

3-19-2019

## Out of the Basement: Partnering to Enhance the Discovery and Use of Graphic Novels

Wendy L. West

*University at Albany, State University of New York, wwest@albany.edu*

Rebecca A. Nous

*University at Albany, State University of New York, rnous@albany.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/collaborativelibrarianship>



Part of the [Cataloging and Metadata Commons](#), and the [Collection Development and Management Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

West, Wendy L. and Nous, Rebecca A. (2019) "Out of the Basement: Partnering to Enhance the Discovery and Use of Graphic Novels," *Collaborative Librarianship*: Vol. 10: Iss. 4, Article 6.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/collaborativelibrarianship/vol10/iss4/6>

This Peer Reviewed Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Collaborative Librarianship by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact [jennifer.cox@du.edu](mailto:jennifer.cox@du.edu), [dig-commons@du.edu](mailto:dig-commons@du.edu).

---

## Out of the Basement: Partnering to Enhance the Discovery and Use of Graphic Novels

### Abstract

This paper presents a project designed to promote and increase the use of graphic novels, previously a seldom utilized collection, at the University at Albany Libraries. Several units in the Libraries collaborated to add additional graphic novels to the collection, augment bibliographic records with genre headings to enhance discovery, and promote this collection in the University Libraries and online. The Libraries used a variety of marketing techniques, including social media. Circulation statistics were recorded before, during, and after the promotional activities. This collaboration not only resulted in an increase in circulation activity for these titles while they were on display and after they were returned to the stacks, but generated other benefits as well.

### Keywords

graphic novels, promoting collections, cataloging and discovery

*Peer Reviewed*

## Out of the Basement: Partnering to Enhance the Discovery and Use of Graphic Novels

Wendy L. West ([wwest@albany.edu](mailto:wwest@albany.edu))

Head of Discovery Services, University at Albany, State University of New York

Rebecca A. Nous ([rnous@albany.edu](mailto:rnous@albany.edu))

Catalog Management Librarian, University at Albany, State University of New York

### Abstract

This paper presents a project designed to promote and increase the use of graphic novels, previously a seldom-utilized collection, at the University at Albany Libraries. Several units in the Libraries collaborated to add additional graphic novels to the collection, augment bibliographic records with genre headings to enhance discovery, and promote this collection in the University Libraries and online. The Libraries used a variety of marketing techniques, including social media. Circulation statistics were recorded before, during, and after the promotional activities. This collaboration not only resulted in an increase in circulation activity for these titles while they were on display and after they were returned to the stacks, but generated other benefits as well.

Keywords: graphic novels, promoting collections, cataloging and discovery

### Introduction

The University at Albany is a research university in the State University of New York library system. To support more than 17,000 students in 245 undergraduate and graduate programs, the University Libraries house a collection of more than two million print volumes across three libraries on two campuses and provide access to over 200,000 electronic resources. Included in these collections is a diverse, but small and rarely used, graphic novel collection. The Marketing Coordinating Committee, a group charged with promoting library resources and services to the campus community, was looking

for a unique collection to spotlight in the Libraries, and decided on graphic novels. A committee member, knowing that the Head of Discovery Services had an interest in the graphic novels collection and a desire to improve their discoverability, approached her to assist with this project. The Head of Discovery Services had also been working with the Subject Librarian for Art, English, Music, Philosophy, and Theatre to build the collection. As work on this project began, it highlighted several areas of concern, including low circulation rates, gaps in the collection, and difficulty finding graphic novel titles in the Libraries' catalog and discovery system.

At the beginning of this project, the University Libraries held 161 graphic novel titles in the three libraries, primarily in adult literature and non-fiction subject areas, as well as in separately housed collections such as the Children and Young Adult Collection and Government Documents Collection. Only 76 (47%) of the titles had circulated prior to the beginning of the project – a somewhat surprising rate since the range of topics would seem to lend themselves to both leisure reading and academic interest.

These low circulation rates raised the question of whether our user population was not interested in graphic novels in general, whether our collection was not meeting their needs, or whether we had barriers to accessing these books that precluded their discovery and circulation. We began a collaborative project to add renowned titles recognized as being part of Werthmann's core collections for academic libraries, which is comprised of graphic novels that have won both the Eisner and Harvey Awards, the two most prestigious awards for graphic novels.<sup>1</sup> We also worked to identify potential barriers to discovery and access; to attempt to remove or minimize those barriers; to conduct an analysis of circulation statistics prior to, during, and after the project; and to engage in promotional activities. Out of the Libraries' collection, we chose to focus on 65 graphic novels that represented a diverse range of subjects, many of which had been recognized as exceptional works and are well-known titles that would lend themselves well to promotional activities (Appendix A). Of these 65 graphic novels, only 25 (38%) had circulated prior to the start of these promotional efforts. The project also included efforts to highlight the titles using a variety of techniques including visual displays and social media.

