

Referencing the Imaginary: An Analysis of Library Collection of Role-Playing Game Materials

The Reference Librarian

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Abstract

The most famous role-playing game, *Dungeons & Dragons*, recently celebrated the 40th anniversary of its release. The books that define the games in the role-playing genre function like sports rulebooks, contain entries like encyclopedias, or are based on collections of maps similar to an atlas. In the library context, this places the books that define role-playing games in the domain of reference books. While currently divisions of the American Library Association encourage librarians to consider using the game in community building and youth services, there was a time period where organized groups actively tried to discourage librarians from collecting materials associated with the genre. This study is an assessment of library holdings of role-playing game materials worldwide, detailing collection and cataloging issues associated with the genre.

Keywords: Role-playing, rulebooks, games

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Introduction

Gaming has been a part of library culture for decades (Nicholson, 2013). Library support for gaming continues into today, as a recent survey found that over 70% of public libraries support gaming in some way, and over 40% of libraries actively host gaming activities such as board game tournaments and video gaming events (Nicholson, 2009).

Paper-based role-playing games have been available to consumers for over 40 years, with the most widely known games marketed under the name *Dungeons & Dragons*. The early history of these games included a period where organized groups publicly described them as dangerous and demonic. In their more recent history the play mechanics of the paper-based games were adapted to video games and are used as the foundation for some of the most valuable pieces of intellectual property in the video game industry. A recent article by *The New York Times* pointed out how influential the game has been in shaping a generation of writers and creatives (Gilsdorf, 2014). Gaming as an area of study has gone from a niche area to a full-fledged field of study, and therefore a review of library support is of interest.

Before one can fully understand the classification of roleplaying game rulebooks as reference materials, it is important to first discuss the concept of what is a source of reference within the library itself. As Archie G. Rugh states in his article *Toward a Science of Reference Work: Basic Concepts*, it is necessary to understand that reference books hold within them information that has meaningfulness to human thought. Readers choose reference materials because they choose to use the information, rather than simply enjoying the book for itself (Rugh, 1975, p. 294). Reference books serve the needs of a particularly community of library users. They operate as convenient, quick sources of both bibliographic and nonbibliographic information. Books such as sports rulebooks, statistics books, and encyclopedias fall into

category of nonbibliographic fact books. It is necessary to recognize that one library's reference book is another library's entry into a general collection. A reference book, per Rugh, is any book which has been selected by librarians to serve a particular community of library users as a convenient source of information (Rugh, 1975, p. 295).

Role-playing game materials fall into the reference book category due to both form and function. In terms of form, they are a hybrid of many different genres that are consistently included in reference collections. On the widest level they are game rulebooks, but the genre also contains titles that are structured like encyclopedias and atlases. For example the book *Monster Manual* (2014) by Wizards of the Coast is an encyclopedia of creatures from Dungeons & Dragons. By definition a gazetteer is a geographical dictionary to be used in conjunction with maps. *Gazetteer* (Holian et al, 2000) was published by Wizards of the Coast and contains maps and geographic information about their fictional worlds. In terms of function these books meet Rugh's definition of a reference book. They are used by a particular community as a source of convenient information during game play. There is also a matter of precedent, classification guidelines place sports rulebooks in reference materials, from national libraries to school libraries ("Sports Reference Sources," n.d.; Safford & Nichols, 1998).

There is evidence that the relationship between libraries and role-playing games is growing. The top publisher in the genre and the American Library Association have collaborated to promote the use of gaming in libraries since 2007 (Heeger, 2008). A section of Scott Nicholson's 2010 book, *Everyone Plays at the Library: Creating Great Gaming Experiences for All Ages*, serves as an introduction for librarians to the genre and points out that many games are based on the idea of interactive storytelling in famous literary worlds. It is not difficult to imagine how games based on cooperative storytelling in worlds based on the literary writings of

J.R.R. Tolkien, J.K. Rowling, or H.P. Lovecraft would be used for community building by progressive minded librarians.

