

## CommunityConnect Case Study Omaha Public Library

### Omaha Public Library at a Glance

**Population** 529,090  
**Customers** 258,894  
customers (49 percent  
market share)  
**Segments** 44  
**Service areas** 12

**Service area with the  
highest population**  
Millard with 156,324  
people

**Segment with the  
largest population**  
Rustbelt Traditions with  
60,686 people

**Segment with most  
customers**  
Rustbelt Traditions with  
29,347 people

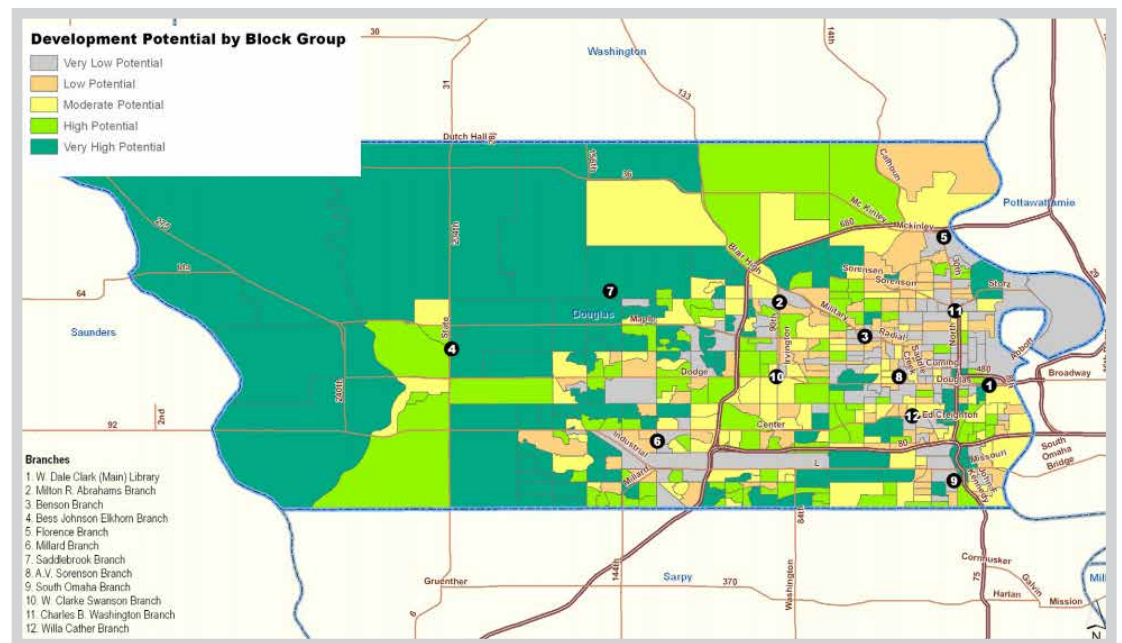
**Segment with the  
highest customer  
potential**  
Rustbelt Traditions with  
31,521 non customers

Theresa Jehlik  
*Strategy and Business  
Intelligence Manager*

Every library service area has its own complexities and challenges. CommunityConnect shines a light on those complexities, creating the opportunity to better meet the challenges. For the Omaha Public Library the CommunityConnect data was both enlightening and engaging.

“Our service area is diverse with 44 out of the 65 Tapestry market segments. That’s a lot of segments. There’s no clear majority in any one segment and no one segment that cuts across all 12 branch locations,” says Theresa Jehlik, Strategy and Business Intelligence Manager. “We were in the habit of looking at our community in broad categories—black, white, Hispanic. Looking at all those segments proved overwhelming for our management staff.”

A more manageable solution was to look at CommunityConnect LifeMode groups. These are groups of individual segments which share traits or characteristics like income or family type. Douglas County is composed of twelve LifeMode groups, with High Society the largest at 17.4%, Family Portrait at 14.8%, and Traditional Living at 13.9%. These three LifeMode groups include 46.1% of the population in 13 segments.



Understand. Predict. Deliver.