## Literature Review

### *Graphic Novels in Libraries & Academia*

Graphic novels now have a firm foothold in academia, and are being used in the classroom to support research and intellectual growth. As pointed out by O'English, Matthews, and Lindsay, graphic novels fulfill multiple roles in an academic environment, ranging from leisure reading to instructional tools.<sup>2</sup> Graphic novels can be used to augment courses by stimulating discourse and highlighting issues, or can themselves be the focus of the course. By their nature, graphic novels present students with a visual and personal perspective that adds context to literature, providing a more thorough and informed understanding than traditional text-based versions of the same work.<sup>3</sup> Finley contends that community and junior colleges should collect graphic novels to encourage reluctant readers, support classroom instruction, and increase non-fiction reading.<sup>4</sup> This helps better prepare their students who intend to continue on to a four year academic college or university.

Graphic novels have increasingly become incorporated into college curricula both as a subject and as a teaching tool. Universities and colleges offer courses focused on graphic novels such as the University of Toronto Department of English course that explores the "rhetorical uses of comics in order to think through important questions of multimodality in various subgenres: short narratives, auto/biography, the superhero, multimedia, and film (wherever possible)."<sup>5</sup> Their iSchool also offers a course, INF2129H Graphic Novels and Comic Books in the Library, which looks at topics such as the history, development, and popularity of comic books and graphic novels. The course also examines how the materials are viewed and interpreted by different groups, and the implications that has for collection development and literacy curricula.<sup>6</sup>

Graphic novels can bring a spotlight to specific issues and events. For example, Juneau and Sucharov propose the importance of graphic novels as a tool when teaching courses that focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>7</sup> They argue that graphic novels written on this subject bring up unique issues such as “life under occupation, the sources of violence, the intractability of the conflict, and Israel’s status as the Middle East’s only democracy.”<sup>8</sup> The novels give students a range of viewpoints that reflect the complexity and diversity of the issues involved in historical events or conflicts. Hawkins, Lopez, and Hughes discuss the merits of using graphic novels to engage students, helping to develop literacy and critical thinking skills when exploring civil rights events and issues.<sup>9</sup>

Graphic novels are a distinct genre of literature that people seek out for reasons that do not apply to more traditional, text-based works. Readers of graphic novels are not always constrained by type of literature, theme, or subject. As with any other type of work, individuals may have a favorite series, sub-genre, or writer/illustrator, or they may be seeking out the latest graphic novel because of their affinity for the format. As with other genres, social groups with a strong interest in graphic novels and comic books form in communities and on college and university campuses. Slater and Kardos learned the importance of outreach to student organizations, and discovered how the library could support this type of campus social interaction and engagement through library sponsored activities and the graphic novel collection.<sup>10</sup>

### *Cataloging & Classification*

Catalog records are intended to accurately represent the works in a library collection, and provide appropriate and sufficient access points for someone to locate them in the catalog. As with other formats, there are several ways of approaching the cataloging and classification of

graphic novels. Goldsmith identified four common strategies libraries employ when handling a graphic novel collection: (1) assigning Dewey or Library of Congress classification schemes based on intellectual content, without regard to format, (2) determining classification by format, regardless of intellectual content, (3) creating a designated space for graphic novels separate from the rest of the library’s collections regardless of classification, and (4) creating a graphic novel browsing collection, where they are placed without treatment by catalogers.<sup>11</sup>

Graphic novels present some challenges to typical cataloging practice. Like audiobooks or visual materials, the intellectual content of the work and the graphic novel format may equally drive the library user’s interest and search strategy.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, genre headings have been used inconsistently and many graphic novel bibliographic records do not include them. In a study of graphic novels held by Association of Research Library members, fewer than 10% had the phrase “graphic novels” as a genre heading, and only 21% included “graphic novels” as social tags in their discovery layer.<sup>13</sup> Those seeking out graphic novels also need a finer level of detail in the catalog record. Fee compares the cataloging of graphic novels to that of music, “where patrons need to know composer, performer, conductor, and other details,” noting that “the more minutiae that can be added to the catalog record the better.”<sup>14</sup> For graphic novels, that additional metadata may include multiple authors, illustrators, colorists, and other creative contributors, as well as relationships to other works.

