



Collection Diversity Report

November 2022



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Executive Summary

As part of the ongoing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) work plan, the Library conducted a diversity audit of the physical collection examining authors, characters, and content. Based on the results of the audit, it was concluded that the overall diversity of the collection was measured at 15.44% for diverse author representation and 24.44% for characters and content.

Collections were audited by evaluating key elements such as race, gender, sexuality, neurodivergence, mental and physical health, and residency for both authors and characters. Collections audited for diversity included: physical collections on the shelves; materials most recently checked out by customers; and new items received. Out of approximately 207,097 physical materials, 22,621 items, or 11% of the collection, were audited.

These audits revealed a prevalence of Caucasian voices in both titles on shelves and items being checked out by customers. The findings from the physical and customer checkout audits showed that 74.76% of authors and 64.66% of characters were tagged as white. However, the New Items audit showed meaningful improvements on these percentages as BIPOC authorship and characterization improved respectively by 84.52% and 32.71% from the physical audit's findings. These increases reflect developments in the publishing industry and the marked (albeit slow) change in readers' interests.

Interestingly, all three (3) segments of the audit showed the Library's collection contains depictions of a myriad of experiences including 2SLGBTQI experiences, world religions, immigrant and refugee experiences, and depictions of cultures outside of North America. Moreover, the audits also revealed that works targeted at young adults aged 12-18 typically achieved parity in representations of Caucasian and BIPOC characters and, additionally, had the highest levels of experiential diversity including 2SLGBTQI, health, and ability experiences.

Given Ajax's demographics, where over 60% of residents are non-white and primarily South Asian and Afro-Caribbean, the audit indicates a need to rebalance representation in the collection by investing in titles with racialized narratives. In addition to the findings from the audit, this report provides recommendations to improve the diversity of the collection. Based on trends in publishing and the Library's collection representation, purchasing targets will aim to increase the overall diversity of the collections' authorship and content respectively by a minimum of 10% by the next census year (2026).

The Library is confident that by reviewing purchasing practices, soliciting community feedback, and ongoing sample reviews of the collection, the diverse representation of authors, characters, and content will increase to be more representative of the Ajax community.

Purpose

Rudine Sims Bishop compared books to “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors” for their ability to reflect and project experiences like or different from the reader’s own. Consequently, reading “becomes a means of self-affirmation” for the reader. However, in the Western world, “an able bodied, white cishet” perspective has traditionally been the default representation, thereby concluding that most books do not serve as mirrors for non-white readers. As such, the purpose of a diversity audit is to collect data about a library’s collection to better understand how the materials reflect the community, and furthermore, where improvement is required to ensure more wholesome representation. The Customer Checkouts audit revealed a dichotomy between the desire of the Library to diversify its holdings and the steady demand for popular Caucasian authors. The goal of a diversity audit is not to discourage the public from their personal reading preferences, but to provide a proportional balance of items that depict experiences like the reader’s own.

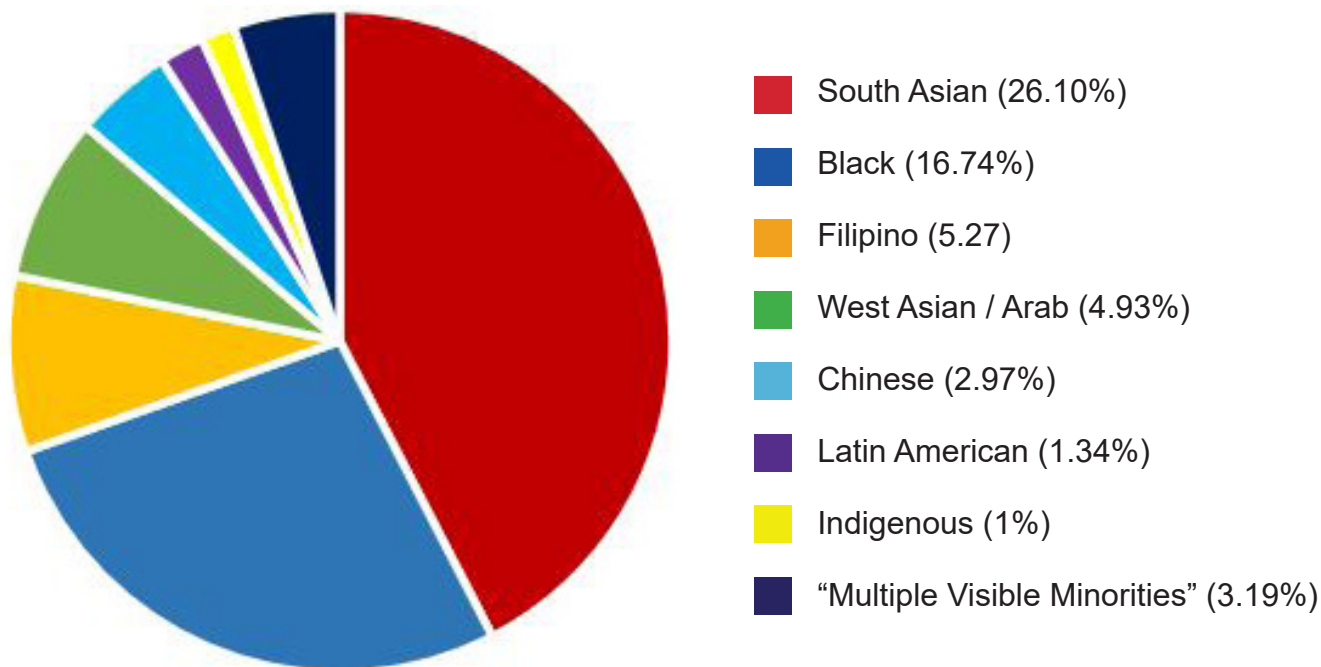
Another rationale for conducting the audit is to compare the findings to data from alternative modes of assessments. The Library employs Collection HQ, an online tool to evaluate usage, holdings, and trends in the Library’s collection. Collection HQ includes a module to evaluate equity, diversity, and inclusion by measuring diverse content of items, identifying gaps in the collection, and measuring trends in acquisitions. At the beginning of the audit in January 2022, Collection HQ measured the physical collections overall diversity at 15.5%. However, this figure is only representative of the subject headings. By only measuring diversity based on tags in records, numerous racial, physical, and experiential identities are conflated, thereby not providing sufficient data about the ethnocultural representation of the collection. Furthermore, this measurement obscures the importance of “OwnVoices” titles where authors from marginalized groups share the same identity as the character they are depicting.

The methodology of this audit aims to achieve a higher level of granularity about the representation found in authorship and content as separate entities. It is important to note a work might be diverse in subject matter, but this does not mean the author/creator is diverse or of the same ethnic background being depicted. With this consideration in mind, the audit evaluated the content and authors separately when examining the degree to which a title is diverse.

