

From the Concept to Results: A Case Study on the Collection Development for the ODC–Opening Day Collection at Qatar National Library

Henry Owino
Qatar National Library, howino@qf.org.qa

Katarzyna Helena Dudek
Qatar National Library, khdudek@qf.org.qa

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From the Concept to Results: A Case Study on the Collection Development for the ODC—Opening Day Collection at Qatar National Library

Henry Owino, Head of Library Acquisitions, Qatar National Library

Katarzyna Helena Dudek, Acquisitions Librarian, Qatar National Library

Abstract

"A library collection should fit the mission for which it is created. The number of books it holds does not determine its worth." (E. J. Loveland, 2000)

If so, how do we create a national library, and how do we build its collection from scratch without making many mistakes? Since 2012, when the plans for the new national library were announced, Qatar National Library (QNL) envisioned as carrying out its mission to "spread knowledge, nurture imagination, cultivate creativity, and preserve the nation's heritage for future generations" through three functions: National library, university and research library, and a metropolitan public library.

This presentation will focus on the 3 years' experience of selection, acquisition, and processing of library materials, in a perspective of achieving the opening day collection. We would like to share a preliminary outcome of building a library collection in Arabic, English, and other languages in record time; facing challenges in negotiations (long-term vendors and single sources), logistics (building a library collection without a building), and business culture (visions, working style in a Middle East business culture/context). We will talk about our various acquisition methods (i.e., blanket and firm orders, donations, gifts and exchanges, spot purchases from book fairs, and personal contacts), highlighting both the challenges and the rewards. General statistics and timelines will be provided to elucidate the intended target and achievements to date. The systems used to support this mission are also highlighted with details enough but not to compromise aspects necessary for future significant milestone reports of QNL. It is expected that the QNL acquisitions program will more than meet its intended targets for the ODC.

Attendees should come away with an understanding of the issues and the processes related to the acquisitions of international materials. In addition, we hope to generate a discussion with the audience about alternative experiences and processes in creating a library collection from the scratch.

Introduction

Qatar: An overview.

The state of Qatar is a small (11,627 km²) sovereign country located in Southwest Asia, occupying the Qatar Peninsula on the northeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula with the capital in Doha. Its sole land border is with Saudi Arabia to the south, with the rest of its territory surrounded by the Gulf¹ (Figure 1).

Qatar is a member of the Arab League, United Nations, and many international and regional organizations. The official language is Arabic, but English is widely spoken, and other Asian and European languages are also used. Until its independence on September 3, 1971, the state of



Figure 1. State of Qatar (source: <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com>).

Qatar was the British protectorate but ruled by the House of Thani since the early 19th century. Since 1995 when Emir Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani assumed power, Qatar has started to develop rapidly within its governmental institutions, land infrastructure, technology, and education. Due to huge projects (e.g., preparation to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup) involving the need for large-scale migration of a foreign labor force, Qatar has noticed a fast rise in population² (Figures 2 and 3).

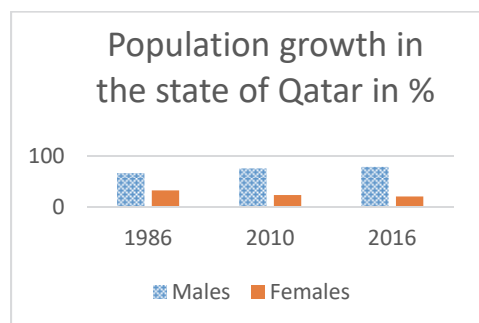


Figure 2. Qatar population coverage by gender.

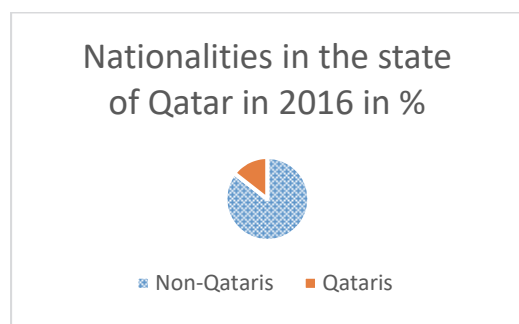


Figure 3. Qatar population coverage by nationality.