While some graphic novels may be written and illustrated by a single person, many are not, and identifying the chief creator of a work may present another challenge. Cataloging graphic novels requires including multiple creative contributors, such as artists, designers, writers, and possibly others to fully describe creative respon-

sibility for some works.<sup>15</sup> O'English, et al. questioned how to handle works produced by more than one creator, each of whom may have a unique LC call number assigned to different parts of the classification schedule, and how to determine who is the chief creator of a work.<sup>16</sup> These issues have both catalog record and classification implications. Avoiding these complexities by "simply classing graphic novels with items about cartoons and/or cartooning inadequately describes the unique complexities of these items," and hampers access to these titles.<sup>17</sup>

In practice, graphic novels are cataloged under a hodgepodge of subject headings and, if used, genre and form headings. The result is that "users often cannot make a comprehensive search of all works in this format because of a lack of understanding about how graphic novels are cataloged, a situation compounded by cataloging inconsistencies."<sup>18</sup>

#### *Marketing & Promotion*

The increased collecting and use of graphic novels in academia, along with the challenge of identifying graphic novel holdings in the catalog, has made finding ways to increase awareness of this collection all the more important. O'English, et al. encouraged planning for the marketing and promotion of graphic novels when beginning to build the collection.<sup>19</sup> They note that "library staff may need to be convinced of the appropriateness of a graphic novel collection, while faculty, students, and non-academic campus units may need to be made aware of the scholarly, creative, entertainment, and marketing opportunities that can arise."<sup>20</sup> They also hold that, while recognizing the importance of efforts to increase faculty awareness of graphic novels in a library's collection, "library outreach and marketing efforts aimed directly at students can increase general student awareness of graphic novels as scholarly resources, artistic

vehicles, and pleasure reading opportunities beyond the classroom presence."<sup>21</sup>

Some libraries choose to shelve their graphic novel collections separately from the rest of their materials to facilitate discovery. Lubbock Public Library found that "it [was] important to have a separate area for a graphic novels collection: a well-lighted area suitable for browsing as well as circulating."<sup>22</sup> Similarly, listserv discussions on the subject indicated that making graphic novels available in a common location appeared to be preferred practice.<sup>23</sup>

#### *Collaboration, Engagement, and Technical Services*

Library users, faculty, and staff benefit greatly from collaborating within and between departments. Kowalski describes a number of reasons for library employees to engage and collaborate with each other, including: the interconnectedness of the work done throughout the library, and the ripple effects that decisions or actions made in one area have on many others; facilitating increased efficiency and creativity in work; enhancing personal and professional growth; and allowing better resource sharing throughout the library to enhance services, even with fewer resources.<sup>24</sup> In fact, a study by Weng and Ackerman revealed that both technical services and public services librarians would appreciate increased communication and collaboration between the two areas.<sup>25</sup>

Collaborating with faculty across the campus can be mutually beneficial. Chan and Kwok describe how faculty from other departments contributed their specialized knowledge and expertise to their project and, as a result, new resources were created that could be used as instructional tools.<sup>26</sup>

As members of an academic community, librarians have a professional responsibility to engage in activities that serve the larger community. Toce and Schofield describe how Southern Con-

necticut State University's Technical Services Division librarians participate in a variety of activities and programming that allow them to interact with students, campus faculty and community partners.<sup>27</sup> Participation in those activities is an effort to support the mutual mission and goals of the University, Library, and Division.

## Background

### *Location, Location, Location*

The University Libraries primarily uses Library of Congress classification to determine the location of materials. Some collections are housed in a special location, such as Reference, Government Documents, the Children and Young Adult Collection, and the Science Browse Collection, but the vast majority of titles, including graphic novels, are shelved solely by classification.

The classification for graphic novels and comic books covers a wide range of topics within the Library of Congress classification system.

Works might be classified under:

- graphic novels (PN6717, PN6727),
- an individual, such as Brian Epstein (ML429.E6),
- a specific character, such as Batman (PN6728.B36),
- a location, such as Poland, (PN6790.P6) or Argentina, (PN 6790 A74), or
- a subject, such as youth--dental care (RK55.Y68).