Statistical Overview

When conducting a diversity audit, it is important to assess the statistics of the community to compare against collection. These statistics can be used as “target goals” against the percentages found in the collection. According to the Ajax 2021 census, out of a population of 126,666 residents; 81,560 people identified as part of a “racialized group(s)” amounting to 64.39% of the total population.

The breakdown of racialized groups within the population of Ajax is as follows:



As of 2021, 41.64% of the population identified as immigrants. As of 2018, Statistics Canada estimates that approximately one million people aged 15 and older identify as 2SLGBTQI translating to 4% of the population of Canada. The 2SLGBTQI population on average is also typically a younger population.

As of 2017, Statistics Canada asserts that one in five (1 in 5) Canadians aged 15 and over identify as having a disability. These figures, along with others (immigration status, spoken languages and religion), form the basis of the “target goals” that the Library’s collection should make strides to reflect; particularly, the representation of Black (Afro-Caribbean), South Asian, Filipino, and West Asian experiences.

Methodology

Overview

In conducting the diversity audit, the Library used the methodology spearheaded by American Teen Public Librarian Karen Jensen from Fort Worth Public Library as the basis for the review as it focused on public library collections. Books and films were examined by author and characters for their representation and depictions of elements, including but not limited to, race, gender, sexual orientation, neurodivergence, mental and physical health, and body image. Appendix A provides the legend of elements of diversity assessed in each audit. Appendix B provides a detailed overview of the methodology used during the auditing process.

The data presented reflects elements of identity that were verifiable. Since this audit examined authors and characters separately and included multiple main characters where applicable, the percentages presented are derived from dividing the categories of representation against the total number of authors, characters, or titles respectively. This is a deviation from Jensen's method of dividing all totals against the total number of titles because this audit aimed to account for titles with multiple authors and main characters.

Audit Schedule and Formats

In November 2021, the Library presented the Diversity Audit Workplan. In this plan, the Library guaranteed to review 10% its collection. Out of approximately 207,097 physical materials, 22,621 items, or 11% of the collection, were audited. Based on the sources reviewed on diversity audits in public libraries, the quantity of items the Library reviewed is unprecedented.

The following table shows the title, duration, and quantity of items that were audited between January 31 and October 7, 2022.

Name	Duration	Number of Items
Physical Audit	January 31-April 7, 2022	2,181
New Items	April 18-June 6, 2022	440
Customer Checkouts	July 19-October 7, 2022	20,000
TOTAL		22,621

The types of materials shown in the table on the next page represent the formats used to create randomized shelf lists for the Physical Audit. For consistency, only the same formats were considered during the New Items and Customer Checkouts audits.

Junior	Young Adult	Adult
Board Book	Young Adult Fiction	Fiction
Picture Book	Young Adult Nonfiction	Nonfiction
Junior Fiction	Young Adult Graphic	Graphic
Junior Nonfiction		DVD
Junior Graphic		Nonfiction DVD
Junior DVD		Blu-ray Fiction
Junior Nonfiction DVD		Blu-ray Nonfiction
		Restricted DVD
		Restricted Nonfiction DVD

As films and TV shows are not coded for young adults in the Library’s collection, the YA category is the smallest. DVD and Blu-ray titles were combined to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the Library’s film holdings. The audit did not include item types such as audiobooks, talking books, and easy readers as their authorship and/or subject matter is often a duplication of book formats in the collection.

Additionally, the Library did not include multilingual collections due to the language barrier(s) these collections presented for auditing staff. Per the Collections Review Report, the Library currently has 6,288 multilingual items across ten (10) languages totaling approximately 3.04% of the physical collection. The continued development of the multilingual collection is an area where the Library explicitly seeks to reflect the language and ethnocultural needs of Ajax’s community; thus, this segment of the collection was omitted from the audit.

Accounting for Bias and Omissions

It is important before presenting the data to acknowledge the bias, subjectivity, and omissions that permeate all diversity audit work. The data collected was recorded by three (3) members of the Collection Services department; each who carried their own experiential lenses throughout the assessment. The department engaged in discussions to confirm ambiguous identities; however, most of the audit was completed by each staff member individually.

The data presented only reflects identities that were searchable about the author and characters, resulting in potential omissions and lacking new elements of representation that may come to light after this audit.

Additionally, in some cases, auditing staff had to assume whiteness. A term that appears frequently in book reviews is the concept of “presumed white” or “default to white”. This term acknowledges, as previously mentioned, that Caucasian viewpoints are often the default representation in Western literature and especially so in “popular” literature. Several books did not explicitly define their characters’ race or features beyond passing descriptions of hair, eye, or skin colour; auditing staff searched for these markers in cover art and character descriptions. Staff also deferred to sources like Kirkus Reviews and made conclusion if their review described characters as “presumed” or “white by default.”

The majority of Caucasian authors rarely identified as “white” in their official media. Instead, a trend of identifying their specific heritage (e.g., Irish) was often noted. In instances where ethnicity was not identified on the author’s website, staff would conduct research of the author to make a determination. If the auditors steadfastly relied on explicit disclosures of whiteness, more authors would appear in the unknown category. Every effort was made to ensure creators were not erroneously categorized.

Assessment

For the purposes of this evaluation, each segment of the audit presents charts and tables to illustrate the diversity of the authors, character types, and the titles overall. It should be noted that the categories assessed during the audit preformed differently when auditing fiction versus non-fiction works.

Fiction works could be audited for specific characters; therefore, the audit of these items is more comprehensive in terms of the representation of racial and gender identities. However, these elements could not be as easily defined in works of non-fiction. For example, for a non-fiction book about “Syria,” the audit would reflect “West Asian & North Africa male/female” despite no specific gender or character being relevant to the work. Furthermore, some works had no connection to the physical human experience and were either marked as “Animal/Non-Human” or were left blank. As a result, the category of “Animal/Non-Human” took on a much larger role in non-fiction to indicate intangible topics in comparison to fiction books where this same category was utilized more to represent animal, robotic, and otherworldly characters.

Evaluation

Summary

The Physical Audit provides a snapshot of the collection on the shelves whereas the New Items Audit provides a sample of the materials that arrived new to the Library between April and June 2022. The Customer Checkouts Audit, which was the largest sample taken of the Library’s collection, represents the last 20,000 checkouts borrowed by customers before July 19, 2022. A large sample was taken from Customer Checkouts to acquire a strong sense of reader preferences across all audience levels. The below tables summarize the author’s racial representation(s) found in the audits and depicts the characters’ racial representation.



