsistencies in the cataloging and labeling practices within a series. An additional question unique to the property series was also studied: to what extent do the spine labels provide information to the reader to help them distinguish between story arcs and identify the order of the volumes in a story arc?

Table 10. Series completion percentages for properties.

List	Series Held	Series Complete	% Complete
Adult	89	51	57.30%
Young Adult	99	47	47.47%

Table 10 displays the findings with respect to series completion for adult and young adult properties, indicating that series completion is an area of concern in all aspects of the collection. Of the 89 series held in the adult collection, 51 (57.30%) were complete, and 47 of the 99 young adult series (47.47%) were complete. As with the other fiction series, the exact volumes missing from each series were noted, so that selectors

will be able to determine if the volumes in question are available to purchase and whether it is worth the investment to buy the missing volumes from the series in question.

Table 11. Catalog records for property series with multiple volumes held.

List	# Series w/ Multiple Vol. Held	# with Multiple Bib Records (%)	# with Single Bib Record (%)
Adult	15	5 (33.33%)	10 (66.67%)
Young Adult	34	6 (17.65%)	28 (82.35%)

Table 11 summarizes the findings related to the practice for catalog records for property series. Again, the focus is on series of which multiple volumes are held, and multiple bound units are identified as part of the series, thus excluding series holdings of a single collected edition. This applies to 15 series in the adult collection, of which two-thirds (10 series, 66.67%) are cataloged with item records for each volume under a bib record for the series, and one-third (5 series) are cataloged with bib records for each volume. As with the fiction series discussed previously, the practice for cataloging young adult series is more consistent overall and has been to consolidate the item records for each volume held under an overarching bib record for the series. Of the 34 relevant series in the young adult collection, 28 (82.35%) have been cataloged in this way, and only 6 (17.65%) are cataloged with separate bib records for each volume in the series and would need to be consolidated.

Table 12. Labeling practices for properties.

List	Total Series	# by Author (%)	# by Series (%)	# Split (%)
Adult	89	18 (20.23%)	71 (79.78%)	1 (1.12%)
Young Adult	99	18 (18.18%)	81 (81.82%)	2 (2.02%)

In contrast to the graphic fiction series, approximately four-fifths of both the adult and young adult property series were labeled according to the series title or character name, instead of the author's last name. Table 12 summarizes these results. 71 of the 89

adult collection series (79.78%) are labeled in this way, as well as 81 of the 99 young adult collection series (81.82%). For these works, this makes a lot of sense, because some of the defining characteristics of properties are that multiple writers write the same characters, that author changes mid-series are common, and that patrons browsing for a favorite character are more likely to look for the name of the character than they are to know the author or artist of a particular work. However, this practice has not been implemented consistently. 18 of the adult series, including *Black Panther*, *Punisher*, *Hellboy*, and *Black Canary and Zatanna* are labeled by the author's name; 18 of the young adult series, including *Ms. Marvel*, *Unbeatable Squirrel Girl*, *Runaways*, *Gotham Academy*, and *Supergirl* are as well. This is another area that could benefit from a more consistent labeling practice; if the decision were made to label all of these series by series title or character name, the 36 series currently labeled by author could be updated, and future additions to the collection could be handled in a more consistent manner.

On three occasions, the volumes of a property series were separated to multiple shelf locations on account of inconsistencies in cataloging and labeling. It was noted that one copy of the second volume of Francis Manapul's *The Flash* was shelved in the adult collection, with its own bib record, while the first volume of the series and a second copy of the second volume are shelved in the young adult collection and consolidated under a bib record for the entire series. In the young adult collection, the catalog records for the *Runaways* series show volumes 2, 3, and 5 under a single record with the call number YGN Vaug (call number based on the last name of Brian K. Vaughan, the writer of the first several volumes in the series), and the rest of the volumes in the 10-volume series have individual bib records for each volume and are labeled YGN Runaways, after the

series title. Choosing consistent cataloging and labeling conventions in this case would unite the volumes of the series together on the shelf and in the catalog. A similar inconsistency exists within the *Astonishing X-Men* series to a lesser degree; most of the volumes of the series are cataloged under one bib record, with the exception of volume 8 (*Astonishing X-Men: Children of the Brood* by Christos Gage), which has its own individual bib record and is difficult to identify as part of the series as a result.