Since the University Libraries does not designate a special location for graphic novels or comic books, their diversity in classification spread materials across three libraries and two campuses. In practice, this means that the graphic novel *The Fifth Beatle: The Brian Epstein Story* is housed among text-based books on topics such

as musical theater and opera.<sup>28</sup> While this may make sense topically, this title would be lost to those specifically seeking graphic novels (the discovery of which at the University Libraries has been hampered by other factors to be detailed below). Raina Telgemeier's *Smile*, the story of a sixth-grade girl discovering her strength and identity while enduring painful orthodontic procedures, by classification would be shelved among works on financing dental care and the costs and benefits of using fluoride in dental care.<sup>29</sup>

How the University Libraries has acquired a book can also impact its location. *Squeaks Discovers Type! How Print Expanded our Universe!* has been classed such that it would sit alongside materials on the history of print (Z124), except that it was published by the U.S. Government Printing Office.<sup>30</sup> In the University Libraries, that requires that it be shelved with government documents in compact shelving, which is not an easily browsed collection.

### *Subject Headings and Genre/Form Terms*

Appropriate subject headings facilitate the discovery of graphic novels through catalogs and discovery layers, but are not faultless. The Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) subdivision "comic books, strips, etc." or "cartoons and comics" can be appended to subject headings to indicate that a title is a graphic novel or comic book. However, some materials date back to older cataloging practices that did not include the addition of subject headings to fiction works. Also, these may not be the terms someone would search for or automatically associate with graphic novels as a genre. Bibliographic records may also include genre/form headings for "Graphic novels," or list "Graphic novels" as a subject heading, but not necessarily. For example, when Mariko and Jillian Tamaki's *Skim* (2008) was originally cataloged, it lacked a genre heading for graphic novels.<sup>31</sup> Since that time, the record has been updated, and now includes four

genre headings referencing graphic novels, though libraries holding that title may not have updated their records for it.

In addition to the evolution of cataloging rules and practice, there has been inconsistency in the application of subject- or genre-related access points for graphic novels and comics for philosophical reasons as well. An argument can be made that a graphic novel is a monograph or book, and should be treated as such. Thus, a cataloger may not see the need to augment a record with a subject or genre heading indicating that a work is a graphic novel. This variation and inconsistency presents another challenge for identifying graphic novels when searching a library's catalog.

#### *Catalog and Discovery Service Limitations*

The University Libraries offers two discovery interfaces, the classic catalog and EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS). The classic catalog has some limited imagery that includes book covers, but does not have format icons or other labels to indicate that a work is a graphic novel or comic book. There is an advanced search, but it does not include facets, and our classic catalog does not offer tagging options that would allow users to identify the materials that they discover. Many of these issues also apply to EDS. We have not enabled social tagging in EDS, and while "graphic novels" is available as a subject facet, these results are only as good as the metadata in our underlying bibliographic records.

#### **Methodology**

To solve some of these problems, we designed a project to improve our graphic novel collection, address inconsistencies and deficiencies in the bibliographic records for our graphic novels, actively promote awareness of this collection, and track usage data for these titles. The project was a collaborative effort between Collections, Technical Services (Cataloging Services and Discov-

ery Services), and the University Libraries Marketing Coordinating Committee. The Marketing Coordinating Committee is comprised of representatives from a variety of functional areas in the Libraries, and focuses on promoting the Libraries collections and services on campus. Each partner department participated in the project in a different capacity, resulting in a well-rounded program to build and promote this seldom-used collection.

#### *Collection Building*

Upon review of our collection, it became apparent that the University Libraries lacked many titles that are considered to be part of a core graphic novel collection. Werthmann ranked American ARL academic libraries by the number of core list graphic novel titles they owned and this listing ranked the University at Albany Libraries' collection as 91 out of 99.<sup>32</sup> After the course of several conversations about the existing titles within the collection, the Subject Librarian for Art, English, Music, Philosophy, and Theatre decided there was a need to augment our graphic novel collection to better meet the needs of our campus community. The Head of Discovery Services and the Subject Librarian reviewed the "Core List of Graphic Novels" from which 30 were identified for purchase.<sup>33</sup>

#### *Improving Discovery*

In a collaborative effort between Discovery Services and Cataloging Services, we attempted to retroactively add the Library of Congress genre/form heading "Graphic novels" to all of our existing bibliographic records for graphic novels. We searched our online catalog for records with the terms "graphic novels" and "comic books" in the subject headings and note fields. While this identified most of our holdings, it was an imperfect process and records that were missed initially were later discovered and augmented. This was an important part of the project because the promotional activities



were temporary, and we wanted to ensure that there were terms in the bibliographic records to make it easier for patrons to discover them in the long term in our online catalog.

