Collection Analysis Part 2:

Collection Comparison for Burlington Public Library with Portsmouth Public Library

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INFO 665: Collection Management

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Introduction

Burlington Public Library is located in the town of Burlington, Massachusetts, and was

established in 1816 (Hutchins, 2010, para. 1). As the name of the library states, this is a public

institution and is dedicated to meeting the information need of the Burlington community. The

library's collection comprises approximately 92,000 print items and 18,000 other resources with

the average annual circulation number being 391,072 (Hutchins, 2010, para. 14). The library's

Mission Statement is as follows:

> *The Burlington Public Library is a vital resource for books, materials, and services for*
>
> *information, enlightenment and recreation of all members of the community. The mission*
>
> *of the Burlington Public Library is to provide a safe and inviting place where residents*
>
> *can interact with each other; find information about their community and its offerings;*
>
> *learn to appreciate their culture as well as that of others; investigate a wide range of*
>
> *topics pertaining to their work, school and personal lives; and develop a love of reading*
>
> *and learning that will continue throughout their lives* (Mission Statement, n.d.).

Burlington, situated just northwest of Boston, houses a population of approximately

25,052, but the fascinating thing about this city is that during the day the population swells to

around 150,000 (Town of Burlington, 2012)! Census data shows the median age of Burlington

residents is 38 years (U.S Census Bureau, 2010). Over 30% of the population is married with

children under 18 years. Interestingly, it is quite an educated city with over 94% of residents

graduated high school and almost 48% having attained a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Internal Analysis

The general collection development policy of the Burlington Public Library is: *The Library seeks to acquire, organize and make easily available materials, which meet ongoing or anticipated educational, cultural and recreational needs of Burlington's residents and business community* (Material Selection Policy, 2004). This policy coincides with the library's Mission Statement in that it strives to encompass a collection that meets both the community's recreational wants, as well as its educational and cultural needs. Not only is the content and quality of an item considered during the collection process, but also its usefulness to the patrons. This results in a collection with profound depth and a wide range, which fits nicely with the tastes of the community.

After searching through Burlington's online catalog, which incorporates the Dewey Decimal System, it appears as if the strongest subjects are History, Art, and Science. The library also has a substantial amount of resources dedicated to the local history of the region. Its weaknesses can be found in the Dewey classification areas of Social Science, Religion, Technology, and Geography. For this assignment, this group has agreed to develop a collection map for the subject areas of Technology, Art, and Local History. It is the group's belief that focusing on both the library's strengths and weaknesses will provide a complete picture on the effectiveness of its selection policies and practices.

Subject Area Collection: Technology

Burlington is home to many educated individuals and economic development is targeted to the information technology field. The rise in daily population is partly due to the number of high tech companies located and being developed in the area. We were interested to see how the public library caters to this particular area. The subject area of interest is Technology. The

following table is based on initial searches using the advanced features available through the

online catalog:

Subject Area Collection: Technology Burlington Public Library	
Format	**Number of Items***
Books (incl. e-books)	596 (53 from 2012/2013)
Databases	2
Magazine Subscriptions	3
Newspapers specific to Technology	2
Total	603

*This count does not include multiple copies of items. Multiple copies are accounted for in the collection map worksheets and collection maps in the appendix.

The subject area of Technology is spread diversely throughout the collection based on

particular fields of interest. To see how Dewey Classification segments break down Burlington's

Technology collection, see Appendix A. When performing an advanced search looking for

books/e-books, a large number of titles are found. The disturbing result is that only 55 books

have a copyright date of 2012/2013. When using the "browse shelf" feature and exploring the

beginning of the 600s, where one of the areas of Technology is located, almost 40% of the titles

are copyrighted in the 1990s. Patrons browsing the shelf are being met with many outdated titles.

Although statistically this particular area's number of holdings should be more than

meeting the needs of the user community, once you consider the median age, education and

requirements of many residents in Burlington, the Technology sections need to be re-worked.

Core collection lists need to be consulted, CREW and MUSTIE guidelines can be followed and

new, current titles can be added to ensure its usefulness in the user community.