During the 1980s there were both organized groups and numerous media reports warning parents and education professionals about the hypothetical dangers of role-playing games. While the groups that opposed these games primarily focused on warning parents, efforts were also made to keep these materials out of schools and libraries. As part of this phenomenon materials were made and distributed to discourage both public and school librarians from adding role-playing game materials to collections (Newitz, 2014). The book *A Christian Guide to Dungeons and Dragons: The Catechism of the New Age* referred to the game as the “chief weapon used in this spiritual raid on our children” (Leithart & Grant, 1987) and warned that libraries were training children to play the game. A booklet distributed by the most high profile group campaigning against the game, titled *Dungeons and Dragons: Witchcraft, Suicide, Violence*, states on its first page “We have now witnessed libraries and educators taking on a great responsibility by allowing the game to become part of the curriculum or program” (Dempsey, Dempsey, & Pulling, n.d).

There are multiple reasons why a study on the collection and use of role-playing games in libraries is warranted. Although libraries may want to collect these materials for patron use, reference support is also needed in the realms of research and curriculum development. There is now an academic journal specifically dedicated to role-playing games. First published in 2009, the *International Journal of Role-Playing* presents an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the games. The Entertainment Software Association (n.d.) reports that there are at least 319 schools in the United States that now offer degrees in video game design. Gen Con, the largest annual convention dedicated to the genre, has had steadily increasing attendance across its 42-

year history, with over 56,000 attendees in 2014. This is a 14% increase over 2013 (Gen Con, 2014). Library collection of these materials can aid researchers looking to study rules referenced in these books, and help students and faculty looking to learn more about some of the gameplay mechanics that have shaped current digital games. Getting a general assessment of how frequently these titles are held in collections would also be helpful to researchers interested in the topic of libraries and gaming. While there is substantial documentation of progressive librarian attitudes towards the wider concept of games in libraries (Nicholson, 2013), there is little information available about the specifics of library collections of role-playing game materials (Sich, 2012).

In the past librarians were pressured by parents groups and media reports not to collect these materials. Currently librarians are encouraged by their central professional organization to both collect and use these materials. In the future, more and more digital interactive media will be made that use the creative foundations of these games. Academic study related to these materials is increasing. This assessment of the role of these materials in library collections is intended to be of interest to both librarians as well as researchers and professionals in fields related to paper-based role-playing and digital entertainment games.

Research Questions:

Searches for previous assessments of library collection of these materials turned up no results. Thus as a beginning assessment on the topic, the research questions are broad.

- Q1: How widely are these materials collected by libraries?
- Q2: Are there differences by state or region?
- Q3: What are the most common archiving and collection issues?

- Q4: What publishers dominate?
- Q5: What libraries have the best collections?

Literature Review:

The conceptual origins of the paper-based role-playing game genre can be traced back as far as the 19th century, as wargaming by Prussian officers had been used as a training tool for the officers in the military. In this setting there were sets of metal miniatures which would simulate military units of various sizes, and rules for combat and conflict (Rausch, 2004a). Many years later, in the mid 1960s, these types of military exercises had evolved into a hobby of wargaming amongst civilians.

The man generally credited with inventing the modern genre of these games, Gary Gygax, believed that a much smaller scale type of gaming system which focused on individual characters rather than squads of military units would be compelling and interesting. He first developed a game known as *Chainmail*, which would eventually evolve into the first published edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1974.

Popularity of *Dungeons & Dragons* grew steadily throughout its first decade. The first edition printing was only of 1,000 copies. Some reports stated its publisher, Tactical Studio Rules (TSR), generated \$2.3 million in sales by the end of the 1970s and peaked with over \$100 million in 1985 (Leithart & Grant, 1987). The game's popularity was spread rapidly through word of mouth. It became a phenomenon which moved from Gygax and a few close associates working out of his basement to a staff of 300 by 1982 (Rausch, 2004b). While the game *Dungeons & Dragons* had been at the forefront of the tabletop roleplaying game craze, many

other variants of such games also were released as other publishers saw opportunities in this growing market.

Efforts to discourage the playing of these games did little to diminish their popularity at the time, and the cultural legacy of the games continues today. Video games that feature game mechanics stemming from the role-playing game genre have sales that total into the billions of dollars, including Square/Enix's Final Fantasy series, Nintendo's Pokemon series, and Blizzard's Diablo series ("Game Database," n.d.). Video game developers have pointed out that it is difficult to imagine how the video game industry would have evolved without the rules and mechanics of *Dungeons and Dragons* to operate as a guide (Frum, 2014).