### *Raising Awareness*

While improving the discovery of our graphic novels through updated cataloging was vital to facilitating access to them, it was only one piece of the puzzle. Graphic novels are a small, niche collection, and if students and faculty were not aware that the Libraries even owns them, we thought they would be unlikely to seek them out in our catalog. As such, this project involved a multi-faceted marketing approach designed to raise awareness of this collection.

This project made use of a University Libraries Marketing Coordinating Committee program that allows library staff to suggest and organize displays of collections that they wish to highlight on highly-visible display shelves located near the entrance of the University Library. We created special signage to draw attention to the display as patrons entered the building. This signage included a large, colorful poster that was a collage of imagery from the graphic novels on display. To take advantage of the artistic nature of the graphic novels, some were strategically chosen to showcase their cover art.

In addition to the bookshelves, we used display cases in a nearby high-traffic seating area to highlight other titles within the collection. The display included color copies of book covers and some panels from the books, as well as information about awards and URLs for the award web sites. Realia such as POP figures and a Bat Signal were included in the display cases. Bookmarks and bracelets were placed near the displays and on service desks as another way to promote general awareness of graphic novels as a genre, and begin associating the genre with the University Libraries.

The University Library has a large screen television located near the library entrance and circulation desk that is used to market library events and resources. Working with the Marketing Coordinating Committee, we created a slide that was shown on the television to direct patrons to the display and highlight a variety of titles.

The University Libraries' website has a scrolling slider on its homepage, which features upcoming events, identifies new resources, or highlights services. Working with the Marketing Coordinating Committee, we created an image to add to the website, which was posted for several weeks. In addition to the website, the University Libraries maintains a social media presence on a variety of platforms, including Pinterest, Facebook, and Twitter, among others. The visual nature of graphic novels makes them well suited for promotion of this kind, so we decided to use each of these three outlets to raise awareness of the collection. We created a board on the Pinterest page, which included cover art from a selection of graphic novels we own, each title's call number, and, in many cases, a brief synopsis. Our board currently has 82 pins and 162 followers, and is available at: <https://www.pinterest.com/ualibraries/graphic-novels/>. Additionally, we posted announcements about the display on the University Libraries' Facebook page and Twitter feed, with 639 and 401 followers respectively.

### *Collecting Circulation Statistics*

We recorded circulation counts for each book at the beginning and at subsequent intervals throughout the marketing project, which concluded in August 2014. As a follow up, we recorded usage statistics for the titles in December 2014 and May 2016 to examine their continued use. This work highlighted an increase in circulation after the addition of genre headings, suggesting their possible contribution to increased discovery. This information also provided insights into collection usage that can be used to

better inform future decisions about purchases and weeding of the collection.

While we recognized that newly acquired titles would not have had the same opportunity to circulate prior to the marketing project as titles that had been in the collection already, we felt their inclusion was important in the marketing efforts and usage analysis. Because the existing collection had very low circulation, with a majority of titles having never circulated, we did not feel that adding these titles would have a negative impact on the overall circulation analysis. Additionally, any circulation activity or lack thereof

would still provide valuable information for collection development purposes.

**Results & Discussion**

*Collection Circulation*

Circulation statistics were recorded three times during the marketing campaign, as well as twice afterward, to determine whether there was a change in usage activity. Table 1 illustrates the number of graphic novels from the University Libraries’ collection that had circulated at least once prior to, throughout, and after our collaboration.

**Table 1. Percentage of Titles with Loans**

| Checkpoint       | Number of Books that Circulated | Increase in Number of Books that Circulated | Percentage of Total Books that Circulated |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 0 (Baseline)     | 25                              | 0   | 38%                                       |
| 1                | 35                              | 10  | 54%                                       |
| 2                | 47                              | 12  | 72%                                       |
| 3                | 59                              | 12  | 91%                                       |
| 4 (Post-Project) | 65                              | 6   | 100%                                      |
| 5 (Post-Project) | 65                              | 0   | 100%                                      |

This project began with fewer than half (38%) of the titles having prior loans. That number increased until, by the time the marketing portion of the project was concluded, almost all (91%) of the books had circulated at least once. One year later, approximately four months following the

conclusion of the marketing portion of this project, each title had been borrowed at least once.

Table 2 illustrates the number of loans that graphic novels from the University Libraries’ collection had prior to our marketing efforts, as



well as the increase in loans throughout and afterward. Checkpoint 0 (baseline) marked the total number of loans for this group of titles just prior to the beginning of the marketing project.