Author Racial Representation

Audit Segment	White	BIPOC	Unknown
Physical Audit	74.65%	13.70%	11.65%
Customer Checkouts	74.90%	11.58%	13.52%
New Items	64.65%	25.28%	10.07%
TOTAL	71.40%	16.85%	11.75%

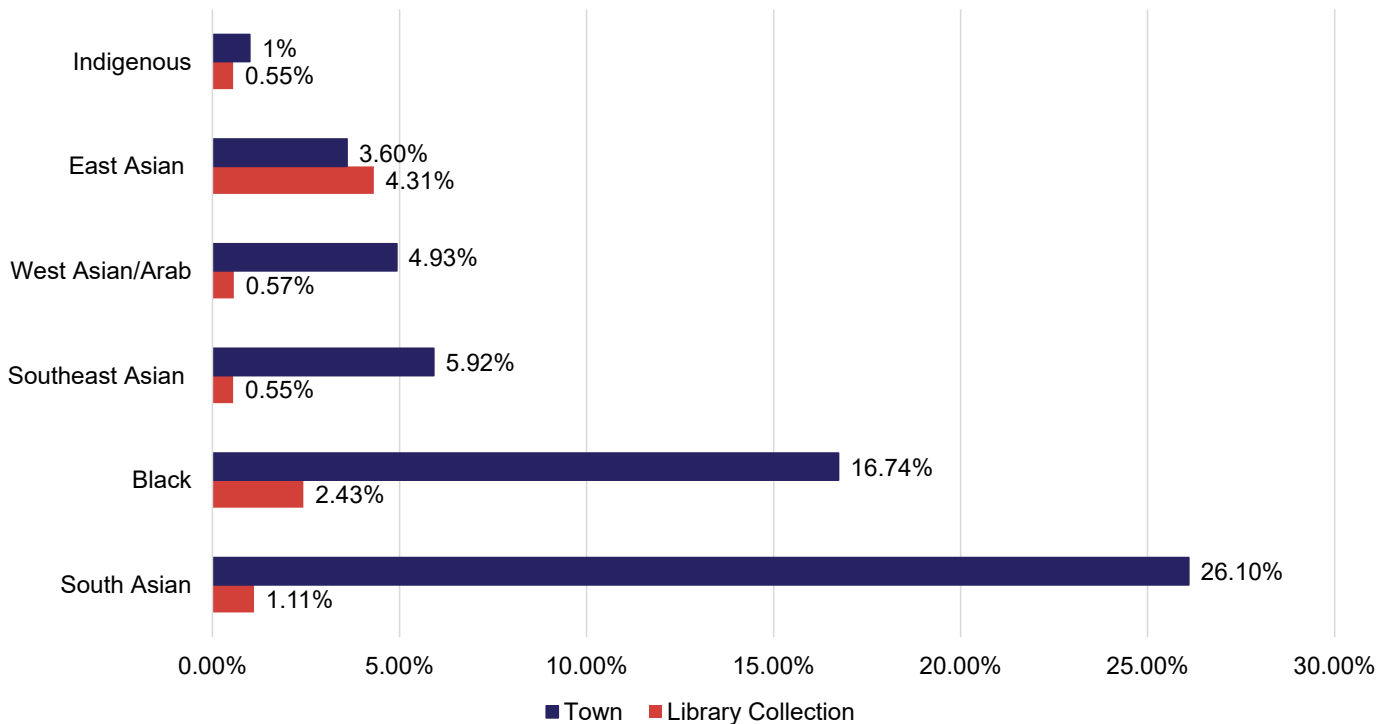


Character Racial Representation

Audit Segment	White	BIPOC	Unknown
Physical Audit	64.81%	27.67%	7.52%
Customer Checkouts	64.51%	30.46%	5.03%
New Items	55.22%	36.72%	8.06%
TOTAL	61.51%	31.62%	6.87%

Across all three (3) segments of the audit, there was a favouring of Caucasian creators. The table on the next page illustrates the racial representation found in authors from the Physical and Customer Checkouts Audit compared to the corresponding demographic from the 2021 census. The margin between authorship and character representation illustrates how authors of one racial identity may depict characters of another. This finding emphasizes that a higher percentage of Caucasian authors were writing characters of colour. However, the data shows the representation of East Asian and Indigenous voices is on or near par with the statistics found in the community, whereas Black, South Asian, and West Asian voices scored considerably beneath the Town’s statistics.