Subject Area Collection: Art

Because Art subject matter is one of the most prevalent topics collected at the library, it was chosen to assess the strengths of the collection and to determine which items are suitable for deselection. The following table is a summary of the information found when using the subject term "art":

Subject Area Collection: Art Burlington Public Library	
Format	**Number of Items***
Books	880
e-Books	77
e-Resources	223
Total	1180

*This count does not include multiple copies of items. Multiple copies are accounted for in the collection map worksheets and collection maps in the appendix.

In addition to the items listed above, there are 7 software items, 33 serials, 33 audio books and 45 DVDs that fall into the subject of "Art". To see how Dewey Classification segments break down Burlington's Art collection, see Appendix A. Using the "oldest to newest" control, the oldest publication date in the collection is 1940 and the newest is 2012.

Because the access to circulation records is denied to the general public, it is difficult to determine how often an item is circulated or downloaded. According to Evans and Saponaro (2012), the condition of the item is an acceptable criterion to justify deselection, however, this information does not fall within the scope of this project (p. 154); therefore, the sole criterion that can be used to weed Burlington's art collection is duplicated items (p. 154).

Special Emphasis Collection: Local History

Because of the significance of history in Massachusetts, especially Boston and its surrounding areas including Burlington, a collection of local history materials is an important service of the Burlington Public Library. There is a high level of interest in local studies by the user community as is evidenced by the presence of a historical commission, preservation of historical sites and buildings, and a city archive and archivist (Town of Burlington, 2011). This local history collection aligns with the library's mission to enable residents to "find information about their community" (Mission Statement, n.d.). The Burlington Public Library is usually the first place people turn to when seeking information pertaining to the history of the area. Therefore, the local history collection has been selected by our group for the "special emphasis collection" as part of our collection mapping evaluation (Loertscher, 1985).

To ensure that patrons' information needs are being met with respect to local history, an evaluation as to the "full depth" of this collection is necessary (Loertscher, 1985). To begin this assessment, an accurate count, format varieties and age of the collection were obtained. The following table is a summary of the formats and count for each:

Special Emphasis Collection: Local History Burlington Public Library	
Format	**Number of Items***
Books (printed)	61
CD	2
VHS	4
DVD	2
Kit	1
Total	70

*This count does not include multiple copies of items. Multiple copies are accounted for in the collection map worksheets and collection maps in the appendix.

Using the sort feature by publication date, the oldest resource was published in 1858 and the most recent in 2011. While other library collections are regularly weeded, local history resources are of lasting and cumulative value for developing local knowledge and understanding (Evans & Saponaro, 2012). Therefore items with older publication dates should remain in the collection as long as they retain their physical integrity, authenticity, and for as long as they remain relevant and useful to the purposes of the user community and the library. To see how Dewey Classification segments break down Burlington's local history collection, see Appendix A.

Comparison Library

The Portsmouth Public Library rests in the center of this New England town and all residents, and business and property owners, are allowed to access the library's collection free of charge (Library Card, 2009). The library was founded in 1881 as a public institution, and its purpose is to fulfill the information needs of the Portsmouth community (About Us, 2009). Today, the library remains as the town's central information hub with a print collection of approximately 150,000 items and a digital collection consisting of 168 databases (Portsmouth Public Library, 2012). In addition to these free resources, the library offers its patrons a number of free programs and materials, such as downloadable audiobooks and music, foreign language instruction, and an online newsstand (About Us, 2009). As the library continues to expand, so does its collection of print and electronic resources.

The Portsmouth Public Library's Mission Statement describes the library as "a gateway to reading, information, culture, community activities, and self-directed learning. It serves those who want to read, to learn, or to connect with our community and our cultural heritage" (Mission,

2009). Though much shorter, this mission statement is similar to that of the Burlington Public

Library as both address the education and recreational needs of their user communities. Both

also stress the importance of the library as a community meeting place as well as a cultural

center.