The final question relevant to the property series was, to what extent does the spine label provide information to help a reader distinguish between story arcs or series that feature the same character? For every series in the adult and young adult collections, the answer is that the spine label does not provide this information. In the adult collection, 19 distinct Batman story arcs are held, as well as 3 for Catwoman, 6 for Justice League, 9 for Superman, and 6 for Wonder Woman. The call numbers on the spine label identify the main character (e.g., GN Catwoman or GN Catwoman v.1, GN Superman or GN Superman v.1) but provide no further assistance to the reader. The same pattern exists in the young adult collection, where there is a lack of distinction between 4 additional Wonder Woman story arcs, 10 additional Batman series, 11 for Spider-Man, and 3 for Batgirl. Frequently, volume numbering is incomplete or missing entirely. An inexperienced graphic novel reader may not know to look for this information elsewhere, and even to an experienced reader, it is inconvenient and potentially confusing not to have access to the information needed to distinguish between story arcs and identify which volumes come next in a particular arc of interest.

Discussion

The following section will address three broad areas of discussion related to this project. The first section will address challenges and considerations for graphic novel collection analysis and collection development, the second will outline the next steps and decision points to be addressed with the Acquisitions and Collections Department as the project progresses, and the third will discuss the scope and limitations of the study, as well as the importance of consistency of practice moving forward.

Format-specific Challenges for Collection Analysis and Development

This study highlighted two areas of format-specific challenges for graphic novel collection analysis and development. The first area relates to format-specific knowledge that selectors and catalogers need to have in order to effectively manage graphic novel collections and their peculiarities compared to other formats. An example of this is the distinction between issues, volumes, books, and omnibus editions discussed above at length, which must be understood to identify which units to buy to complete a series holding and how to label them correctly for patrons to find. Another example is the existence of multiple story arcs and authors for each property, and the frequency of author changes within a single story arc, which make it easy to accidentally divide a story arc across multiple shelf locations. In addition, many of the tools that librarians use to help patrons (and themselves) identify the order of volumes in print series, such as the

KDL What's Next or NoveList Plus databases, do not include graphic novels in a comprehensive manner, if at all. The Goodreads database was fairly effective for this purpose, and additional ISBN searches on Amazon and graphic novel review sites cleared up most areas of confusion, but these appear to be areas in which careful documentation of procedures and additional training for selectors and catalogers may be useful, especially for those staff who are not familiar with the graphic novel format or graphic novel-specific resources.

The second area of graphic novel-specific challenges encountered relates to collection analysis methodologies, specifically the applicability of circulation analysis. In this study, the list-checking analysis was useful for identifying broad areas of strength and weakness in the collection, and the core lists can be used to provide suggestions for titles to fill in gaps or areas of weakness. The direct collection analysis was very useful for gathering information in response to questions related to changes under consideration. Early in the course of this project, a circulation study was considered as a means of adding a use-centered component to the analysis, but was later rejected. The primary reason for this was that if the circulation data of lost, damaged, or otherwise withdrawn volumes does not exist or is not accessible, it is very difficult to extract meaningful data about the collection, especially given the relative frequency with which graphic novel volumes are replaced. If a library's ILS allows that data to be stored even after a specific volume is withdrawn, it would benefit selectors to keep those use statistics. Circulation data for individual series will still be incorporated into decisions about which series to complete, and whether there is sufficient demand to justify a purchase, but the challenges of conducting a circulation analysis for the entire graphic novel collection highlighted the

need to consider which collection analysis methods are appropriate and meaningful for the collection and setting in question.

Next Steps/Decision Points

Approach to Series Completion

Both the list-checking analysis and the direct collection analysis identified graphic novel series completion as an area in need of significant attention. The list-checking analysis found that of the core graphic novel series held, 53.64% of those series were complete, and only 24.49% of the core manga series held were complete. The direct collection analysis found that for graphic fiction series for both adults and young adults, slightly less than one-third of the series (31.85% and 31.25%, respectively) were complete. Comparatively, the rates of series completion for properties were higher, at 57.30% for items in the adult collection and 47.47% for items in the young adult collection, but the need to address incomplete series is still evident.

Obviously, from a reader's perspective, it is desirable to be able to find all of the volumes in a series of interest at a single location, in this case a public library. From a vendor perspective, some volumes missing from series held may not be in print or available to purchase any longer, regardless of how much a selector wants to replace it, and regardless of the gap it may leave in a series holding. From a financial perspective, it is not likely that the adult or young adult selectors would be able to purchase all of the volumes missing from the series that are partially held, and even if it were possible, collection budgets are limited and they would be weighing the decision to use those funds to fill in gaps in older series rather than to purchase new titles that may be in high

demand. Where series completion is concerned, the next step in the process is to present the list of missing volumes to the adult and young adult selectors and make decisions about how to approach gaps in series. For example, it may be decided that it is worth the expenditure to buy the missing volumes, where available, for series that are only missing 1-2 volumes, and to bring recent series up to date if the latest volumes have not yet been purchased, but that it is financially infeasible to complete a 12-volume series where only the first two volumes are held at present. The selectors may decide that for an older series, even if the replacement volumes are available, their funds are better spent on new titles or titles requested by patrons, for which there is immediate demand. It would also be prudent to discuss the point at which a selector might intentionally stop collecting a series, and whether such decisions were made for some of the series in question. Discussing these scenarios with the selectors and defining priorities and parameters for replacement will be the next step to compiling an order list.