The percentage increase is calculated relative to the number of loans prior to beginning the project (Checkpoint 0).

**Table 2. Percentage of Loan Increases**

| Checkpoint       | Loans | Loan Increases | Percentage Increase in Loans |
|------------------|-------|----------------|------------------------------|
| 0 (Baseline)     | 116   | 0              | 0%                           |
| 1                | 131   | 15             | 13%                          |
| 2                | 159   | 28             | 37%                          |
| 3                | 204   | 46             | 76%                          |
| 4 (Post-Project) | 233   | 29             | 101%                         |
| 5 (Post-Project) | 273   | 40             | 135%                         |

While the marketing project was active, this graphic novel collection had a continuously increasing number of loans. At the conclusion of the marketing project, the total number of loans for the graphic novel collection had more than doubled. About four months later, we saw continued borrowing of graphic novels, as the number of loans increased to a total of 273, a 135% increase over the number of loans this collection had at the outset of this project.

The post-project checkpoints (Checkpoints 4 and 5) also saw additional increases in both of these measures, which reflected continued use of the graphic novel collection despite it no longer being actively promoted. We observed a dramatic increase in the number of titles that circulated and the overall number of loans for this collection.

#### *The Collaborative Process*

This collaborative project benefitted library patrons and departments throughout the Libraries. Collections Services had devoted a small portion of its budget to starting and building this graphic novel collection to help support the research, scholarship, and reading habits of the University's students and faculty, even as collections budgets faced increasing pressure from the rising costs of resources. The Subject Librarian for Art, English, Music, Philosophy, and Theatre believed there was a need for these titles on campus, even though the circulation statistics were not showing much use of them prior to this project. The increased circulation of the graphic novel collection demonstrates the interest in them, and has been used to guide subsequent purchases in this area.

Patrons benefitted from this collaboration as well. The circulation of all of the titles that we promoted, as well as the increase in the number of loans we observed across the collection, indicate that there was an appetite for graphic novels, but that our patrons were either unaware that we owned them or were unable to find them in the catalog or in the stacks. We tackled those barriers to access through the displays and our other marketing efforts, as well as improving discovery by updating and augmenting our catalog records, and made the titles in this collection accessible to our patrons.

Collaborating with Collections Services and the Marketing Coordinating Committee provided the Cataloging and Discovery Services Departments (both in Technical Services) with an opportunity for increased visibility and engagement with our colleagues. Technical Services personnel routinely serve on committees or on other groups with colleagues from different departments throughout the Libraries, but our daily work typically happens behind the scenes. This project offered the chance to engage with our colleagues in Collections Services and Public Services to enhance discovery of our graphic novel collection in a different way than we are used to. Normally, materials arrive, then are cataloged, processed, and sent to the stacks without much interaction between different divisions. Working on this project together gave Technical Services staff insight into the perspective of Collections and Public Services, and gave our colleagues outside of Technical Services a peek into what we do, and how we all work together to enhance discovery and improve patrons' access to our collections.

### **Conclusion**

The collaborative efforts of this project helped to enhance access to this collection more effectively than if each department had worked alone. Mutually agreed upon decisions related to choosing the titles to add to our collection, highlighting

the collection with displays and on social media, and improving cataloging are pieces of a puzzle that worked together to encourage and enable discovery during the marketing effort and after the promotional activities ended.

Adding, improving, and standardizing access points in our catalog records was effectively complemented by highlighting a particular collection, particularly one that students, faculty, and the community may not typically associate with our library. This project's exposure of our graphic novel collection improved and sustained awareness and circulation of these materials, both during the marketing campaign and after its conclusion.

Future research could include surveying students and faculty about their knowledge of our collections and how they learn about library resources. Now that the University Libraries' graphic collection has seen increased awareness and usage, it would be interesting to survey faculty and students regarding how they use graphic novels, attitudes toward the collection, and areas for improvement in discovery. For this project, we used several different approaches to marketing the materials and we do not have a clear sense of what was more or less effective. Now that the project is over and the displays are down, we would like to know how students and faculty search for and find the graphic novels in our collection, and what terms they are using if searching the catalog. There are still several unknown aspects to how users are accessing these materials and how successful they are in finding them. Finally, it would be worth considering whether similar efforts could be effective in increasing use and impact of other hidden collections.