The three core missions of Qatar Foundation are:

1. Education
2. Science and research
3. Community development

Society and Education

In June 2013, Sheikh Hamad was succeeded by his son Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, who continued to improve the domestic welfare of citizens in Qatar through the establishment of advanced health care and education systems as well as expansion of the country's infrastructure. One of the pillars of the Qatar National Vision 2030³ which

aims to make the country a self-sufficient, sustainable economy with highly developed human capital (General Secretariat for Development, 2015) is to support education.⁴ To meet this goal, the government of Qatar establish a program of increasing the number of educational facilities such as nurseries, schools, colleges, and universities. Since 1956, when formal education in the state of Qatar began, primary education is obligatory for every child and free in public schools. Education in Qatar is diverse, with schools that follow the curricula of different international systems as well as Arab communities (Egyptian and Jordanian). There are approximately 338 international schools in the country. The country's national university is Qatar University, founded as a teachers' college in 1973. Several American universities have opened satellite campuses in the country, including Cornell University, Weill Medical College, Carnegie Mellon University, Georgetown University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Northwestern University in Qatar, and Texas A&M University. They all have campuses in Education City. Universities from Canada include College of the North Atlantic-Qatar and the University of Calgary-Qatar. Outside Education City, there is a branch of Dutch Stenden University in Qatar, University College London, and HEC Paris. On top of that, Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies is the graduate school and international center of excellence in Islamic studies that is under the umbrella of Hamad Bin Khalifa University, a member of Qatar Foundation.

Libraries in Qatar

Supporting Qatar in its development from a carbon-based to a knowledge-based economy by unlocking human potential (Qatar Foundation, 2014) is the mandate of the Qatar Foundation, a semiprivate nonprofit and one of the most advanced organizations in the region, the parent of Qatar National Library (Lux, 2014). Qatar Foundation (QF) was founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Father Emir, who shared his vision with Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, chairperson of Qatar Foundation.

The first core of the QF is developing through improving education in the country, establishing new schools, and supporting graduate programs at colleges and universities to build a workforce with high qualifications at international levels. For the



second core mission, QF runs a large research department and a science park with future plans to employ more researchers during following years. Higher education and research need access to international information and the development of a national knowledge base. Investing in research and community development is an important part of the new Qatar National Library, and one of its designated roles is to provide access to knowledge. The Qatar Foundation project started with Education City, which is the heart of six universities invited by QF from the United States. Those branch universities (Weill Medical College, Carnegie Mellon University, Georgetown University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Northwestern University, and Texas A&M University) together with Qatar University provide a variety of library collections, programs, and services. Apart from academic libraries inside and outside Qatar Foundation, there are also government libraries (established by the Ministries and some foreign embassies), school libraries (Ministry of Education and Higher Education Qatar report 2014-2015), special libraries (museums, hospitals, army, and special collections) and public libraries. Public libraries are established in all the major cities in Qatar, including Al-Khor, Al-Shamal, Al-Wakra, and Doha.

Qatar National Library (QNL)

Project

QNL started as a project of the Qatar Foundation as a central library to serve the QF community. In April 2012, the project was renamed Qatar National Library and was assigned three functions: National library, university and research library, and metropolitan public library of the digital age (Medawar & Tabet, 2016). The official Qatar National Library announcement ceremony took place on November 19, 2012, led by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser in the presence of the Minister of Culture, Arts, and Heritage. For the library building project (Figure 4), Her Highness Sheikha Moza, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, chose a spectacular modern design of renowned architect, Rem Koolhaas.

The concept of his design was to provide unprecedented immediate access to books,⁵ a reactionary approach to re-empower books as the primary medium of education and information in the age of digital technology. The new Qatar National Library building will have an area of 45,000 square

meters and will be constructed as one big room with three main terraces on which the bays will be placed along the general collection for academics and the materials for the general public. The 120-meter bridge will lead library users to the conference hall, the multimedia room, and study carrels (Figure 5).



Figure 4. QNL building, Doha, Qatar (architectural rendering).



Figure 5. Views on to the bridge inside of the QNL building (architectural renderings).