      The overall collection development objectives of the Portsmouth Public Library includes

"selecting, arranging, lending, or otherwise making available resources and materials of general

interest or recurring utility" based on continual assessment of the "reading and informational

needs of the community" (Mission, 2009). These objectives demonstrate a commitment to the

user community as described in its mission. However the statement, "materials of general

interest or recurring utility" is very broad and unclear in showing how the collection objectives

will meet the more specific recreational, educational, or cultural needs of patrons. In comparison,

Burlington Public Library's collection policy clearly states its aim to support recreational,

educational, and cultural needs and also specifies particular sects of its community for which it

does this.

      Portsmouth, situated some 50 miles outside of Boston, is home to approximately 20,779

residents. Besides the geographic proximity, the cities of Burlington and Portsmouth have

several other similarities. With a population just under 4,300 than that of Burlington, the

metropolitan area of Portsmouth is known for its "technologically adept workforce" (City of

Portsmouth, 2012). Similarly 48.4% of Portsmouth's residents have attained a Bachelor's degree

or higher (State and County, 2011) in comparison to Burlington's 48%. Also, whereas the

majority of Burlington's industry comes from the technology sector, residents who work in

Portsmouth are also "workers who thrive in the technologically and biologically oriented

business climate that has characterized much of [the city's] new economic growth" (City of

Portsmouth, 2012).

Portsmouth is thought to be one of America's oldest cities (City of Portsmouth, 2012).

The Portsmouth Historical Society maintains a website about the city's heritage at

http://www.portsmouthhistory.org/, and a basic Google search leads to hits about everything

from the Black Heritage Trail to the opportunities to stay in historic guest rooms when visiting

the area. Heritage and culture appears to account for much of Portsmouth's culture. By all

accounts, the work done by the Portsmouth Historical Society is as vibrant and substantive as

that being done by Burlington's Historical Society.

When looking at the arts, Portsmouth itself is home to ten galleries, an annual arts festival

and the Portsmouth Art Museum. The city has an active Cultural Commission whose mandate is

to support "Portsmouth's artists, visitors, citizens and businesses" (Art-Speak, 2012). Arts and

culture is an important part of Portsmouth's community.

These parallels show many similarities between the user groups of Burlington and

Portsmouth. It is for this reason that the collections of these two cities were chosen as

comparisons to one another.

External Analysis

Subject Collection Area: Technology

When searching Portsmouth Public Library's online catalog, the following items were

found when performing a keyword search using "Technology" as the search term:

Subject Collection: Technology Portsmouth Public Library

Format	Number of Items
Books	687
Large Print	6
e-Books	19
e-Resources	10
Audio Books	60
Magazines	7
DVDs	28
Total:	807

The library classifies its materials according to the Dewey Decimal system. The majority of the materials referencing technology are print based with most of the items being located in the 300s (212), followed by the 600s (137). In comparison, Burlington Public Library's collection has 149 titles in the 600s, followed by just 116 in the 300s. It is interesting to note that while Burlington's population is greater than that of Portsmouth, Portsmouth appears to have a more extensive and varied technology collection.

The profiles for the user communities of both Burlington and Portsmouth suggest that technology is extremely important to the economic development, workforce and sustainability of both cities. It is therefore surprising that collections from both libraries fall even beneath the realm of being "Fair" according Loertscher (p. 13). The weaknesses are clearly evident when viewing the collection maps located in the appendices of this document.

While the collection mapping gives a clearer view of the strengths and weaknesses within the collections, there may be mitigating circumstances. There is a possibility that the libraries do

not need to duplicate collections available elsewhere in their respective communities. Hesser

College or one of the university campuses in Portsmouth may have more readily available,

current resources than the public library. In Burlington, resources may exist at either the Bay

Path College or Northeastern university campuses. Whatever the reason, both of these public

libraries should be reviewing the needs of their communities to seek out and fill the gaps in this

collection.