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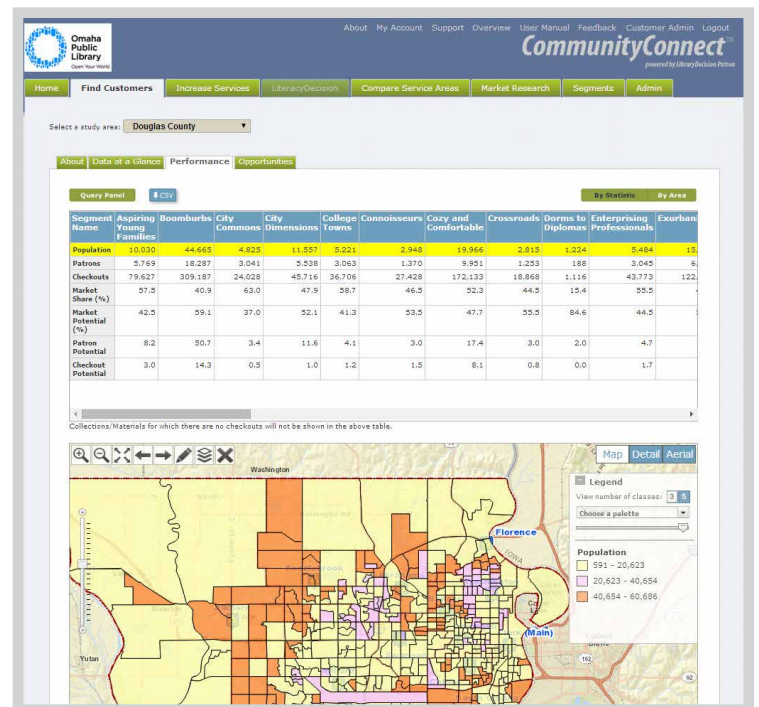
“We had some revealing surprises as we looked at our data,” says Jehlik. “First, of the seven wealthiest Tapestry segments we have six of them. We didn’t realize we had such a large concentration of wealthy people in Omaha because people here don’t flaunt what they have. After all, Warren Buffett lives here in a very modest home in a modest neighborhood.” Further, she says, the county has all nine senior segments. “We are a community aging in place. People are rooted here.”

### Applying the Data

Each month library administrators select one or two programming themes to highlight system-wide. It is up to staff leadership at each branch to determine how to apply the theme, based on the CommunityConnect data at their fingertips. “Previously we required programming in every branch, even though some branches struggled to draw an audience,” Jehlik says. “With CommunityConnect we understand that the segments in those branches don’t value library programming so instead we apply

the theme in other ways like book and film displays or booklists—whatever is appropriate given the market segments of that branch. Organizing library programs is time-consuming and expensive; now the branches have control over what will work in their communities and they understand why.”

Based on CommunityConnect data, the branches have also changed their in-house book displays. These are now based on the known characteristics of the targeted segments, not on arbitrary holidays or events. As a result, Jehlik says their book display circulation has increased because customers readily find what they value.



One difficult aspect of using data to shape branch activities is accepting that there can be segments on which the library won't focus. For example, says Jehlik, one of their branches serves primarily all young families comprising five or six segments. In that service area there are also Enterprising Professionals, which are adults in their 30s and 40s with no children. Since they represent a small percent of the overall market for that branch, the decision was made not to actively engage them. "Walking away from a segment is tough for staff," Jehlik says. "We need to understand that we're still serving them, we're just not actively pursuing them."

Connecting with and understanding the community with CommunityConnect impacts collection development and space utilization. One branch has a large Hispanic population. They were acquiring and displaying English as a Second Language materials but it turns out that the population is far from homogeneous—most of these people readily speak English. Library staff now understands they have Spanish speakers at varying stages of the immigration process who need a range of services from the library.

Another branch had very high card usage, but not for books. That location



has been reconfigured to better serve a population that needs access to information for life skills. There is now less space for books and more space for meetings and Internet access.

The CommunityConnect data has also shown that residents in the high-growth western part of Douglas County are underserved because of the geographic distribution of branches in the eastern part of the county (see page 3). Expanding with new facilities is not fiscally feasible at this time, but Omaha's Executive Director Gary Wasdin uses this data to demonstrate to county officials the need for expansion with the hope that in the long term this will be possible.