In the center of the building there will be an architectural feature in the shape of an archeological site with shelves filled with the heritage collection of Qatar National Library. The library will offer state-of-the-art facilities, technologies, and services that any Qatar resident may use. Included in the library will be public computer workstations, digital media production facilities, a variety of collaborative and individual learning spaces, a large children's library, performance spaces, a café, and more. A book transport system will help to take the books up into the height of the terraces, but additional space for the collection is offered by compact shelves in the basement. This book transport system is going to be connected to the radio frequency identification (RFID) system that will allow complete self-service



for check-in and check-out of library materials. The building is located in Education City between four of the American universities, close to the student center, Oxygen Park from one side and open to the main street and the future metro station from the other side (Figure 6)

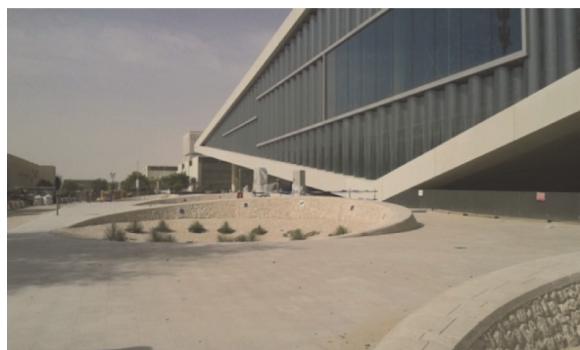


Figure 6. External facade of the QNL building (photo by K. Dudek, Dec 2015).

Although the new building is not yet open for the public, the Qatar National Library is already open digitally. It provides free access to its online resources for everyone who lives in the State of Qatar. The digital library is very important in Qatar, where the percentage of individuals using the Internet was 91.5%, which was ranked 12th in the world in 2014 (The State of Broadband 2015: Broadband as a Foundation for Sustainable Development).

Mission and Structure

The Qatar National Library is an exceptional example of a first fully integrated library that started from scratch.

The mission of the Qatar National Library is to spread knowledge, nurture imagination, cultivate creativity, and preserve the nation's heritage for the future.

While combining three library functions in one—the national library, the university and research library, and the metropolitan public library—Qatar National Library will have all national library functions defined by UNESCO: Legal deposit, national bibliography, ISBN center, special collection of heritage material, and an international research collection. The decision of library management is not to separate

the material from the different library types inside the library but to provide a fully integrated collection of research, popular nonfiction, and fiction. Free access to all levels of library material and one classification on one shelf will give everyone a choice and will enhance library experience and usage (Lux, 2014). The integrated collection will show and educate people to the possibilities they have, which they might have missed because of a distinct collection arrangement (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Collection display in the QNL (architectural rendering).

Qatar National Library will have the function of the central university library, focusing on the faculty and students of the Education City universities, but it will also serve higher education in the country. To support all level of education in the country, QNL has already started to work closely with school librarians and develop programs and activities for children and teens with their support. By providing access to international databases for scientific books and journals in all research entities in the country as well as public libraries, QNL establishes a national reference center concentrated on a unified service with diverse content for the user. To work together with all public libraries, QNL plans to develop a modern public library network in Qatar.

Collections and Services in QNL

All users who join the Qatar National Library may access numerous databases, scientific e-books, standards, and e-journals with one access code. Already registered patrons (20,911 QNL registered users as of April 9, 2016) may use the online public access catalog (OPAC) of the Sierra library system or go directly to the specific database.



Most of the material is in English and other European languages, but the number of accessible Arabic databases is still growing. A selected part of important heritage material from the library is accessible through the World Digital Library (WDL) and Qatar Digital Library (QDL), and the digital collection of manuscripts and maps can be accessed also through the library OPAC. The heritage collection of print materials comprises more than 2,400 manuscripts, hundreds of historical maps, and many rare and valuable books printed between the 15th and 20th centuries before Qatar became independent in 1971 (Lux, 2014). This heritage collection will be placed in the heart of the new library building to emphasize the role of preserving the nation's heritage for the future. To excite people to share news about the new Qatar National Library, librarians have started to provide special services and many active monthly programs for the Qatar community such as book club meetings in English and Arabic, reading activities for children and teens (e.g., baby reading, summer reading, and reading championships for students), book discussions, and database training. Librarians are trying to reach Qatar's diverse society and meet their life-long learning and informational needs.