Subject Collection Area: Art

Subject Collection: Art Portsmouth Public Library	
Format	**Number of Items**
Books	1501
Large Print	22
e-Books	25
e-Resources	47
Audio Books	50
Magazines	12
DVDs	53
Unspecified	2
Total:	1712

According to Portsmouth's online catalog, there is a total of 1712 items pertaining to Art

in its collection. By far and large, the majority of resources dedicated to the subject of Art are

located in the 700 section, the library uses the Dewey Decimal System to classify its materials,

while the Reference and 800 segments trail distantly behind with 121 and 90 items, respectively.

In regards to the format of the materials, most of the Art subject collection consists of printed

non-fiction books; however, this collection also includes a considerable number of DVDs, audio

books, which entails both downloadable audio books and CDs, and eBooks. The oldest item in

this collection is a print reference book that was published in 1894 and is titled "An Island

Garden." Celia Thaxter wrote this book, yet its condition cannot be determined through the sole

use of the library's online catalog.

When comparing the Art collections of both libraries, it is abundantly clear that, overall,

Portsmouth's breadth and range for the subject is greater than that of Burlington's. Accounting

for print materials alone, Burlington has 880 books on hand while Portsmouth's print collection

tallies at a whopping 1,350. This means that Burlington's print collection has approximately 35%

fewer books than Portsmouth. However, this is by no means a declaration that Burlington's

collection is inadequate, for its digital collection of 223 items surpasses Portsmouth's 47

electronic resources greatly. This could be an indicator that Burlington is forward thinking and is

dedicating more of its budget to the acquisition of electronic materials, which seems to be the

direction that many publishing houses are headed as well. On the other hand, Burlington's Art

collection is more diversified and has items spread throughout the entire range of Dewey

whereas Portsmouth's Art collection is predominantly located in the library's 700 collection. It is

apparent that both libraries are meeting the needs of each community and are providing users

with a wide array of materials focusing the subject of Art.

By studying the collection maps for the subject area of Art, both Portsmouth and

Burlington's Art collection had much to be desired. Both fell short of being "fair" on the general

emphasis scale. On the scale, Portsmouth tallied in at 0.082 while Burlington's Art collection

teetered at 0.047; thus, Portsmouth's collection is performing a bit broader than Burlington's. In

all fairness, these libraries are not large cities and do not have the funds and resources compared

with other consortia in the country. To compare these two libraries to such large institutions as

the New York Public Library is futile. Clearly, both Portsmouth and Burlington do need to

strengthen its Art collection, but each must be pragmatic in doing so.

Special Emphasis Collection: Local History

According to Portsmouth's online catalog, there are 558 items associated with its local

history/genealogy collection. The following table shows how these items are divided among

formats:

Special Emphasis Collection: Local History/Genealogy Portsmouth Public Library	
Format	**Number of Items***
Print Books	429
Print Serials (magazines, periodicals, newspapers)	10
eBooks	1
Audio Books (CD & Tape)	3
Microform	51
CD	3
VHS	10
DVD	1
Print Maps	50
Total	558

*This count does not include multiple copies of items. Multiple copies are accounted for in the collection map worksheets and collection maps in the appendix.

While a majority of the items, 429, are print books, the collection houses a number of other formats including microform, VHS, and maps. The majority of resources for this collection are located in the 900 section of the Dewey Classification; however there is considerable coverage in other Dewey segments such as 800 and 700. See Appendix B for a complete breakdown of this collection by Dewey. The oldest dated resource is from 1600 and the most recent from 2012, though there are a number of items, largely maps and building plans, that have no date associated with them.

Comparing Portsmouth's local history collection with that of Burlington reveals some striking differences, especially in the way of collection policies. Portsmouth's collection is much larger, with nearly eight times the number of unique items than that of Burlington's local history collection. One reason for this difference is how each library chooses to collect. Burlington's local history collection policy is much stricter on the inclusion of local authors and literature. It states, "Local authors must demonstrate a strong tie to Burlington to be included in the local history collection. Self-published books by local authors are generally not included" (Burlington Public Library, 2006). Portsmouth however includes much more with respect to local authorship. This is evidenced by numerous local poetry items and literature in the 800 segment, local music and musicians in the 700 segment, and a number of fiction items. Burlington in comparison has no items in the 800, 700, or fiction segments. It is assumed that by excluding these items from local history, Burlington instead classifies them in its larger non-fiction and fiction sections elsewhere in the library.