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### **Encouraging Branch Collaboration**

Jehlik says the more they study the data the more they learn. For example, she says, they have a large group of the Prosperous Empty Nesters segment served by four branches. Three of them are suburban locations with common characteristics and clustered close together. But the fourth is in a little corner of the county and in other ways not at all like the other three. By using CommunityConnect these four branches understand where they can work together effectively to eliminate redundancy of effort in program planning. Without CommunityConnect they would not have recognized this opportunity for collaboration to serve seniors.

Primarily Jehlik sees that CommunityConnect is causing a culture shift in the organization. Managers are learning to use the market segments to connect with their communities—to think about their customers and who they need to focus on serving. If staff identify segments of non-library users they need to make conscious data-driven decisions as to whether to focus on those segments or not.

### **The Bottom Line**

Jehlik has identified four “takeaways” from working with the Omaha CommunityConnect data.

- 1. We are wealthy.** Over 52% in those wealthy segments have library cards. They might not come into the library but they have cards and possibly use online services.
- 2. We are family-oriented, regardless of age.**
- 3. Line staff has new ways to collaborate.** Each LifeMode group is shared by at least two branches, opening up opportunities for staff to collaborate to deliver more effective service.
- 4. The more affluent and mobile the LifeMode group, the more marketing channels they use.** The converse of that is there are many segments that still want to receive information in print. This continues to be a marketing and budget challenge for the library.

For the Nebraska Library Association Advocacy Day, Staff Development Specialist Rebecca Stavick prepared an information sheet for each branch describing its service area population. These sheets were used to help State Senators understand who their constituents are and how those

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 Strategy and Business  
 Intelligence Manager

constituents use the library. “There’s a perception that the library is just for people who don’t have Internet access,” says Jehlik. “That is very far from the truth. These information sheets, compiled with CommunityConnect data, help us demonstrate the diversity of our community and the library services they value.”

**Key Data**

**12 locations**

OPL’s service area includes the City of Omaha and areas of Douglas County, Nebraska not served by other municipal libraries within a total geographic area of 328.5 square miles. OPL is a department of the City of Omaha, Nebraska and is funded through the City’s general and capital annual budgets. Douglas County provides funding through a Library Interlocal Agreement, which levies a library tax on residents in unincorporated areas at the City’s per capita library support annually.

**Top 6 Segments in Douglas County**

Segment	Population	% of County Population
Rustbelt Traditions	60,447	11.6
Up and Coming Families	43,871	8.4
Boomburbs	43,701	8.4
Young and Restless	28,561	5.5
Metro City Edge	22,279	4.8
Prosperous Empty Nesters	20,191	3.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>219,050</i>	<i>42.6</i>

*“In these post-recession times it is more important than ever to ensure library resources are being utilized effectively and strategically. CommunityConnect helps libraries pinpoint precisely who to serve and how to serve them. This investment yields an immediate ROI in better attended programs, increased collection usage, more cardholders, and better use of library space.”*

—Marc Futterman,  
CIVICTechnologies  
President and CEO

## **About CommunityConnect**

CommunityConnect is a web-software solution that integrates data from your library with market segmentation, demographic, and other data so you can better understand your community, predict what people are interested in, and deliver relevant services to them.

Using CommunityConnect, our customers effectively execute cardholder development campaigns, make smarter collection development decisions, determine the need and find the best sites for new locations, plan programs and services, align staff to meet community needs, plan facility improvements, develop consumer technologies, and invest in effective marketing and communications campaigns.

## **About CIVICTechnologies**

CIVICTechnologies provides a full suite of web services, customized applications and consulting service to meet the complete market analytics and geographic information systems (GIS) needs of libraries and businesses—from small and medium sized enterprises to Fortune 500 companies—across a diverse range of industries. CIVICTechnologies enables its customers to visualize data in new and innovative ways in order to deliver more effective products and services, make better informed decisions, build consensus faster, allocate resources more wisely, and implement organization-wide solutions more effectively.

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