Ajax Demographics vs. Library Collection

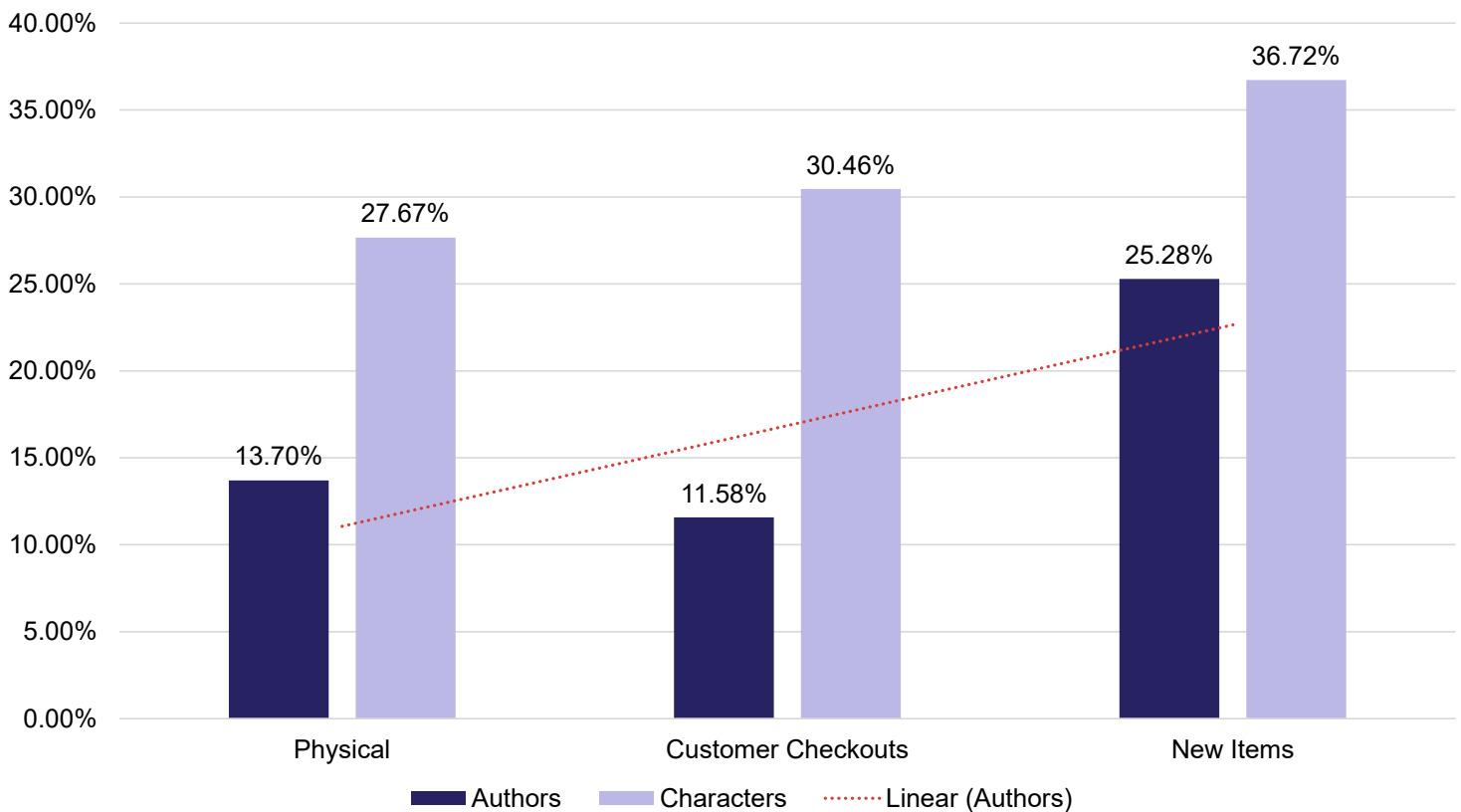


The prevalence of white voices particularly between the Physical and Customer Checkouts audits reveals a causal nexus. The Library employs an Automatic Release Plan (ARP) to select and purchase the majority of physical items for the collection. The Library’s ARP aligns with industry standards and generates its titles and quantities based on the popularity of circulating authors, of which the majority are currently Caucasian. Out of 58 of the most popular authors identified across audiences in the Customer Checkouts Audit, 81% of them were Caucasian. The only notable exception was the preference of Japanese creators in the young adult graphic section due the high popularity of manga.

The data also indicated that movies were disproportionately directed by Caucasian men and junior fiction and picture books were predominantly written by Caucasian women. As such, a collection developed only around customer use would be predominately white in authorship and content. To combat this, libraries must actively procure titles outside of customer demand/use.

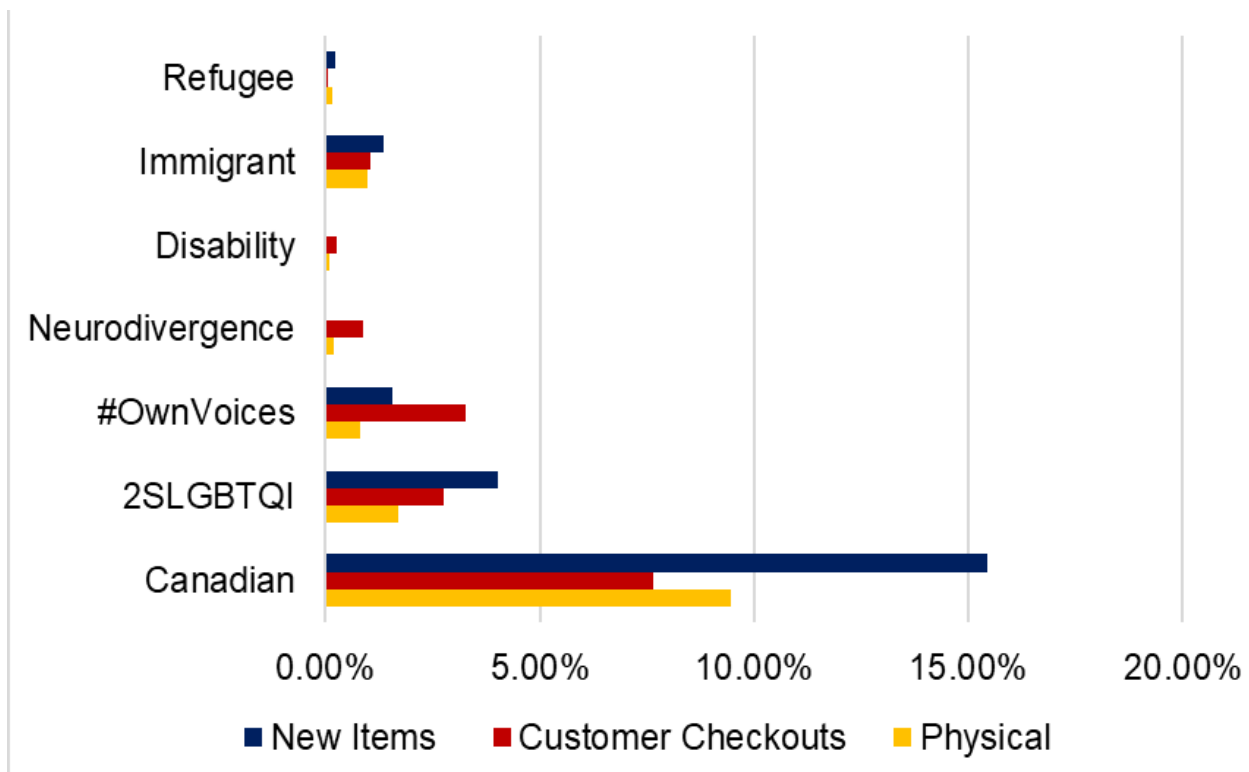
Audits themselves “do not erase the need for publishers to champion writers from marginalized groups”. Instead, the audit reveals trends in both publishing and customer preference. The New Items Audit depicts the positive changes taking place in the publishing industry as BIPOC authors gain more recognition and promotion. The racial diversity of both authors and characters improved by 84.52% and 32.71% respectively from the percentages observed in the physical audit meaning that new titles coming into the Library in 2022 were typically more diverse than titles on the shelves.

BIPOC Representation Across Audits



Authors

Authors were audited for elements of identity including race, gender, relation to Canada, sexuality, neurodivergence, disability, and residency. Additionally, authors were assessed internally for whether their titles were “OwnVoices”. The Physical and Customer Checkouts Audits revealed similar trends with the percentage of Caucasian authors being nearly identical at 74.65% and 74.90% respectively. Beyond “unknown” authors the second largest group observed were Asian creators. The larger percentage of Asian authors, on average 7.36%, derived in part from the high quantities of Japanese manga artists as manga is an extremely popular medium with young adult readers. Black authors accounted for an average of 2.43% of the collection between the physical and customer checkouts audit and South Asian authors accounted for 1.11%. The New Items Audit improved on these numbers as Black and South Asian authors accounted for 6.94% and 3.13% of the audited authors. Each audit achieved near parity between male and female creators. However, on average, authors flagged as genderqueer, trans*, or non-binary accounted for 1.17% of the total authors. As previously noted, a leading cause for the high level of Caucasian creators is their prevalence and popularity in the publishing industry as well as in customer interests. The below table illustrates the other identities audited for authors across each audit. Canadian authors were by far the most flagged diversity element averaging 10.85% of all authors audited. On average 2.83% authors identified as members of the 2SLGBTQI community.