---

**Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> Eric Werthmann, "Graphic Novel Holdings in Academic Libraries," In *Graphic Novels and Comics in Libraries and Archives*, ed. Robert G. Weiner (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2010), 242-259.
- <sup>2</sup> Lorena O'English, J. Gregory Matthews, and Elizabeth Blakesley Lindsay, "Graphic Novels in Academic Libraries: From Maus to Manga and Beyond," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 32, no. 2 (2006): 173-182, <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2005.12.002>.
- <sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Bridges, "Bridging the Gap: A Literacy-Oriented Approach to Teaching the Graphic Novel *Der erste Frühling*," *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German* 42: no. 2 (2009): 152-161, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1756-1221.2009.00049.x>.
- <sup>4</sup> Wayne Finley, "Graphic Novels in Community and Junior College Libraries," *Community & Junior College Libraries* 21: no. 3/4 (2009): 75-79, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02763915.2016.1165996>.
- <sup>5</sup> University of Toronto, "ENG235H1S: The Graphic Novel," 2016-2017, [http://www.english.utoronto.ca/undergrad/2016-17\\_Timetable/2016-17\\_courses/eng235h1sl5101.htm](http://www.english.utoronto.ca/undergrad/2016-17_Timetable/2016-17_courses/eng235h1sl5101.htm).
- <sup>6</sup> University of Toronto, "INF2129H: Graphic Novels and Comic Books in the Library," 2015, <http://current.ischool.utoronto.ca/course-descriptions/inf2129h>.
- <sup>7</sup> Thomas Juneau and Mira Sucharov, "Narratives in Pencil: Using Graphic Novels to Teach Israeli-Palestinian Relations," *International Studies Perspectives* 11: no. 2 (2010): 172-183, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1528-3585.2010.00400.x>.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.
- <sup>9</sup> Megan Hawkins, Katie Lopez, and Richard L. Hughes, "John Lewis's March, Book Two: Assessing the Impact of a Graphic Novel on Teaching the Civil Rights Movement," *Social Education* 80: no. 3 (2016): 151-156.
- <sup>10</sup> Aimee Slater and Ann Kardos, "Graphic Novels: Collecting, Cataloging and Outreach in an Academic Library," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 43: no. 2 (2017): 116-120, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2017.01.011>.
- <sup>11</sup> Francisca Goldsmith, *Graphic Novels Now: Building, Managing, and Marketing a Dynamic Collection*. (Chicago: American Library Association, 2005).
- <sup>12</sup> Lorena O'English, "Comics and Graphic Novels in the Academic Library Collection," In *Graphic Novels Beyond the Basics: Insights and Issues for Libraries*, ed. Martha Cornog and Timothy Perper (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2009), 175.
- <sup>13</sup> Wendy West, "Tag, You're It: Enhancing Access to Graphic Novels," *Portal: Libraries & The Academy* 13: no. 3 (2013): 312. <https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2013.0023>.
- <sup>14</sup> William T. B. Fee, "Where is the Justice... League?: Graphic Novel Cataloging and Classification," *Serials Review* 39: no. 1 (2013), 37. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.serrev.2013.02.004>.
- <sup>15</sup> Goldsmith, *Graphic Novels Now: Building, Managing, and Marketing a Dynamic Collection*.

- 
- <sup>16</sup> O'English, Matthews, and Lindsay, "Graphic Novels in Academic Libraries: From Maus to Manga and Beyond."
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., 176.
- <sup>18</sup> O'English, "Comics and Graphic Novels in the Academic Library Collection," 175.
- <sup>19</sup> O'English, Matthews, and Lindsay, "Graphic Novels in Academic Libraries: From Maus to Manga and Beyond."
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., 178.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., 179.
- <sup>22</sup> Robert G. Weiner, "One Library's Solution to the Cataloging Problem," *Texas Library Journal* 84: no. 1 (2008), 9.
- <sup>23</sup> O'English, Matthews, and Lindsay, "Graphic Novels in Academic Libraries: From Maus to Manga and Beyond," 176.
- <sup>24</sup> Meghan Kowalski, "Breaking Down Silo Walls: Successful Collaboration Across Library Departments," *Library Leadership & Management* 31: no. 2 (2017): 1-15.
- <sup>25</sup> Cathy Weng and Erin Ackerman, "Towards Sustainable Partnership: Examining Cross Perceptions of Public and Technical Services Academic Librarians," *Library Resources & Technical Services* 61: no. 4 (2017): 198-211.
- <sup>26</sup> Kylie Chan and Lolita Kwok, "Expanding the Role of Technical Services Librarians in Community Outreach: A Successful Program in Achieving Synergy," *Technical Services Quarterly* 30: no. 4 (2013): 372-387.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07317131.2013.818500>
- <sup>27</sup> Jacqueline Toce and Cindy Schofield, "Technical Service Outreach Strategies for Academic Libraries," *Technical Services Quarterly* 28: no. 3 (2011): 312-321.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07317131.2011.571638>
- <sup>28</sup> Vivek J. Tiwary, *The fifth Beatle: the Brian Epstein story*. (Milwaukie, OR: M Press, 2013).
- <sup>29</sup> Raina Telgemeier, *Smile*. (New York: Graphix, 2010).
- <sup>30</sup> *Squeaks discovers type! How print expanded our universe!* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010).
- <sup>31</sup> Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki, *Skim*. (Toronto, Canada: Groundwood Books, 2008).
- <sup>32</sup> Werthmann, "Graphic Novel Holdings in Academic Libraries."
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., 254.