Despite their importance to the evolution of the multi-billion dollar video game industry, and their 40-year history, titles in the role-playing game genre have not been comprehensively collected within the Library of Congress. A collections policy statement from 2008 clarified the numerical system to define the extent of their collections in different areas. Five is the highest level, known as "comprehensive level," and zero is the lowest level, described as "Out-of-Scope." Role-playing games were classified in a broadly defined group titled "Games and Amusements" that also includes parlor magic and crossword puzzles. Of the five levels of collection this group is classified as a three, "Instructional Support Level." As a point of comparison to other subjects in the Sports, Leisure, and Recreation topic area, books on waxworks and fencing are collected at level four, known as "research level" (Library of Congress Collections Policy Statements, 2008).

Methodology:

Guiding Framework

The first step in assessing library collections of these materials was adapting a research methodology from what is known as a test of collection strength (White, 2008). In a test of collection strength a list is constructed of important books, and then libraries' collections are measured by how many of these titles are in their collections. Generally the books are ranked by importance from one to four. Early searches for role-playing game material in libraries revealed only four role-playing game titles with more than 200 copies circulating within the entire Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) system, many titles were listed under multiple names within OCLC, and some titles were found not to have ISBN numbers. OCLC is a nonprofit computer library service and organization which provides bibliographic, abstract, and full-text information to the public. Founded in 1967 as the Ohio College Library Center, OCLC has since become a nonprofit membership cooperative that spans the world and changed its name to the Online Computer Library Center, Inc. OCLC and its member libraries maintain WorldCat, the largest online public access catalog (OPAC) in the world ("Find items in libraries near you," n.d.). OCLC is comprised of over 72,000 libraries, archives, and museums spread across 170 separate countries ("History of Cooperation," n.d.). As of February 2007, the OCLC database contained over 1.1 billion catalogued items. The massive scope of the OCLC system is why it was selected for this research. The primary goal of this network and database is to bring libraries together to cooperatively keep track of the world's information in order to best serve researchers and scholars. While most participating members of OCLC are libraries, there are vendors included in the system.

Instead of performing this research exactly along a traditional collection strength test methodology, it was decided to adapt strength testing methodology into a wider survey on the

collection of role-playing game materials based on the research methodology known as Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory is based on putting data collection first, then organizing findings into concepts, which then generate the final hypotheses (Glaser & Strauss, 2009).

The first step in this research was gathering a list of important titles in the role-playing game genre. The list of titles was built through player input, sales data, and academic papers providing professional advice to librarians.

Gathering player input was done by starting a discussion in an online community on what titles the community members felt should be held in an ideal library collection. The social media website Reddit has a subdomain devoted to role-playing games. There are over 71,000 registered accounts subscribing to this subdomain. A post titled “Researcher asking for your RPG (role-playing game) knowledge: What books should a library have if they are interested in collecting RPG related materials?” was made to the subdomain, and it received 141 comments, including over 200 suggested titles (Reddit.com, 2014). Users of this subdomain were also able to vote upwards the titles they felt were important and vote down the titles they felt were not. Over 1,000 votes were cast. While this is not scientifically valid polling, it was useful in generating a list of potential titles as a starting point.

A database of the titles suggested by the Reddit users was then compared to both historical and current lists of best selling role-playing game titles. The retail website Amazon posts a list of its top selling titles in the genre (“Best Sellers in Fantasy Gaming,” 2014), and lists of top selling titles from past decades were also considered (Appelcline, 2012). Advice on building a role-playing game collection from articles in academic library journals was also used (Sich, 2012; Snow, 2008). A synthesis of the player suggestions, sales charts, and the journal article yielded a list of 80 books.

To assist in locating and gathering data about the 80 books, the titles were compiled into a database, and paired with their ISBN numbers. At this point it was discovered that nine of the titles (11.2%) did not have ISBN numbers. While the books were catalogued on Amazon, and had Amazon book numbers, the lack of ISBN number excluded them from being tracked in OCLC. Some of the titles lacking ISBN numbers are considered very influential in the history of the genre. The first editions of multiple titles published by TSR, such as *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Boot Hill*, did not have ISBN numbers. Unlike some reference books, where the older editions become less valuable once a newer edition is released, older editions of role-playing games have value to collectors, players, and researchers. Game players have been known to favor certain editions due to rule changes, and researchers could potentially want to study rule changes over time. TSR's titles did not feature ISBN numbers until 1978. The books published in the *Runequest* series were considered to be in the top three best-selling systems of the 1970s and early 1980s (Livingstone & Guadalupi, 1986), but none of the titles from that period have ISBN numbers. The role-playing game series *Shadowrun* has a 25 year history that continues today, but the original book in the series *Shadowrun: Where Man Meets Magic and Machine* was published without an ISBN. The role-playing game Traveller was also considered to be a top three best-selling system of the early era, and the original books in the Traveller series were also published without ISBN numbers.