Current number of e-resources (August 2016)

Databases: 178
E-books: 318,086

Strategic Plan

To establish a new library that integrates research, national, and public library functions from a scratch is an extremely challenging project. Moreover, to build knowledge capacity for a society in a rapidly changing environment where information technology is developing with high speed and different formats to fulfill the Qatar National Vision 2030⁶ is even more demanding. To achieve this goal, QNL is focusing on the special and general interests of male and female Qataris as well as expatriates from different language communities and cultures. To get to know all needs, librarians must communicate with the society by promoting the knowledge about the Qatar National Library, developing the network of libraries in the country, and collecting all legal deposits of Qatar and research output of Qatari researchers from all over the world. To ensure this development, QNL needs to

provide library services to research and education institutions in the country through the purchase of national license of databases needed, as well as keep up-to-date about new digital resources from around the world in all fields and monitor already purchased database usage. To fulfill all the points, QNL needs to build a highly qualified, specialized, and subject-oriented collection staff, which is going to raise awareness about the role of library and its programs, as well as to understand and preserve the nation's heritage.

Acquisitions In QNL—Background

Prior to the announcement for the QNL, a lot of background work and negotiation on strategic sourcing had been undertaken, but there were sporadic purchases of a single-source nature, especially from the antique book dealers who were offering collections that were suitable for the existing Heritage Library, so the negotiations and tenders progressed to signing stages. We need to add that for the first contract signed in early 2013 it took nearly 3 years from start to signatures. This contract was for mainly academic English language materials. For the sake of confidentiality, we will call this Vendor A. The second major contract was signed in December 2013, and this was for the nonacademic public library, children and young adult materials, again mainly English language materials. Again, for the sake of confidentiality, we will call this Vendor B. Other sourcing of materials has been based on specific individual collection purchases through heritage antiquarian dealers and Arabic single-source vendors as well as attendance at local and regional book fairs. This category we will refer to as Vendor C. The items supplied in this category consists of some of the finest items in the areas of first editions, early printed books, bindings, illustrated books, literature, manuscripts, and maps as well as licensed content for digital resources.

Materials and Vendors—Purchases and Resources

Both Vendors A and B are very well established and have been in the market for a very long time, but they have operated in markets that are very traditional library supplier oriented and well informed of the business practices and setup. For Vendor A, the options included using profiles for the approval plan materials, and the setting up of the profiles was undertaken by the QNL staff in conjunction with the collection development specialist from the vendor,



who took considerable time refining the profiles and answering several questions as well as ensuring that appropriate controls were in place to prevent undesirable titles being supplied. The second option was the firm orders selections reliant on the titles database provided by the vendor, which is flexible to allow for addition of desired titles/items not yet included in the vendor database.

As for Vendor B, the one option chosen was for firm ordering based on subject selection lists generated through the vendor's collection development section. These lists were then vetted by the QNL selection staff and refined ready for load onto the vendor's database in QNL's account. On some lists, QNL selectors added/deleted titles, and on other lists, the vendor made the final determination of selection in consultation with QNL Acquisitions. QNL acquisitions section then used these lists to complete the massive ordering and acquiring of the titles as identified (see sample of a day's volume of orders for vendor B in Figure 8).

Collection/Subject	Number of Titles
Anthropology	197
Biology	50
Botany	11
Business	282
Chemistry	17
Economics	112
Education	555
Geography	25
Geology	11
History	1,081
Home Economics	463
Juvenile Fiction	10
Languages	65
Literature	768
Medicine	397
Political Science	201
Psychology	236
Recreation	78
Sociology	453
Social Science General	10
Zoology	14
Total	5,018

Figure 8. Volume of single-day ordering transaction to Vendor B.

For vendors under category C, it has involved careful selection either on the spot at the book fairs or in book shops as well as using auctioneers and presentations from private and antiquarian dealers. For the databases and electronic resources, there has been very careful selection, negotiation, and approval process prior to licensing and then access to the resources. The QNL has focused on providing access to electronic resources at the national level as much as possible, and while the state-of-the-art building has been under construction, the library has provided services through the licensing of an extensive suite of electronic resources.