Due to its large collection size, Portsmouth in turn has a wider variety of formats, including numerous local serials. Burlington instead chooses to house its serials, aside from yearbooks, separate from its local history collection. It is also apparent that Portsmouth's local

history collection contains a larger age range, far surpassing Burlington's oldest resource from 1858. Portsmouth's oldest dated item, a map of the Piscataqua River in New England from 1600, is rather impressive.

While both libraries are attempting to meet the needs of its community, from this analysis it appears they do so in very different ways. Portsmouth elects to have all local resources in one area, while Burlington is more restrictive. This may be due to the fact that Burlington's local history collection is non-circulating and housed within a separate room of the library where permission is required for access (Burlington Public Library, 2006). The library's choice in selectiveness for this collection may be due in large part to access. If an item can be classified elsewhere, such as a local author's book in the general non-fiction or fiction area of the library, it would allow for greater access.

In comparing the collection maps of Burlington and Portsmouth for local history, appendix C and D respectively, it is apparent that Portsmouth's local history collection performs better with respect to items per person. However, according to Loertscher's scale for collection mapping, both collections fail to reach to lowest indicator of "Fair" (Loertscher, 1985, p.13). Portsmouth is nearly halfway to reaching fair status, while Burlington in contrast is barely visible on the scale.

Group Strategies & Responsibilities

Overall, this group worked extremely well together. Though there was not a leader specifically assigned to this group, Renee Smith played an integral role in getting the discussion for both assignments started. Each time a member submitted input or suggestions, the group was diplomatic in its consideration of all ideas. Additionally, for both assignments, there was not a

definite timeline, but each member strived to post on the group's discussion board to keep

abreast of any updates that were made. For Assignment 5, the group worked in tandem to churn

out an exemplary project. But due to the Thanksgiving break, the schedules of the group

members were a bit incongruent for Assignment 5; however, the professor's extension of the

deadline for Assignment 5 was very much appreciated.

For Assignment 4, the division of tasks was assigned early on, and each member was

responsible for a particular section. This strategy was not as stringently used for Assignment 5.

Instead, the group decided to partake in a true collaborative effort and took responsibility in

completing each section together, although Renee Smith went above and beyond of what was

expected, and Kelly and Karen are forever grateful for her hard work and dedication. This group

took advantage of Google Docs, and this resource proved to be an invaluable tool because it

allowed each member to draft and edit her content into 1 working document.

For both assignments, Renee was tasked with doing the research for the Local History

collection, Karen was assigned the Art collection, and Kelly completed the Technology

collection. The group worked in a cohesive manner and contributed to the success of both

assignments. If this project was not composed in a group environment, the challenge to complete

its requirements would be insurmountable. Luckily, each member's performance was exceptional

and should be congratulated for being able to build a successful partnership through consistent

dedication and diligence.

Appendix

Appendix A: Collection Map Worksheet for Burlington Public Library

Collection Map Worksheet

Library name: Burlington Public Library (Burlington, MA)
Population: 25,052
Total number of items in the collection: 109,053
Number of total collection items per person: 4.35

Collection Segments

	Total	Subject Area Collections		Special Emphasis Collection
		Technology	*Art*	*Local History*
Reference	361	29	315	17
000	30	30		
100	12	12		
200	1	1		
300	145	116	17	12
400	1	1		
500	51	51		
600	149	149		
700	871	23	848	
800	6	6		
900	109	30		79
Biography	32	30		2
Fiction	50	50		
Periodicals	5	5		
Kits	1			1
Total Segment	**1,824**	533	1180	111
Items/Person	.073	.021	.047	.0044

*The Total column is the sum of the library's Technology, Art, and Local History Collections

Appendix B: Collection Map Worksheet for Portsmouth Public Library

Collection Map Worksheet

Library name: Portsmouth Public Library (Portsmouth, NH)
Population: 20,779
Total number of items in the collection: 149,016
Number of total collection items per person: 7.17