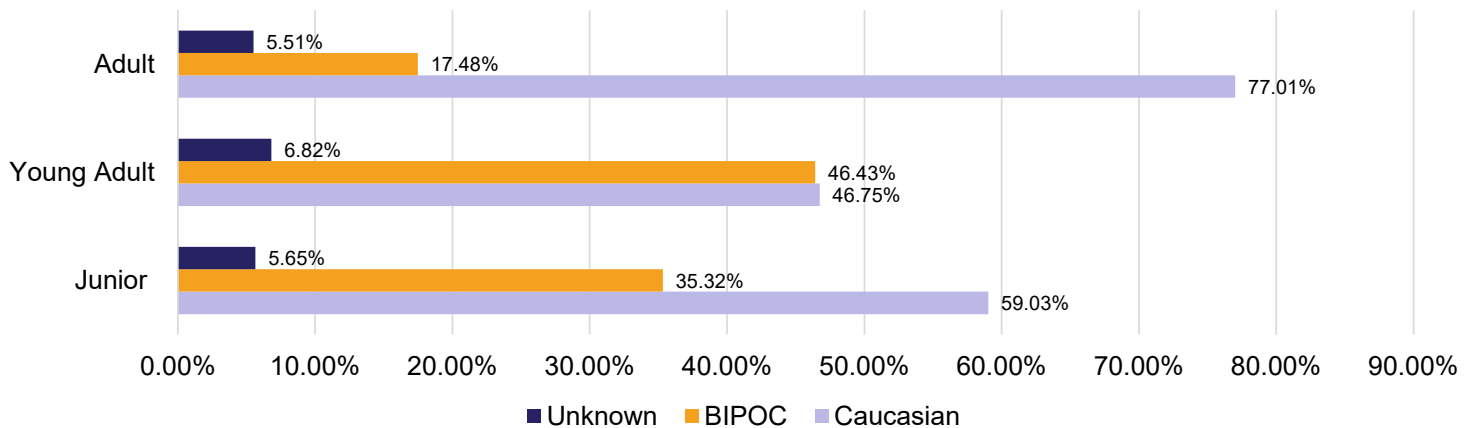


Characters and Content

Characters and titles were audited for the same components as authors as well as additional elements described in Appendix A. Once again, the number of Caucasian characters between the Physical and Customer Checkouts audit was very similar at 64.81% and 64.51% of characters audited. Regarding the diversity of content, the predominance of Animal/Non-Human characters across all three (3) audits, averaging 34.37% of the total titles, derived primarily from non-fiction works whose subjects were outside the corporeal human experience and junior books depicting animal characters. In fiction titles, 29.44% of audited materials were flagged for Animal/Non-Human characters. The prevalence of animal characters in junior works is a studied phenomenon. No measured element of diversity apart from 2SLGBTQI and Canadian experiences exceeded 5% of the total number of audited materials from each audit. Here too shows an opportunity for growth and consideration when purchasing Library materials especially surrounding depictions of mental and physical health, disability and neurodivergent experiences.

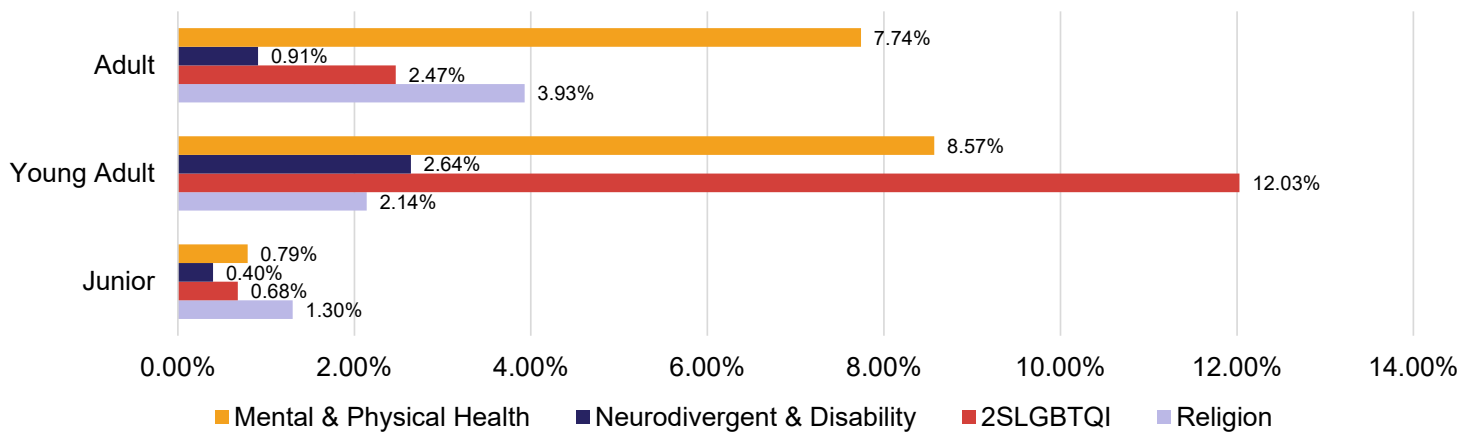
Finally, the audit revealed that on average Young Adult works have the highest level of racial and experiential diversity. The following tables illustrate the representation found in the content of print items from the Customer Checkouts Audit by audience level. As previously mentioned, a large contributor to the diversity of young adult fiction was the extreme popularity of manga which often features Japanese characters. The findings illustrate that BIPOC and Caucasian representation achieved near parity. Young Adult books also had the highest percentages of titles featuring 2SLGBTQI, health, and ability experiences. These findings affirm the trends observed by Collection HQ where “teen” collections similarly had the highest levels of EDI content.

Racial Representation by Audience



Overall, a specific area of focus in Collections and Programs should be in the promotion of Black and South Asian voices especially in the adult collection because these ethnocultural groups make up a large component of the Town’s community. Achieving more equitable representation will require not only ensuring the collection has diverse materials, but also taking large strides to draw customers and staff attention to their presence as up and coming alternatives to already popular creators.

Experiential Representation by Audience



Key Findings

- The data from the Physical and Customer Checkouts Audits indicates that a higher percentage of Caucasian authors were writing characters of colour.
- The data from the Physical and Customer Checkouts Audits reflects that the representation of East Asian and Indigenous voices is on or near par with the statistics found in the community, whereas Black, South Asian, and West Asian voices scored considerably beneath the Town's statistics.
- Out of 58 of the most popular authors identified across audiences in the Customer Checkouts Audit, 81% of them were Caucasian, therefore, a collection developed around only customer use would be predominately white in authorship and content.
- The New Items Audit depicts the positive changes taking place in the publishing industry as BIPOC authors gain more recognition and promotion.
- The predominance of Animal/Non-Human characters across all three audits, averaging 34.37% of the total titles, derived primarily from non-fiction works and junior books. In fiction titles, 29.44% of audited materials were flagged for Animal/Non-Human characters.
- The audits revealed that Young Adult works, on average, had the highest level of racial and experiential diversity. Young Adult books also had the highest percentages of titles featuring 2SLGBTQI, Health, and Ability experiences.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations that the Library can undertake to improve the diversity of its collection.