The lack of ISBN numbers reduced the list of titles to 71, and each of these were searched for in OCLC by ISBN. Relevant data from the search results was recorded, including publisher, number of copies in the system, number of different titles the book was catalogued under, and the libraries and geographic locations where each book could be found.

Results of Data Collection:

Basic Cataloguing Issues:

During the data collection phase several issues of interest appeared. While the original list of researched books was reduced from 80 to 71 due to lack of ISBN numbers, the first round of data collection revealed that seven of the 71 remaining titles had no circulating copies catalogued in the OCLC system. This then reduced the number of titles in our data collection to 64. It also quickly became apparent that books commonly were catalogued under multiple names. For example the book titled *Rules Compendium: An Essential Dungeons & Dragons Compendium* (ISBN-10: 9780786956210) is also catalogued under the names *Rules Compendium: Roleplaying Game Core Rules*, *Dungeons & Dragons Rules Compendium*, and *Rules Compendium*. While no book was catalogued under more than four names, only 22 of the 64 remaining titles (30.9%) were catalogued under a single title. The average number of catalogue titles per ISBN number was 1.96, when the result theoretically should be a single listing per ISBN. The problem of multiple cataloging titles per ISBN was exacerbated by the number of titles circulating in the system. The number of different cataloging titles had a mild positive correlation ($r=.667$) with the average number of circulating copies. For example the average number of circulating copies of a book catalogued under a single title was 15.54, while the average number of titles of a book catalogued under three different titles was 121.88. This is understandable, as the more copies of a book there are in circulation, the greater the chance of cataloguing error.

[Table 1]

Another item of interest to librarians was the frequency of the title “Dungeons & Dragons Publications” in search results. Nine of the ISBN numbers from the search list returned this, and it was listed as being in 63 different library collections. For example *Dark Sun Campaign Setting: A 4th Edition D&D Supplement* (ISBN: 0786954930) and *Monster Manual: Core Rulebook III* (ISBN: 078692893X) both return this result. The details of the OCLC listing for “Dungeons and Dragons Publications” includes the ISBN numbers of 174 different titles. The entry is listed as a book, not a kit. Calls to libraries that list this item as being in their collections revealed differing results. Most commonly libraries digitally listed the entry as in their collections, but had nothing on the shelves. Some libraries had a single book under the entry, while others had a list of titles. The entry was connected to random individual items in some collections, such as laserdiscs and young adult fiction titles. This entry is found at the Library of Congress connected with a list of 83 related ISBN numbers. Similarly, the Library of Congress is also the only holder of an entry titled “Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Publications” which holds a list of 30 related ISBN numbers.

Publisher Dominance:

In the genre of paper-based role-playing games, the game *Dungeons & Dragons* is so dominant that it has become something of a genericized trademark. The game was originally published by TSR, and TSR was purchased by Wizards of the Coast in 1997. Of the 71 titles originally investigated, 31 titles (43.6%) are books published by TSR or Wizards of the Coast. The remaining 40 titles (56.3%) are from 27 different publishers, with the second most common publisher being White Wolf Publishing, creators of games such as *Vampire: The Masquerade* and *Mage: The Ascension*. As mentioned, seven of the 71 books had ISBN numbers but no

circulating copies within OCLC. Each of these seven titles was from a different publisher, and none were from TSR or Wizards of the Coast.

Analysis of the library collections by publisher revealed the dominance of TSR/ Wizards of the Coast. As seen in Table 2, The TSR/ Wizards of the Coast titles make up a majority of the books held in collections. In the scope of the search list, there are more TSR/ Wizards of the Coast titles on library shelves than titles from all other publishers combined.

[Table 2]

Even though today Wizards of the Coast owns TSR, the breakdown of books published under each is of interest to get an approximate measurement of changes in collection over time, as all books published under the TSR name would date from before 1997. As seen in Table 3, there is little difference in the average number of circulating copies for each publisher.