Collection Segments

	Total	Subject Area Collections		Special Emphasis Collection
		Technology	*Art*	*Local History*
Reference	211	13	121	77
000	81	45	25	11
100	12	12		
200	38	2	36	
300	360	212	60	88
400	3	3		
500	29	29		
600	197	137	21	39
700	1382	32	1229	121
800	261	8	93	160
900	487	49	42	396
Biography	88	29	20	39
Fiction	247	116	65	66
Periodicals	7	7		
Total Segment	**3,403**	694	1712	997
Items/Person	0.164	.033	.082	.047

*The total column is the sum of the library's Technology, Art, and Local History Collections.

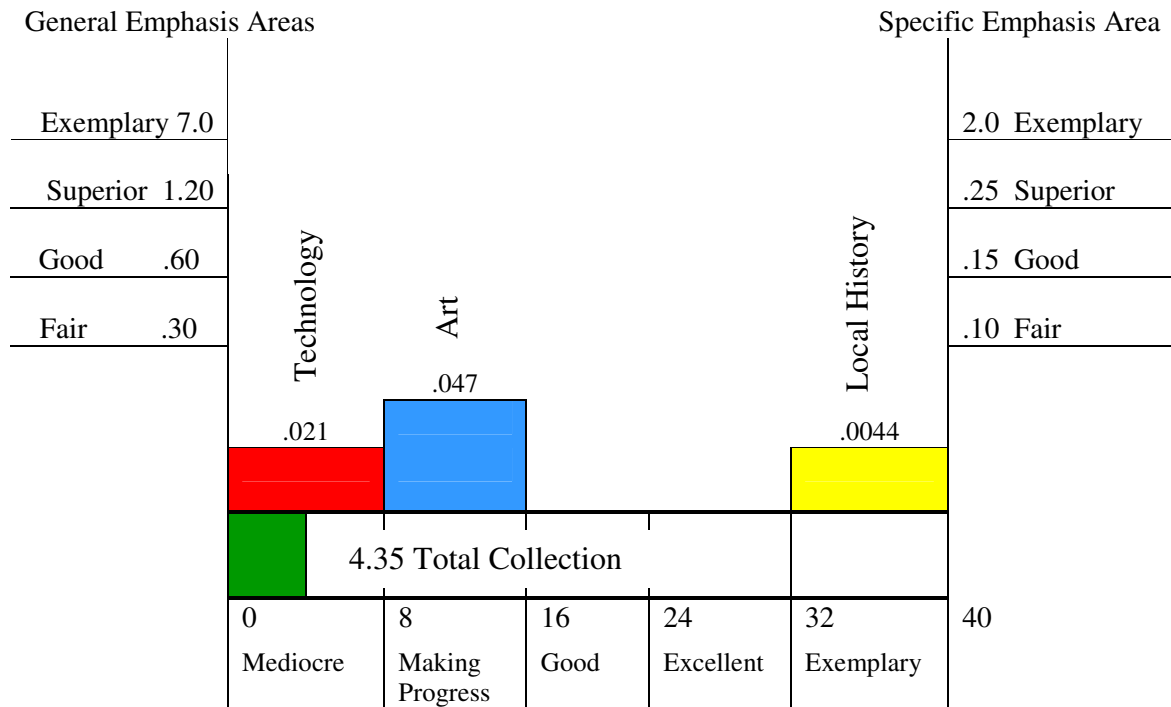**Appendix C: Collection Map for Burlington Public Library**

Library name: Burlington Public Library (Burlington, MA)
Population: 25,052
Total number of items in the collection: 109,053
Number of total collection items per person: 4.35

	Number of Items	**Number of Items Per Person**
General Emphasis Areas:		
1. Technology	533	.021
2. Art	1180	.047
Specific Emphasis Area:		
3. Local History	111	.0044
Total	**1824**	--

General Emphasis Areas   Specific Emphasis Area

Exemplary 7.0		2.0 Exemplary
Superior 1.20		.25 Superior
Good .60		.15 Good
Fair .30		.10 Fair