Approach to Shelf Classification and Potential Relocation of Graphic Nonfiction Titles

The next set of decision points addresses the issue of shelf classification and potential relocation of the adult and young adult graphic nonfiction collections. Fee (2013) and Hoover (2011) recommend shelving all graphic format works together as a single format, as a library would shelve all of the print fiction or books on CD together, and the Acquisitions and Collections Department is interested in making a change in that direction. However, the direct collection analysis found that in the collection's current state, the practice has overwhelmingly (if not completely consistently) been to shelve works of fiction in a designated separate graphic novel section, and to interfile the

graphic format nonfiction titles in the print nonfiction and biography collections. This applies to 111 of the 116 graphic nonfiction volumes in the adult collection, and 25 of the 32 volumes in the young adult collection. The next step with respect to graphic nonfiction shelf classification is to decide in conjunction with library staff whether to commit to making this change. Part of the decision would depend on the issue of shelf space; where the adult and young adult collections are currently located, there is not room to add that number of volumes to the shelves; as a result, unless volumes were weeded from the collection, additional space would have to be secured. For the adult collection, there is a potential opportunity to move the graphic novel collection to a more visible location with additional shelf space that would allow the addition of sections for nonfiction works; this will need to be discussed further with the User Experience team. If this decision were to be made, the volumes in question would need to be relabeled with the “GN” descriptor and their call numbers and location codes would need to be updated in their catalog records. Signage for the new shelf locations would also need to be created to alert patrons to the change.

Approach to Cataloging Practice for Fiction and Property Series

With respect to cataloging practices for fiction and property series, a decision will need to be made about whether an overarching bib record for the series should be created with item records for each volume, or whether individual bib records should exist for each volume. Fee (2013) and Uong (2016) recommend creating a top-level bib record that unites all of the volume records, and in all areas of the library’s graphic novel collections, this is a more common practice. 52.27% of the adult fiction series with multiple volumes, 84.21% of the young adult fiction series, 66.67% of the adult

properties, and 82.35% of the young adult properties are handled in this manner already. The next step will be to decide whether to commit to doing this consistently, since it is already the more common practice, and if so, use the list of series with multiple bib records from the data collection spreadsheet to identify and consolidate those records.

Approach to Labeling Conventions for Fiction Series

In the case of properties, the literature recommends labeling a series by its property or character name, so as to group all of the works about a single character together on the shelf; properties will be discussed in the next section. This begs the question, however, of how to handle fiction series that are not properties – whether to label them by the author’s last name, or by the series title. For fiction series, the practice has overwhelmingly been to label them by author’s last name; 94.82% of the adult series and 96.88% of the young adult series have been handled in this way. With such a majority, it appears logical to officially adopt that practice going forward, but confirming that judgment will be the next step for these works, followed by relabeling the outliers, ensuring that the series are numbered correctly, and reuniting series that were split by inconsistency in this regard.

Approach to Labeling Conventions for Properties

For properties, besides the issue of series completion, the main decision points focus on series labeling. The first decision to be made is whether to commit to a practice of labeling these series by the property or character name (e.g., Wonder Woman, Batman), as recommended by Pyles (2013), instead of by author name. For both adult and young adult titles, approximately four-fifths of the series are already labeled in this

way (79.78% and 81.82%, respectively), and relatively few series would need to be updated. This approach helps group all works about the same character together, regardless of who or how many writers have worked with that character or story arc, and avoids dividing series to multiple shelf locations in the case of an author change.

