

Library Collection Audit Project

Case Study

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Law Library Management, Incorporated (LLM) was engaged by an AM Law 25 firm to complete a library collection audit and analysis. The audit included both print and online resources of the firm's U.S. offices.

Objective:

Through detailed analysis by a team of law librarians, LLM identified areas of overlap in the coverage of similar subject matter from multiple resources both print and online. Opportunities for right sizing the collection were identified for the firm and specific recommendations were offered. The project as conceived and implemented consisted of four phases.



1. Discovery:

During this phase, LLM gathered all the data necessary for the analysis. Data included lists of all print resources in the U.S. Offices and copies of all online agreements from service providers that are subject to the review. In addition, any usage reports available from online service providers or third party ERM platforms as well as circulation records were gathered. To assist in this effort and the subsequent phases as well, the firm appointed an internal project manager with whom the LLM specialists met regularly.

2. Analysis:

The LLM specialists reviewed all the data gathered and identified areas of overlapping and redundant coverage of similar subject matter.

3. Findings:

During this phase, the LLM specialists communicated with the firm project manager and other internal stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the preferences and research behaviors of the firm's users. In order to gain an understanding of industry best practices, the LLM specialists met with library directors and managers of peer firms which had been through a similar exercise.

4. Draft and Present Recommendations:

LLM prepared and delivered a detailed report, including specific recommendations for adjusting the collection, to ensure that the firm derives maximum value for its expenditures, while not disrupting attorney workflow. It was recommended that any suggested cancellations be applied to all of the firm's offices. At the end of this phase, the LLM team met with their law firm counterparts to review the findings in detail and provide hard and soft copies of the report.

Law Firm Print Collection: Analysis and Recommendations



In anticipation of a move of the firm's offices to a new location, in which the library will be allocated less space than it currently occupies, it was recommended that the extent of the print collection be adjusted accordingly and online versions of the affected titles be utilized in their stead. It was further recommended that this transition be accomplished in three phases over an eighteen month period to give users a chance to get accustomed to the new circumstance.

Factors taken into consideration when determining which specific titles were allotted to a particular phase were as follows.

- Is the content generic or proprietary or exclusive?
- Is it available online?
- Is the print version heavily used?
- Does the print version occupy a large footprint?
- Does the online platform offer a good user experience?

Objective:

- Analyze the extent and utilization of the collection, and the availability of online alternatives.
- Transition as much of the print collection as possible to its digital counterparts in a way calculated to minimize disruption to attorney workflow.

Resources Consulted:

- Shelf list of print holdings for all firm offices
- Lists of active subscriptions of print titles from individual publishers
- Terms of agreements with individual service providers
- Library circulation records from all firm offices

- Online database directories of publishers of legal materials
- Conversations with library management team and reference and research staff
- Best practices of peer firms
- Industry knowledge and experience of LLM law librarian team

Methodology:

- Review shelf lists and lists of active subscriptions from publishers.
- Search online database directories to ensure that there is a digital version of the title.
- Consult circulation records
- Speak to library management team and reference and research staff.
- Apply peer firm best practices and LLM industry knowledge.
- Make recommendations

Focus on Major Publishers

- The firm subscribes to many titles from major service providers.
- Many of the individual titles consist of large numbers of volumes.
- Virtually every title from these publishers is offered in digital format of one kind or another.

Meeting with Firm Reference Staff

The LLM specialist met with members of the reference, research and technical services staff individually and in groups. The resulting conversations yielded much useful information about the preferences and research behaviors of the firm's end users.

Office Copies

The firm subscribed to hundreds of copies of many desktop books; soft covered annuals that are replaced each year such as New York Business Corporation Laws, and hard bound serials such as the Securities Act Handbook. There are significant costs associated with maintaining these subscriptions. In addition to the cost of the

subscription itself, considerable staff hours are required to physically handle and distribute each volume as well as update hard cover books when a supplement is received. As much of this content is generic and available from many online sources, firms have worked diligently to reduce the extent of this collection. Some specific strategies were recommended.

Law Firm Online Collection: Analysis and Recommendations

The firm subscribes to many online legal and business research services. A number of them offer similar, overlapping and duplicative coverage of the same subject matter. Some of them are underutilized.

Objective:

- Analyze the extent and utilization of the collection.
- Identify areas of overlap and duplication.
- Identify underutilized resources.
- Make recommendations to eliminate overlapping, duplicative and underutilized resources.

Resources Consulted:

- Usage tracking software from Research Monitor
- Usage data reports from service providers
- Conversations with library management team and reference and research staff
- Best practices of peer firms
- Industry knowledge and experience of LLM law librarian team

Methodology:

- Review lists of active online subscriptions from publishers.
- Analyze usage data from third party web tracking software and online service providers.
- Speak to library management team and reference and research staff.
- Apply peer firm best practices and LLM industry knowledge.
- Make recommendations

Conclusions:



- The firm was provided with anecdotal and quantitative data which suggested a particular course of action to pursue.
- Though not participating in contract negotiations, LLM provided the firm with a detailed blue print and road map enabling it to approach upcoming contract renewal conversations with service providers.
- At the conclusion of the project, the Firm Wide Library Director described the information provided by Law Library Management, Incorporated to be “invaluable”