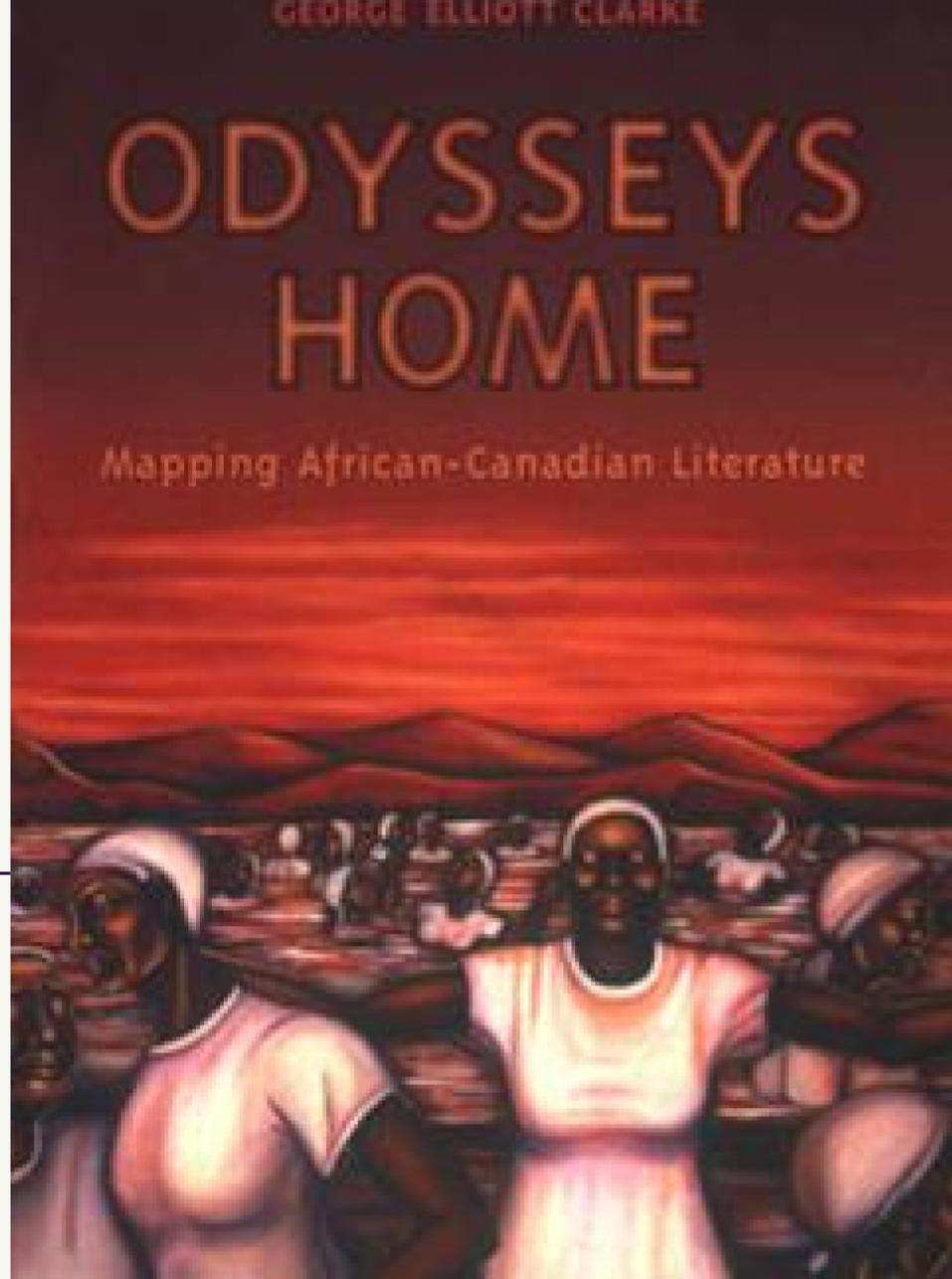


Find the Gap: The Bibliography as a Starting Point to Assess The Diversity of a Library Collection

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While new methods have emerged in recent years, the traditional method of assessing the diversity of a collection is to compare that collection with a standard bibliography. The project team used the work of a renowned scholar in the area of Black Canadian literature, *Odysseys Home: Mapping African-Canadian Literature* by George Elliott Clarke, as the basis for assessing the library collection. The bibliography in this seminal text was OCR'd and ingested into Zotero and then project teams compared the bibliography with the library's holdings, applying tags depending on whether the work was available in print, electronically, or not at all.