Implementation and Workflow—Hands on Deck

Overall, the contract between vendors in categories A/B and QNL worked very well. In the beginning, there was a lot of setup work that needed to be done to establish interfacing between vendor systems, technical specifications, and account configuration. QNL and vendor staff devoted a lot of time to setting up these configurations, and there were obstacles and challenges that caused some delays, but both QNL Acquisitions, Procurement, and Finance worked through these issues and completed the work and, as a result, have established some very automated and smooth processes. The efficiencies that QNL developed were very important considering the enormous volume of orders that needed to be selected, ordered, and invoiced. These successes would not have been possible without a good partnership between the two sides and knowledgeable, professional staff. The expected outcomes can be summed up as shelf-ready materials and the process involving:

- Electronic selection (for firm orders or profile based)
- Electronic ordering
- MARC-formatted export or confirmation records
- Electronic order responses/status reports
- Electronic invoicing
- Cataloging records
- Physical processing
 - Binding and strengthening
 - Property stamps



- RFID tags/barcodes
- Theft detection
- Spine labels
- Mylar covers

Titles selections for both approval and firm orders. This worked very well. The profiles and the subject specifications were effective at choosing the right books for the QNL collection. There were few instances where the book chosen was not right for the collection and had to be rejected. Also, the vendors effectively adjusted the profile to fit the budget each year, ensuring that the size of the budget was not exceeded or left unused.

Orders receipts and management. This worked smoothly also except when Vendors A and B received orders for collections outside the profiles, accounts, or other libraries supported by Qatar Foundation. In the beginning, both vendors were not aware there would be orders for other libraries using other funds of QF. These caused some confusion initially but was eventually understood and made clear. These kinds of orders often required exceptional treatment, and rather than the resources being stored to await the bulk shipment to Doha, they had to be couriered, which meant treating them as exceptions, but these issues were sorted out and fixed.

Documentation—Invoices and accounts; receipts and payments. The existence of so many subaccounts and item codes should have been discussed and clearly understood by the library staff and vendor staff from the beginning of the contract implementation. An extensive discussion about the various subaccounts, item codes, and their purpose would have been very helpful. Because this did not happen, there were some delays in placing some orders until all this became clear. This also applied to the invoicing. Initial invoices did not meet Finance criteria as they lacked the items codes required by finance and indicated on the contracts. This helps Finance track the types of resources supplied and their value, discounts, and possible rebates as per contract agreement. This meant that initial contract payments from QNL to the vendors were made long after the established payment terms. This occurred because new processes were being established for loading invoices into the Millennium system for

cross-checking orders with invoices and for approving invoices. Also, there were variations on interpretation of the terms of payment. While the vendors interpreted the data due from the dates on the invoices, the QNL finance department counted the date due from the time the invoice was released to their department. These requirements were not known beforehand. At times, the outstanding balances owed were high and a matter of great concern to vendors' finance staff, and both QNL Acquisitions and Finance had to respond to various correspondences on payments. In the future, we hope to focus on this area and have further discussion on the payment processes and requirements to avoid these delays and ensure both sides are aware of requirements. As the contracts progressed, however, payments were much timelier, and this issue mostly disappeared.

Shelf ready—the technical specification. The only issue here was the slow response and delivery times from the RFID company. When Vendor A and QNL staff were working to process and invoice all the books before the end of the fiscal year, the goals were almost not achieved because of late availability of RFID tags. Some of the RFID tags delivered did not have the ownership logos, which led to a makeshift arrangement to purchase rubber stamp logos used to supplement the requirement, which required manual placement of ownership logos. At the time of preparation of this presentation, there is testing of the automatic book sorter, circulation system, and the security gates for compatibility especially with the RFID tags. Every large undertaking involves a significant amount of planning, and this is no exception.

Language of the collection. As shown in the following table, a significant portion of the collection is already in the Arabic language, with a concerted effort being put into greatly enhancing the proportion of Arabic language resources in the collection.