Technology .021
Art .047
Local History .0044

4.35 Total Collection

| 0 | 8 | 16 | 24 | 32 | 40 |
| Mediocre | Making Progress | Good | Excellent | Exemplary | |

Result: Total collection is Mediocre and is only half way to being at the Making Progress stage

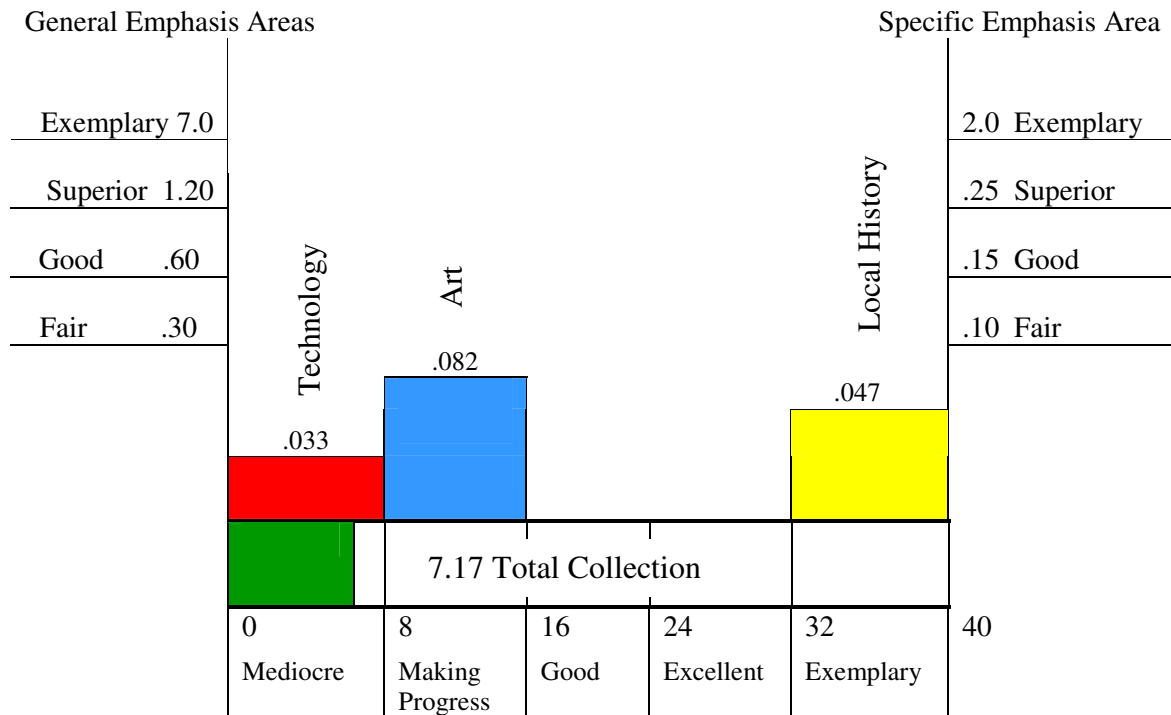**Appendix D: Collection Map for Portsmouth Public Library**

Library name: Portsmouth Public Library (Portsmouth, NH)
Population: 20,779
Total number of items in the collection: 149,016
Number of total collection items per person: 7.17

	Number of Items	**Number of Items Per Person**
General Emphasis Areas:		
1. Technology	694	.033
2. Art	1712	.082
Specific Emphasis Area:		
3. Local History	997	.047
Total	**3403**	--

General Emphasis Areas   Specific Emphasis Area

Exemplary 7.0		2.0 Exemplary
Superior 1.20		.25 Superior
Good .60		.15 Good
Fair .30		.10 Fair

Technology   .033
Art   .082
Local History   .047

7.17 Total Collection

0	8	16	24	32	40
Mediocre	Making Progress	Good	Excellent	Exemplary	

Result: Total collection is Mediocre but is on the verge of Making Progress.

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