OBJECTIVE

The goals of the project were to carry out an assessment of the library's collection to understand how well it had been built to meet the needs of scholars in the area of literature by Black Canadians and to more specifically identify the "gaps," the authors and publishers that had been neglected over the years and could now be added to the library collection. The project sought to expand the availability of the creative, political, documentary and scholarly writings of black Canadians that have been insufficiently studied due to the difficulties scholars have encountered in accessing the works in question.

METHODOLOGY

The project team extracted the bibliography from George Elliott Clarke's seminal work *Odyssey's Home: Mapping African-Canadian Literature* (University of Toronto Press, 2002) and converted it into tabular data using anystyle.io, an open source bibliographic parsing platform. The title list was ingested into the citation management tool Zotero and then the project team applied tags to each individual title to mark if the title was owned by the library (in either print or digital format) and if not, if the title was available through regular channels for purchase as an ebook.

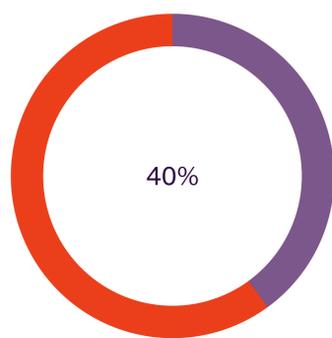
RESULTS

Of the 2113 items listed in the bibliography, 841 were not owned by the library in either print or electronic format. 172 titles that were not already owned electronically were found to be commercially available and were added to the library's holdings and five publishers were identified and approached to have their materials scanned and ingested into the library's holdings.

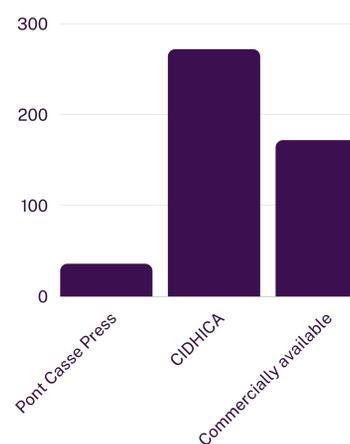
ANALYSIS

The conversion of the bibliographical information into tabular format, and the application of the tags, allowed the project team to "find the gaps" - that is, to identify the authors, publishers, or even geographical areas where the library's holdings were weak and to set priorities for acquisitions.

Zotero allowed the project team to look at the data in a variety of ways - for example to look at the set of titles that was not owned in any format and to find common authors or publishers from within that dataset. Once those were identified, the project team approached publishers directly to invite them to collaborate.



40% (or 841 titles) of the titles listed in the bibliography were not owned in any format by the library. 480 new titles have been acquired thus far - either through regular ebook channels or through direct partnerships with publishers.



\$30,000 of material has been acquired so far, with a total of \$100,000 slated for acquisition

CONCLUSION

Considering the diversity of a library collection must be done in partnership with the library's users, but at the same time, diversity work should not put additional labor on members of our library user community. Relying on the scholarship created by our faculty allows these scholars to point to the voices that are missing from the library collection and the use of more modern tools and approaches ensures that the gaps, once identified, are filled.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE? START HERE:

Clarke, George Elliott. *Odysseys Home: Mapping African-Canadian Literature*. University of Toronto Press, 2002

GALLON, KIM. "Making a Case for the Black Digital Humanities." *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, edited by Matthew K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein, University of Minnesota Press, 2016, pp. 42-49, <https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctt1cn6thb.7>

So, Richard Jean. *Redlining Culture: A Data History of Racial Inequality and Postwar Fiction*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021.