

Analytics Basic Overview

Analytics is the new way to generate reports about patrons, items, holds, bills, Acquisitions, and all connecting points. It is based in “MicroStrategy”, a major vendor of reporting and analytical software; our data is imported into SirsiDynix structures within an online-hosted MicroStrategy server.

That is a very complicated way to say that Analytics is accessed through a browser, using any computer (no special software needs to be installed) but then has its own unique data structure.

Due to the unique data structure, reports can be created that contain information from multiple sets of data. However, creating those connections requires a detailed understanding of our data’s underpinnings. Once created, reports can be personalized and run without needing to touch the inner workings of the report itself (similar to Template reports in Workflows). The report results can then be scheduled to run automatically, or downloaded in an Excel document.

Benefits:

- Results download natively as an Excel document (worth repeating): no need to copy text from a notepad and use “Text to Columns” to insert into Excel
- Report titles less cryptic, and reports can have a note with an even longer explanation of what the report contains and any special instructions for running the report
- Fewer prompts to run a report: some require only the library running the report. When there are multiple prompts, clarification text can be added to each prompt to explain what information to fill in, and when to do so if it is optional.
- Prompted reports can be saved to run again without entering information, or scheduled to run and email automatically
- If the report needs to be changed (add prompts, add or remove fields in results, change order of results), Admin user can do so without “gutting” the report.
- No finished reports to remove; if you get results that are not as intended, can go back and try again without needing to clean up the finished report.

Downsides:

- New way to enter prompts does require a learning curve
- All reports have to be created by Admin users before libraries can use them
- Relatively limited dates and times for reports to be scheduled to run (ex: can’t schedule a report to run every 17th at 5:48 pm)
- Data is only as of yesterday, not to the minute the report is run.