The second decision to be made regarding properties is whether the call numbers for these series should be amended to provide patrons with more information to identify individual story arcs and series order. As they exist at the present, these call numbers tend to take the form “GN [Character]”, occasionally with a volume number. This fails to distinguish between the multiple story arcs for each character. One possible approach to address this issue is to add another line to the call number, between the character name and any applicable volume numbers, to identify the particular story arc. For example, Kurt Busiek’s *Superman: Secret Identity* story arc might be labeled “GN Superman Identity”, which would distinguish it from Grant Morrison’s *All-Star Superman* story arc, “GN Superman Allstar”. Each could have volume numbers as needed added to the labels. For an additional layer of specificity, the year in which the series started could be included as an additional line, after the descriptor but before the volume number. This could distinguish Brian Azzarello’s 2011 *Wonder Woman* series (“GN Wonder Woman 2011”), from Greg Rucka’s 2017 *Wonder Woman* (“GN Wonder Woman 2017”), with volumes numbered as appropriate. The Acquisitions and Collections Department has expressed support for this option, and if a final decision were to be made in favor of it, unique descriptors would need to be identified and approved for each property series and all volumes would need to be relabeled accordingly.

Scope and Limitations of Study

It is important to note the limitations created by the scope of this study, as its focus is limited to the adult and young adult graphic novel collections at a single North Carolina public library. The list-checking study and direct collection analysis inform several decision points as the next steps in the graphic novel project are determined. The cataloging, labeling, and shelf classification practices that the academic and professional literature describe as “best practices” for a collection or format may not be appropriate, or feasible, for a particular setting or collection or user group, and the extent to which these practices will be considered and adopted will be determined in forthcoming conversations with the Chapel Hill Public Library’s Acquisitions and Collections Department. In addition, what works well at the Chapel Hill Public Library may not automatically be the best system to apply to another type of institution, or even another public library, and selectors and catalogers should carefully consider the needs of their institution before adopting the approaches recommended for another. Regardless of the specific practices adopted, Uong’s (2016, slide 52) final directive to “Be consistent” holds true; the importance of consistency in approaching the graphic novel collection’s cataloging, labeling, and shelf classification cannot be understated. At the beginning of this paper, the second research question asked, “To what extent do the adult and young adult graphic novel collections at the Chapel Hill Public Library reflect consistent cataloging, labeling, and classification practices?” The answer appears to be a very lukewarm “sometimes”. Consistent practice helps everyone who interacts with the graphic novel collection – the selectors, the catalogers, the staff shelving the collection, and the patrons trying to find

the items they want – and as a result, regardless of the combination of decisions made about the collection practices going forward, bringing the existing collection completely in line with those decisions with updates to catalog records, spine labels, and shelf location, and continuing to document the established practice and decision points for staff to apply to future collection additions will be essential.

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Notes

¹Fee (2013) uses this *Lord of the Rings* reference to refer to the recommended practice for graphic novels of creating a single overarching bib record for a series with item records for each volume under it. In studying the cataloging practices for the fiction and property series in the Chapel Hill Public Library's graphic novel collection, this was one of the practices examined.

²For the purposes of this project, the term "graphic novels" will be used to describe the collection, including comics bound in trade collections, graphic nonfiction and biography, manga, and "graphic novels" as traditionally defined as single-volume graphic fiction. It can be argued that "comics" is a more accurate descriptor for the format as a whole; Scott McCloud's seminal work *Understanding Comics* provides a widely accepted definition of comics, describing them as "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in a deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or produce an aesthetic response in the viewer" (60). With that definition, "comics" refers to the particular kind of sequential art, regardless of the subject (fiction or nonfiction) or the end product (trade paperback collection, manga, stand-alone graphic novel, etc.). Although "graphic novels" is thus not the most accurate term to use for the full collection, it is the term most commonly used in the academic literature, as well as the term used as a format limiter in the OPAC at the Chapel Hill Public Library, and will be maintained here.

³The distinction between issues, trade paperback volumes, and books is particularly

salient for graphic novel collections and a potential pitfall for selectors. Comics are published in individual issues, and then publishers compile story arcs of five or six issues into trade paperback volumes. This is the format most likely to be collected by libraries. However, some series will also have books or deluxe editions, which compile multiple volumes with bonus material such as interview transcripts, sketches, or variant cover galleries. These terms are not interchangeable, and it is necessary to determine exactly which edition is held by a library in order to assess whether a series is complete.

⁴ Lists of recent format, subject, or genre-specific award winners are often used in list-checking studies as an indicator of high-quality titles, and selectors may use these lists outside of the context of a formal collection analysis to inform their purchasing decisions. Although the Eisner Awards are high-profile, format-specific awards granted to graphic novels and their creators, and considered the equivalent of the Oscar Awards for graphic novels, lists of current and past Eisner Award winners were not included in the composite list because many of the categories recognized by these awards (Best Short Story, Best Single Issue, Best Writer, Best Penciller/Inker, Best Colorist) do not directly correspond to the trade paperback format in which public libraries typically collect graphic novels (SDCC 2018).

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