Arabic collection overview. While it was easy to conduct a comparative analysis between QNL's English collection with some other libraries, it is rather complicated to do the same with the Arabic collection for many reasons. It may also require a lot of time and effort. The lack of Arabic aggregators with good services like those of large English language suppliers such as Yankee Book Peddler (YBP), Ingram, or Coutts-ProQuest in the region, make it challenging to source shelf ready Arabic collections. This is why a significant total of the Arabic books are still being cataloged in house.

Table 1. Qatar National Library holdings by language.

Qatar National Library Holdings by Language			
Code	Meaning	Record Count	Copies
ara	Arabic	127,260	162,184
eng	English	834,648	578,053
fre	French	8,616	4,286
ger	German	2,948	1,849
ita	Italian	1,883	357
spa	Spanish	3,418	1,258

- Total number of Arabic books within QNL (including heritage and children) = 162,184 books
- Total number of books as new acquisitions = 59,364 books (around 33,832 Arabic books still not catalogued)

It might also be worth mentioning that the volume of Arabic publishing is low and considered to be around 15,000 new titles (annually). This is exclusive of reprints of existing titles, which is common. A significant purchasing of Arabic books has been through the book fairs where on average books are comparatively cheaper.

Expectations, outcomes, solutions, opportunities, and looking forward. In the paper written for 2011 Charleston conference (Owino, 2011), the following observation was made: The acquisition business faces considerable challenge as the newly established library has to work within the corporate culture and the procedures of an established company with specific sets of norms. To develop a collection to meet the teaching, learning, and research needs of a nation and several competing establishments is always going to be a challenge. There needed to be:

- A learning process for the librarians coming from various parts of the world to appreciate why specific corporate rules and regulations exist and are (sometimes) different from the way libraries elsewhere

operate as well as an opportunity for these librarians and management to explore why procedures need to be adjusted to lead to provision of better services.

- Trust needed to be developed between the librarians and the management, procurement, and finance officers. For example, when the finance team insisted on having item codes included in the invoice lines, it seemed unnecessary to the incoming librarians, but this was a necessary component in obtaining data for future rebate calculations.
- Reputations needed protecting and credibility established and enhanced, leading to reduction of doubts on librarians' intentions, strengthening justification as to why alternative methods of performance were necessary.
- Process improvement initiatives resulting in introducing different ways of carrying out processes, cutting out redundant steps, and empowering the librarians to work effectively to maximize efficiencies. The fact that the new QNL building was some time from completion led to a consideration of the temporary storage both locally and overseas, where both Vendors A and B provided storage facilities offshore (at a fee) plus insurance for the resources acquired by QNL.
- Library technical services operations tend to require significant space outlays. The QNL space is provided two significantly large villas, famously referred to as Villa E & Villa G. This is where the offices of the technical service director and two out of the three sections are located (Figures 9 and 10).



Figure 9. Temporary QNL offices in villas.



Figure 10. Acquisition and cataloging department offices.

A revolving amount of incoming resources for receipt and processing as well as outgoing amount of resources to QF central storage is handled through this location. This central storage location came on board late 2015 for all of Qatar Foundation institutions, and QNL has been able to make a significant use of the state-of-the-art storage facility. Several large containers of books on several pallets were shipped at various agreed times. Flexible customs and other routine clearances made promptly have enabled the convenient delivery and storage of the books that were awaiting the move to the new QNL Library building. At all times, the location of the materials was tracked as being in overseas storage or as now in local Doha storage. As the move occurs, the materials will be cross checked for accuracy of supply. As the saying goes, “the taste of the pudding is in the eating,” so we expect all titles purchased to be among the currently stored items.

Conclusion

Though librarians in Qatar have already started to create awareness actively (e.g., throughout a

broad range of educational and instructional programs and services that focus on information literacy, early literacy, research skills, and using digital resources) about the role of libraries in society,⁷ there is still a lot of work to be done to promote libraries in Qatar as centers of global information and knowledge about the country and the region. One of the biggest challenges is to change user’s perception about the role of the library, which can be done, for example, by marketing library services and collections, staying informed and proficient with new technologies to guide users to get better research results, building a country network of libraries by cooperating with existing libraries. The first step has been done; the Library and Information Association Forum in Qatar was created in October 2015, and the future ones (consortia, partnerships, and interlibrary loan services) are underway. For the Qatar National Library, the opening day collection will be the big test because of its mission and three functions (national, research, and metropolitan library). QNL needs to provide access to international information and knowledge and develop a national knowledge base. This cannot be accomplished without building a library collection that fulfills needs of the Qatar National Library future users, so the last 3 years have been very challenging for the QNL (Figure 11):

The opening day collection project has been a complete success. At the time of this writing, we have met the target set and doubled the amount when both Arabic and English language materials are factored in. The success is attributed to the provision of financial and human resources and the management support to see this project successfully accomplished.