Staff Distribution

An essential next step will be sharing the findings of the audit to all Library staff to encourage collaboration and feedback to further improve the collection and use in Library services. Sharing key findings and goals from this audit will better equip each department to respond with intention to the targets established in this report by modifying their processes internally and when working with the public. These modifications will include updated reader's advisory strategies, increase in diverse title selection for use in programming, and incorporating diverse materials in reading lists and displays. This will be shared with staff in a variety of ways such as collaborating with the Library's Equity, Inclusion & Diversity Staff (LEIDS) and/or staff presentations.

Reader's Advisory

Reader's Advisory is a cornerstone service staff provide to the public. By promoting diverse titles in their interactions with the public, staff recommendations are more reflective of the community. The Library will collaborate internally and with its vendors to create more opportunities to share diverse titles with staff and the public. Some directives for sharing diverse materials will include:

- Creating digital and physical lists, collections and displays that highlight specific voices;
- Consulting vendors, websites, and booklists for trending and up and coming authors/titles;
- Collaborating with the Community Engagement department to curate titles in programs;
- Staff training to expand knowledge of diverse authors through book and author talks.

Seeking opportunities for promotion will allow the Library to do its due diligence in making diverse materials visible to the public.

The Library has already begun highlighting diverse voices in the collection. Of note, the Library experienced an overwhelmingly positive response to its pop-up Black Voices Collection and AfriCANthology event in June. The event was well attended and generated 77 circulations from the physical and digital displays. The community's response to this impromptu initiative, and the subsequent creation of the bimonthly Black Lit Durham events, demonstrates the benefit of meeting the community where they are. A permanent Black Voices digital collection is now available on the Library's Overdrive. The Library is eager to engage with its partners to create further collections that reflect the demographics and experiences of the Ajax community.

Automatic Release Program

As previously mentioned, the Library employs an Automatic Release Plan (ARP) to determine what materials are sent from our vendor. ARPs determine the title selections and quantities by popularity and circulation of authors. While the industry is improving, the majority of best-selling authors for adult, YA, and Junior audiences are Caucasian. This popularity creates a double bind for Collections as it perpetuates the proliferation of primarily white voices, but it is done so to meet the demand of our customers. The Library is committed to updating its ARP and working with its vendor(s) and their selectors to explicitly add considerations for diversity including but not limited to:

- Consulting and including upcoming authors lists;
- Consulting diverse book lists and resources;
- Providing staff reader advisories and publishing trends that include up and coming authors and titles.

The Library will have a draft of its updated ARP in place by December 31, 2022. Beyond updating the ARP and making more diverse materials available, the Library will continue to garner community interest; efforts to do so are captured in further recommendations.

Respectful Subject Headings and Classification Systems

Updating subject headings and reimaging classification systems to reflect communities' chosen names and values is a vital step in decentralizing whiteness and colonial ideas. For example, the Library of Congress Classification (LCC) system employs several outdated subject headings that reinforce colonial beliefs. A particular concern for public libraries is the subject headings for Indigenous peoples as LCC still employs the word "Indian". Moreover, the Dewey Decimal system employs bias in how items are organized and shelved in the Library. For example, its prioritization of Christianity in categorizations of religion limits how world religions are presented in the collection.

Since January 2021, the Library's vendor, Library Services Centre, has been updating Indigenous LCC headings provided to libraries with respectful headings in the Machine-Readable Cataloging records (MARC). The spreadsheet of subject headings was initially developed by the Greater Victoria Public Library with their vendor LibraryBound who used information consolidated by the Xwi7xwa Library at UBC, the Manitoba Archival Information Network, and the University of Alberta. The Library is using this work as a springboard to investigate and update Indigenous subject headings local to our community and other problematic headings used to describe cultures, beliefs, and sexuality.

Additionally, the Library will investigate specifying certain headings to better represent the ethnocultural groups present in community. Whereas the work for Indigenous Subject Headings has been established through extensive collaboration with various communities, the work surrounding other respectful cultural headings remains less developed. The Library will need to collaborate with community partners and internal committees to find language that serves and reflects the identities of the Town's residents. By Q3 of 2023, the Library will have a draft list of updated cultural subject headings in place to supply to its vendor.

Finally, as a long-term project, the Library will explore other models for classification and review industry best practices for shelving library materials to be more inclusive.

Spot Checks

Using the same principles established in the audit, conducting spot checks or annual mini audits will allow the Library to review what materials are being received and promoted. The equity, diversity, and inclusion modules on Collection HQ will also allow for further analysis of chosen collections. Annabelle Mortensen (Skokie Public Library) highlighted the following mini-audits to routinely assess for diversity:

- Review of staff recommended reader advisories;
- Review of titles selected for monthly displays;
- Review of monthly acquisitions;
- Review of digital carts before purchasing.

Collection Services will develop and schedule a structure for reviewing incoming materials to assess their representation. A second New Items Audit is scheduled for Q2 2023 to measure absorption of changes to the ARP. The findings of this second audit will be shared in Q4 2023. Regular checks will also allow Collections to assess the uptake of the new elements within the ARP and to adjust accordingly to meet the established goals

Community Feedback

Developing a system for receiving formal feedback from the community about their larger impressions of the collection will allow the Library to target areas of interest or need. Previously, the Library has conducted surveys about Library Space Needs to understand how customers feel the space should operate. A similar campaign aimed at collections not only allows the community to have a larger hand in building the collection, but also removes the guesswork about whether residents feel represented by the collection. The Library can use these findings to respond directly to the desires of the community. At present, the Library has a “Suggest to Purchase” system to fulfill individual collection requests; however, a larger campaign will allow the Library to establish:

- Gaps within the collection
- Overall impressions of representation
- Subjects or genres of interest or need
- Authors or titles of interests
- Needs and supports for local authors

The Library has several partners and programs across all audience levels that can be engaged to encourage feedback about their collection use, interests, and needs. Further methods for community engagement could include promotional drives, prize campaigns, end-of-program surveys, letters to partners, and meetings with the Library’s advisory councils. Direct feedback would allow the Library to learn, codify, and respond to the needs of the public.

Next Steps

The following work plan denotes the upcoming timeline of tasks the Library will undertake to continue improving the EDI of the collection. As a first benchmark towards 10% improvement by 2026, the Library will aim for a minimum 2% increase in diverse materials by Q4 2023.