[Table 3]

Dominance of Vendors over Libraries

Each library or participant in OCLC is given a unique cataloging code, and as books from the list were searched the codes indicating where the book was held were recorded. When the codes were sorted by how many of the 71 titles they held it was discovered that the top three entries were not libraries, but instead were vendors that serve libraries. Private entities, such as

vendors, corporations, and publishers are allowed to have OCLC codes. The vendor Alibris (OCLC Code: ALBRS) had the widest collection of any single OCLC participant, with 53 out of 71 titles. Another vendor, Baker and Taylor, uses three OCLC codes for different subsidiaries (OCLC Codes: BCTCA, BAKER, and YDX) and these three combined had the highest number of items from the list with 63. Baker and Taylor had all but eight of 71 titles between the three codes. While the online retailer Amazon is not part of OCLC, a side query was done. Every title on the list, including the nine titles from the original list that did not have ISBN numbers, was available for sale on Amazon.com.

The second pattern that appeared when looking at the data in the context of individual OCLC codes was the dominance of large library systems. Sorting the number of titles held by each code revealed that most of the larger collections of these materials are held in library systems with numerous branches or cooperatives of libraries working together. In terms of results per OCLC code, the top twenty include the Toronto Public Library (102 branch locations), the South Central Library system in Wisconsin (53 associated libraries), the Minuteman Library Network (62 locations) and the C/W Mars system in Massachusetts (144 member libraries). The average number of branches or cooperative libraries for each of the top twenty library-linked OCLC codes was 35.53. The number of libraries or branches associated with each OCLC code becomes especially revealing in the context of the number of titles held by each code. The top twenty library collections held on average 19.76 titles out of 71 from our search list. Thus the library systems with the widest collection of these materials averaged 0.52 titles from the search list per associated branch location or library.

In geographic terms, most (87.04%) of the circulating copies found were located in the United States (3,110 copies), followed by the United Kingdom (123 copies), Canada (94 copies),

New Zealand (43 copies), and Denmark (21 copies). Small numbers of books were also found in Germany (15 copies), Ireland (14 copies), Taiwan (3 copies), South Korea (2 copies) and Bulgaria (1 copy). Across the United States collection was fairly consistent, with a mild positive correlation between the number of circulating copies found in each state and that state's population ($r=.73$). However, significant differences were found by region. Looking at collection of these materials by US Census regions revealed that states found in the East North Central Region (including Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Michigan) had the largest numbers of circulating copies, averaging 192.2 copies per state. On the other end of the spectrum, states in the East South Central Region (Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi) averaged 18.5 copies per state.

When the research data was compiled based on individual library holdings, the numbers indicated that substantial collections of these materials are very rare. Searching for these materials returned 953 OCLC libraries or participating organizations that held at least one title from the list. Of these, the average number of titles held was 3.67. The median number of titles held was 2, and the most common number of titles held (the mode) was 1. There are over 11,831 OCLC codes registered in the United States, meaning that over 90% of OCLC participants had nothing from the search list. According to the Institute of Museum and Library Services there are 17,078 library branch locations and bookmobiles in the United States (IMLS, 2010). The most commonly stocked book, the 2008 edition of the *Dungeons & Dragons Players Handbook*, only has 327 copies within the OCLC system worldwide. Considering that less than ten percent of OCLC participants in the United States had any of these titles, only 3,493 titles were found within the entire OCLC system, and the larger systems that stock some of these materials

average less than one book per branch, it can safely be estimated that the average library location in the United States has no role-playing game materials.

Research Question Answers

Q1: How widely are these materials collected by libraries?

The answer to this question is clearly that these materials are not widely collected. Looking at only the 953 OCLC participants that had any of these titles, the average number of titles in a collection was 3.67, or 5.16% of the search list. More than 90% of OCLC participants in the United States had no materials from the search list.

Q2: Are there differences by state or region?

When comparing state population to the numbers of books from the search list found in collections, the books appear to be collected consistently across the United States. However there were significant differences when census regions were compared, with some regions having more than ten times as many titles as others. The census regions with the greatest number of titles in collections is the East North Central Region (WI, IL, IN, OH, & MI), averaging 192.3 copies of books from the search list circulating in each state. The Pacific Region (HI, CA, OR, WA, AK) averaged 110.4 copies per state, and the Middle Atlantic Region (NY, PA, & NJ) averaged 105.0 copies per state. The census region with the least number of books in OCLC collections is the East South Central Region (AL, MS, TN, & KY), averaging 18.5 copies per state. South Atlantic Region (WV, MD, DE, NC, SC, FL, GA, DC, & VA) averaged 32.3 copies per state, and the Midwest (KS, MO, MN, IA, SD, & ND) averaging 34.4 copies of books from the search list in collections from each state.