Table 2. ODC selective data summary.

	Overall totals	May to June 30, 2013	July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014	July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015	From July 1, 2015, onwards
Academic Units	166,553	73	106,344	25,606	34,530
Nonacademic Units	483,199	n/a	83,771	314,766	84,662

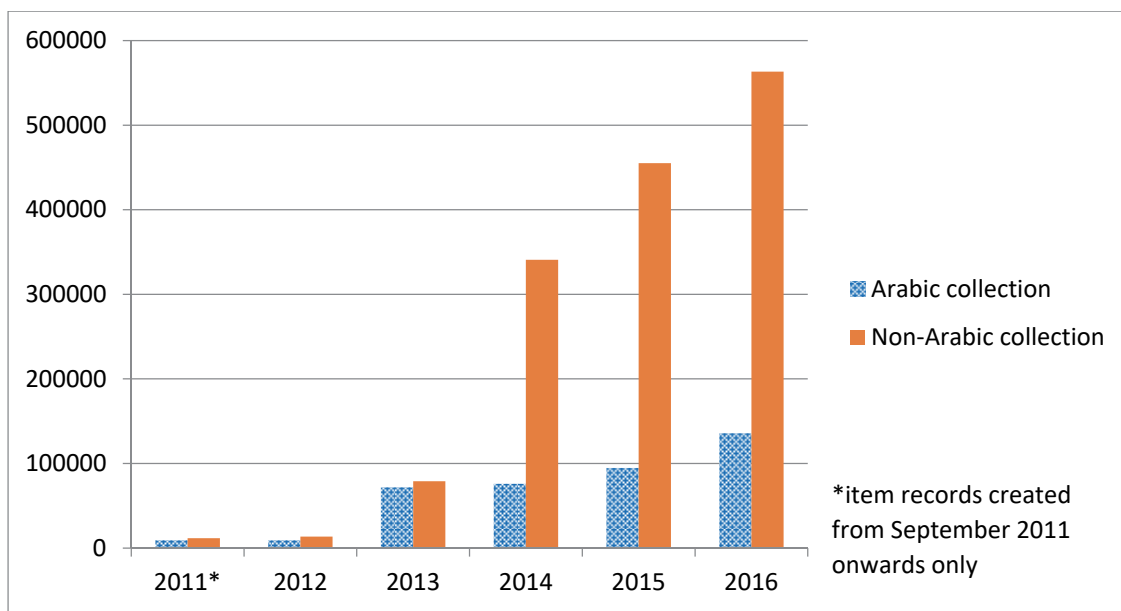


Figure 11. Opening Day Collection (ODC) selective data summary part 2.

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¹ Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qatar>

² From 369,079 habitants (33% females, 67% males) in 1986, through 1,699,435 (24% females, 76% males) in 2010, to reach 2,326,464 (21% females, 79% males) habitants in 31 July 31, 2016, where only 13% of the total number represent Qatari nationals (source: www.mdps.gov.qa).

³ First published July 2008 to build a country “in which nature and man are in harmony,” Qatar National Vision 2030.

⁴ Four pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030 are: human development, social development, economic development, and environmental development. In: Qatar National Vision 2030.

⁵ Qatar National Library Announcement (2012). Part 2. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/U5rEcYs2RDI>

⁶ “Qatar’s population needs to become fully information literate, easily find the information it needs, and have unrestricted access to knowledge and world literature.” In: QNL strategic plan 2012-2017.

⁷ Educational programs and services at Qatar National Library such as book clubs, language-learning classes, musical events, and craft workshops, as well as events for children and their families, such as storytelling, crafts, and science exhibits.