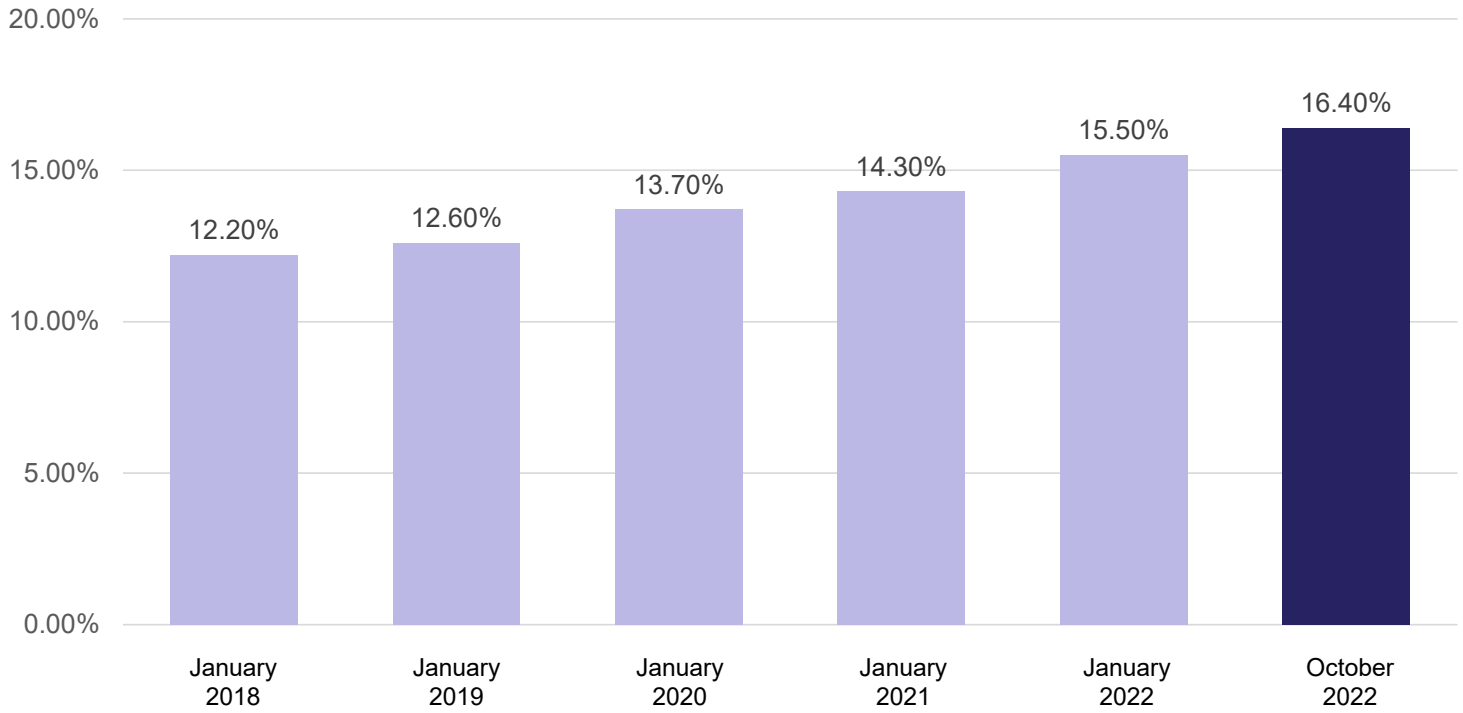
Primary Objective	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Publish digital Black Voices Collection					
Update ARP to include EDI specifications					
Review records to update Indigenous Subject Headings					
Establish schedule for spot checks of the collection					
Second New Items Audit					
Draft list of respectful subject headings supplied to vendors					
Findings from Second New Items Audit shared					
Minimum 2% EDI increase					

Based on the aggregate EDI findings from the audit of 15.44% for authorship and 24.44% for content the Library is striving for a minimum of 10% improvement on both these measures by the next census year in 2026. This projection is informed by the marked improvement in diversity noted in the New Items audit as well as Collection HQ. The table below denotes Collection HQ's measurement of the collections' diverse content from January 2018 to October 2022 and illustrates the accelerated growth experienced across the four (4) year span. In two (2) years, between 2018 and 2020 EDI content grew 1.5%; however, compared to 2022, EDI has improved by 1% in ten months alone. The Library anticipates that this acceleration will continue, allowing for a minimum of 2% improvement by the end of each calendar year.

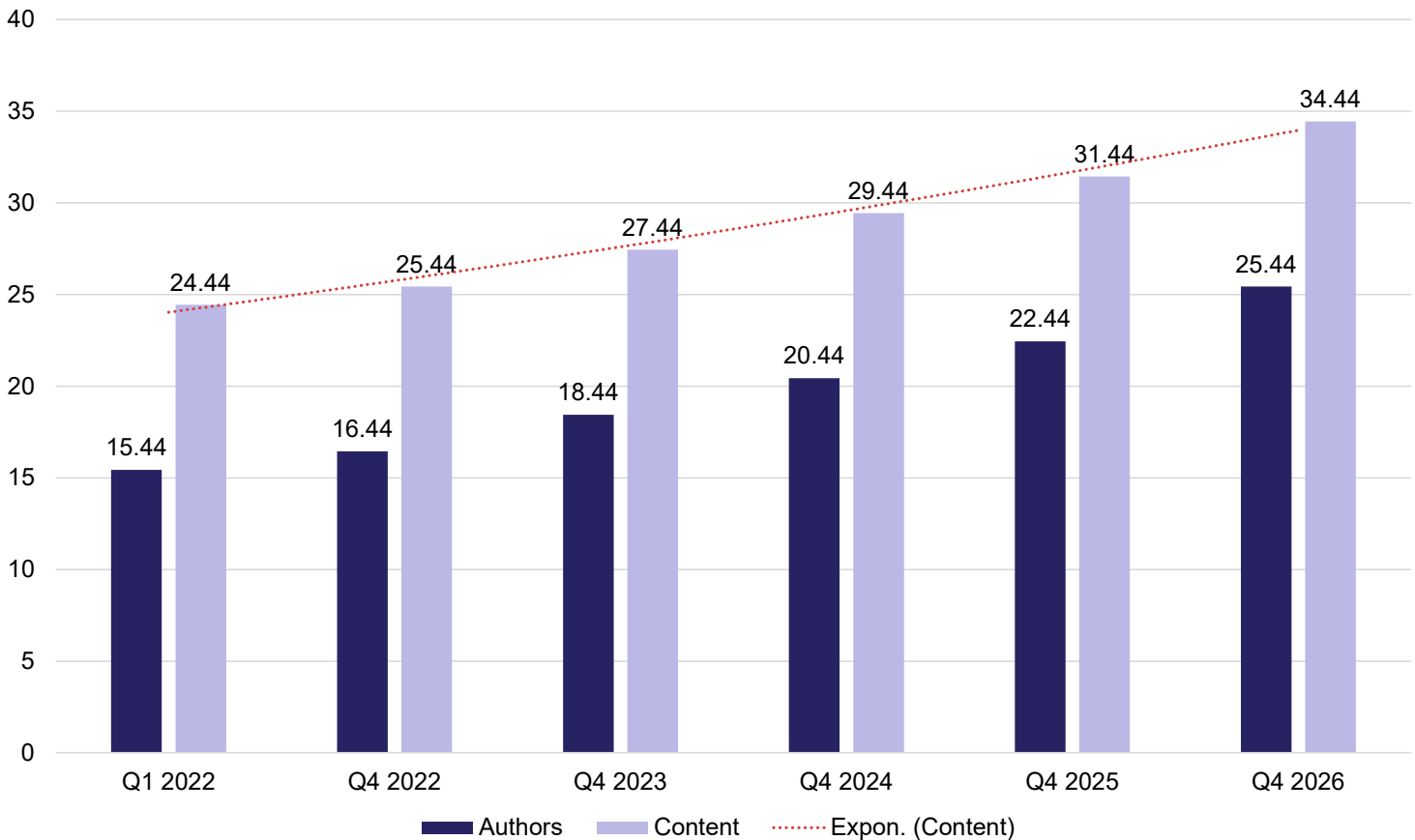
Conclusion

The first stages of the diversity audit found that the physical collection as well as customer checkouts favour books and media by white creators but that the content within the books was on average more diverse. By contrast, the marked improvement in the New Items audit alludes to the changes in the publishing industry as BIPOC voices and #OwnVoices materials gain more promotion. The Library is committed to continuing its assessment and improvement of the diversity of its collection. The audits undertaken throughout the year of 2022 reveal areas of improvement that the Library can address through a combination of the recommendations.