Q3: What are the most common archiving and collection issues?

The most common archiving issue was inconsistent naming in the OCLC system. Most titles from the search list were found under multiple names. Other issues include the use of the listing title “Dungeons and Dragons Materials” as a catchall for 147 different ISBN numbers, yet most commonly leading to nothing on library shelves.

Q4: What publishers dominate?

By far TSR/ Wizards of the Coast is the most dominant publisher of materials held in library collections. While books from this publisher made up a significant amount (43.66%) of the titles searched, they ended up producing over 82% of the titles found within OCLC.

Q5: What libraries have the best collections?

The largest circulating collection found was in the Merril Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation & Fantasy in the Toronto Public Library. While the system has 102 branches listed on its website, its role-playing game materials are held in this specialized collection. A search of its local catalog returned over 300 items related to *Dungeons & Dragons* alone, as well as substantial amounts of other role-playing game material.

Two other public library systems stood out in terms of the scale of collection. The two largest circulating collections in the United States were found in the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and the Genesee District Library in Flint, Michigan. Both libraries had more titles from the search list (32 and 20 out of 71 titles respectively) than the Library of

Congress (17 out of 71 items). Searches of each system's individual catalogs showed that both had over 150 Dungeons & Dragons related titles as well as other role-playing game materials in their collections. The largest academic collection was found at the Oberlin College Library. A search of their local catalog turned up 67 Dungeons & Dragons titles, and also contained other role-playing game materials. In terms of national libraries, both the Library of Scotland (21 of 71 titles) and the National Library of Denmark (18 of 71 titles) also had more from the search list than the Library of Congress.

The Edwin and Terry Murray Collection of Role-Playing Games at Duke University's Rubenstein Library is a massive collection of approximately 13,000 items related to role-playing games ("Guide to the Edwin and Terry Murray Collection of Role-Playing Games," n.d.). The collection was not included in our research results, as it is a non-circulating collection. No other library collection was found anywhere near the scale of this collection.

Conclusion:

The most fundamental result of this research is that role-playing game materials are not widely collected by libraries, and are not catalogued well. Only a small percentage of libraries have any of these materials, and those that have them usually only have a small number of titles. In some areas of the United States collection of these materials is virtually non-existent. The materials collected are overwhelmingly from a single publisher. Except for a very small number of outstanding institutions, library collections of these materials are small and lack intellectual diversity.

Discussion:

It may be time to reconsider the role of role-playing games in collections. The academic study of games has steadily increased, both in research and in curriculum. Popular interest in the role-playing game genre shows no obvious signs of subsiding. Library collection of these materials simply does not match these trends. A library with a single shelf of role-playing game books would be in the top 5% of library collections of these materials. A library with a single bookcase of role-playing game books would be in the top 1% of library collections of these materials. The American Library Association produces materials encouraging libraries to use these materials in community building, but players need to reference these titles to play. Many academic video game programs exist in states that have minimal numbers of these titles. Even with the advent of video games, paper-based role-playing games have remained popular, and their continued popularity can be seen as an indicator of their cultural importance.

Anecdotal reports indicated that patron theft could potentially be discouraging librarians from collecting role-playing game materials, but no verified data could be found. The results from the comparison of TSR materials to Wizards of the Coast materials imply that this might be an unsubstantiated fear. Digital circulation of materials could be a potential solution if theft is found to be a substantial issue. Future research could investigate the reality of theft problems with these materials, and at the same time study their impact on patron engagement.

Table 1: Variations in Titles

Number of OCLC Variant Titles	Average number of OCLC Circulating Copies	Number of researched books	Total number of circulating titles
0	0	7	0
1	15.54	22	436
2	75.87	23	1745
3	121.88	16	1950
4	76.50	2	153

Table 2: Prevalence of Materials in Libraries by Publisher

Publisher	Percentage of total number Circulating Copies Found	Number of titles on search list from this publisher
TSR / Wizards of the Coast	82.07%	31
White Wolf	6.86%	8
Paizo	4.52%	3
Steve Jackson Games	1.31%	2
All others combined	4.41%	26

Table 3: Number of Circulating Copies from TSR vs. Wizards of the Coast

Publisher	Average Number of Circulating Copies per title	Number of titles on search list from this publisher
TSR	112.57	7
Wizards of the Coast	109.12	25

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