**Appendix A. Graphic Novels Displayed and Tracked**

| Title                                 | ISBN          |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| A drifting life                       | 9781897299746 |
| Adventures of Rabbi Harvey            | 9781580233101 |
| American born Chinese                 | 9781596431522 |
| Anya's ghost                          | 9781596437708 |
| Astérix et Cléopâtre                  | 2205001574    |
| Astro city                            | 9781401232610 |
| Barefoot Gen (v.2)                    | 0865711224    |
| Batman : the killing joke             | 9781401216672 |
| Batman black and white                | 9781563894398 |
| Batman, the dark knight returns       | 9781563893421 |
| Black hole                            | 9780375714726 |
| Blankets                              | 9781891830433 |
| Blue pills                            | 9780618820993 |
| Britten and Brülighly                 | 9780805089271 |
| Complete Don Quixote                  | 9781906838652 |
| Contract with God                     | 9780393328042 |
| Diary of a wimpy kid                  | 9781419712760 |
| Diary of a wimpy kid : dog days       | 9780810988880 |
| Diary of a wimpy kid : Rodrick rules  | 9780810988941 |
| Diary of a wimpy kid : the last straw | 9780810988927 |
| Drama                                 | 9780545326995 |
| Dropsie Avenue                        | 0878163484    |
| Ed the happy clown                    | 9781770460751 |

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| El eternauta (v.1)   | 9789507823725 |
| El loco Chávez   | 9789507823701 |
| Fairy tales of Oscar Wilder (v.1)  | 9781561630561 |
| Far from home  | 9781596434462 |
| From hell  | 9780958578349 |
| Fun house  | 9780618477944 |
| Ghost world  | 9781560974277 |
| Golem's mighty swing   | 9781896597454 |
| Howl   | 9780062015174 |
| International maid of mystery  | 0864864434    |
| Last day in Vietnam  | 9781616551209 |
| Life force   | 9780393328035 |
| Margot : queen of the night  | 1882931157    |
| Marvels  | 9780785142867 |
| Me and the devil blues   | 9780345499264 |
| Meanwhile  | 9780810984233 |
| Metamorphosis  | 1400047951    |
| Museum vaults  | 9781561635146 |
| Name of the game   | 9780393328158 |
| New American splendor anthology  | 9780941423649 |
| Official comics adaptation : Batman & Superman adventures : world's finest | 9781563893865 |
| One hundred demons   | 1570614598    |
| Onimusha (v.1)   | 9780973865257 |
| Onimusha (v.2)   | 9780973865264 |
| Palestine  | 9781560974321 |



|                                      |               |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Persepolis 2 : the story of a return | 9780375422881 |
| Rabbi Harvey rides again :           | 9781580233477 |
| Rabbi Harvey vs. the wisdom kid      | 9781580234221 |
| Sandman                              | 9781563890116 |
| Sandman (v.2)                        | 9781401227999 |
| Sandman (v.3)                        | 9781401229351 |
| Scarlet                              | 9780785152514 |
| Shutterbug follies                   | 9780385503464 |
| Signal to noise                      | 9781593077525 |
| Sin city (v.4)                       | 9781593072964 |
| Sin city (v.5)                       | 9781593072971 |
| Smile                                | 9780545132060 |
| Stitches                             | 9780393338966 |
| Swallow me whole                     | 9781603090339 |
| Understanding comics                 | 006097625X    |
| Watchmen                             | 9780930289232 |
| Whatcha mean, what's a zine?         | 9780618563159 |