Overall EDI Items 2018 - 2022



Projected EDI Item Growth



Appendix A

Definitions

This legend denotes the elements of diversity measured for the authors, characters, and content of the audited materials. For authors the categories that were assessed included: race, gender, relation to Canada, sexuality, neurodivergence, disability, immigration, and refugee status. Gender was divided into male, female and nonbinary/trans with the intention of acknowledging marginalized versus cis identities. These categories and all others were applied to the content and characters of the items.

Term/Acronym	Definition
M	Male
F	Female
NB/T	Non-Binary OR Trans*
Unknown	A character whose race and/or gender is not specified.
White	Caucasian
Black (Unspecified)	Identifies as Black with no specified origin.
Black (Caribbean)	Identifies as Black with origins/heritage from the Caribbean.
Black (African)	Identifies as Black with origins/heritage from Africa.
Indigenous	Identifies as Indigenous includes Indigenous peoples of the Americas, First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and all international Indigenous persons (ex. South America, Australia, Oceania, etc.).
Biracial/Multiracial	Consisting of two (2) or more races.
Asian (Unspecified)	Identifies as Asian with no specified origin.
South Asian	Origins/heritage from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, AND/OR Sri Lanka.
East Asian	Origins/heritage from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, AND/OR Taiwan.
Southeast Asian	Origins/heritage from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, AND/OR Vietnam.
North African & West Asian	Origins/heritage from Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudia Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Türkiye, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Western Sahara, AND/OR Yemen.
Central Asian	Origins/heritage from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.
Latin American	Origins/heritage from countries within South or Central America or islands in the Caribbean.

Term/Acronym (cont'd)	Definition (cont'd)
POC	Person of Colour.
Canadian	Origins/citizenship in Canada. Author/main character(s) explicitly identify as being from Canada.
2SLGBTQI	Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and additional sexual orientations and gender identities.
#OwnVoices	Books about characters from underrepresented/marginalized groups in which the author shares the same identity.
Neurodivergent	Differing in mental or neurological function from what is considered typical or normal.
Person with a disability	Person experiencing a physical, developmental, mental, or intellectual impairment or disability; may include the use of assistive aids.
Immigrant	A person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country.
Refugee	A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.
Animal/Non-Human	Stories featuring non-human characters including animals, robots, AI, etc.
Non-Traditional Family	A family that is not made up of one (1) mother, one (1) father, and a child or children.
Body Image	A narrative that focuses on the size, shape, or look of a character and their relationship to their image.
Socioeconomic (Poverty/ Homelessness)	A person experiencing an unstable socioeconomic situation.
International (White)	A Caucasian character/story with origins or settings outside of North America.
International (BIPOC)	A Black, Indigenous, or person of colour with origins or settings outside of North America.
Immigrant (White)	Immigrant narrative featuring a Caucasian character.
Immigrant (BIPOC)	Immigrant narrative featuring a Black, Indigenous, or POC character.
Mental Health Narrative	A story relating to the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of the character. Includes anxiety, personality, and eating disorders.
Physical Health OR Illness Narrative	A story focusing on the physical health of the character including experiences with disease, diet, nutrition, sleep, and relations to substances.
Discrimination Narrative	A story where the characters face major adversity of some kind; this can include historical or societal traumas or any “ism” (racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, etc.).

Appendix A updated February 2024.

Appendix B

Detailed Methodology

The audit was based on framework created by Karen Jensen from Fort Worth Public Library. Categories of representation, including but not limited to race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability, were created for both authors and main characters and these categories were translated into a spreadsheet for each segment. Gender was divided into male, female, and nonbinary/trans with the intention of acknowledging marginalized versus cis identities (see Appendix A). The Library considered multiple main characters when auditing works as key representations could be lost when focusing on only a central character.

For each element of diversity identified, a “1” was placed in the corresponding books’ column of the audit spreadsheet. It should be noted that while the total number of authors is comprehensive, the number of “characters/topics” is not as the 1 indicates the element of diversity met rather than the total number of characters within that category.

In reviewing these materials, some items were physically handled, and characters and authors were researched using a variety of digital sources including author websites, Kirkus reviews, fandom websites, GoodReads, Wikipedia, and the Library’s catalogue. Authors’ social media were also consulted for indications of pronouns, heritage, and sexuality.

For the Physical Audit, the Library’s Integrated Library System (ILS) Koha was used to generate randomized lists of the selected categories of the collection. The Physical Audit was the first audit conducted, commencing in January 2022. The table below illustrates the breakdown of items that were reviewed per collection type and branch.

Collection Type	Sample Number / Branch	Sample Total (System)
Board Books	25	75
Junior Picture Book	65	195
Junior Fiction	50	150
Junior Nonfiction	30	90
Junior Graphic Novel	35	105
Childrens DVDs (All)	92	276
Young Adult Fiction	60	180
Young Adult Nonfiction	30	90
Young Adult Graphic Novel	40	120
Adult Fiction	80	240
Adult Nonfiction	45	135
Adult Graphic Novel*	60	120
Adult DVDs (All)	105	315
Restricted DVDs (All)	30	90
TOTALS	747 (Audley & Main) 687 (McLean)	2,181

*Audley & Main Branches only.

For the New Items Audit, 60 items were audited per shipment of materials across eight (8) weeks. Random number generators were used to select items from shipment invoices. The Customer Checkouts Audit was collected by a report from Koha, containing 20,000 of the most recent checkouts until July 19, 2022. For the Customer Checkouts Audit, duplicates of titles were removed to provide an accurate snapshot of interests; however, duplicates were noted and contributed to the tabulations of popular authors.

The data reflects elements of identity that were verifiable. Authors that were unknown or unsearchable were highlighted in red whereas unknown characters were flagged using the same process as the other racial categories. The percentages were derived from dividing the categories of representation against the total number of authors, characters, or titles respectively; a slight deviation from Jensen's method of dividing all totals against the total number of titles as she did not separate authors and characters in the same way.

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