

Why You Need Policies



this information has been moved to <https://support.goalexandria.com/knowledge-base/alexandria-statistics/#policies>

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In addition to setting up Circulation rules for different types of patrons and items, policies also determine what kind of statistics you can get out of Alexandria. Although you may feel that your needs will be satisfied by the barest, basic statistical data such as number of items checked out for the week, month, or year—you may not realize the powerful statistics that Alexandria can provide. Here are a few thought-provoking questions to consider:

- What role do statistics play in your library or district?
- Will you be referring to the statistical data that Alexandria gathers for you?
- Would more detailed statistics be beneficial to you and how?
- Is there a way to achieve very detailed statistical data?

Statistical Reports

Alexandria has many statistical reports. The Super Summary report details an amazing amount of statistical data about your collection, including the number of titles and copies, value, number or lost and discarded copies, collection age, and collection usage. And you can sort this information by call number, item policy, and medium. Other reports will show the number of items checked out, renewed, checked in, and the number of holds placed in a certain time period. All these are extremely useful statistics; however, other reports can provide statistics based on combinations of patron and item policies.

Using grouped patron and item policies generates statistical data that will empower you to view your collection and patrons with fresh eyes. For instance, a circulation of 3,615 items for the month may sound very impressive, but if you were able to compare the usage of one grade to another grade, you might be surprised by the results. Further, looking at the usage of one patron group compared to another in a particular area of your library collection could also be very informative.

For example, if you were to use a combination of patron and item policies to see how many biographies were being checked out by eighth graders (since a biography unit is part of their core curriculum) and you discover that absolutely no eighth graders had checked out biographies right before the end of the school year, what could you do? You can take a very close look at your biographies to determine if the reading level is too low, too high, or is so outdated that the students don't recognize the names of the people whose biographies you have.

Setting Policies to Achieve Meaningful Statistics

Alexandria comes with two standard patron policies—Standard Patron and System Patron—and two standard item policies—Standard Item and System Item.



System Patrons/Items are used by Alexandria to set Lost and Discarded copies, etc.

Most librarians will establish their own policies. Generally, these are very simple, such as Student and Teacher or Book and Ebook. But let's look at how we can make these policies provide more meaningful statistics...

To achieve greater detail in your statistics, we suggest a policy (or Statistics Group) for each specific group of patrons or items that you wish to follow. In a school setting, this might be a policy for each grade or even each grade/gender (e.g. 6th Grade Girls). However, a public library might want to follow users from a geographical area and/or age (e.g. Norton Township or Norton Township Adults). Even if the circulation privileges of the group are the same as other groups, you should still create policies that are going to identify the patron groups you wish to follow. With more detail-specific policies, you can now see how many items are being checked out by each of these patron groups.

Item Policies Example

Let's take this idea a bit further by providing more detail in your item policies.

Perhaps you've set your item policies to general groups based upon the length of the checkout period: books for two weeks, reference with no circulation, audio-visual for one week, etc.

True, you could have a Fiction and a Non-Fiction policy instead, but consider being even more detailed in setting your policies. Instead of just Non-Fiction, think of the benefits of having a 000s policy, a 100s policy, a 200s policy, etc.

Now, your statistics become very useful.

So, what exactly is a Standard Item and who is a Standard Patron? All of a sudden, these designations seem much less useful when compared to the other groups mentioned above. Just think about how much more valuable these statistics could be if Non-Fiction was divided by the major divisions of the Dewey Decimal system.

[Link](#)