A Comparative Study of Book and Journal Use in the Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

Academic librarians are challenged with development and maintenance of collections of research materials in various formats. Though it is largely assumed librarians are closely monitoring the needs of their constituencies as a part of the collection management decision-making process, the literature reflects only a small number of studies that focus on direct solicitation of user opinions. This project included a 22-question survey sent to all faculty and graduate students in a cross-section of social science disciplines (anthropology, psychology, social work, and sociology) in 2005. Responses from 122 individuals (32.1% of the faculty and 13.6% of the graduate students) provided data about book and journal use that have informed collection development priorities and reveal shifting patterns of use in an increasingly hybrid (print and electronic) information environment. Results show that faculty and graduate students in all disciplines depend heavily on library collections and, in most cases, prefer to access materials online. The relative importance of books and journals varies among (and within) disciplines and in accordance with the task at hand. Books are heavily used for teaching in all four disciplines surveyed, while journals are generally more important for research, especially among the more science-oriented specializations within anthropology and psychology. Even within these two disciplines, however, there are a large number of scholars who rely heavily on books and monographs. Indeed, the average number of books checked out per person each year in anthropology (M=54.0) is significantly higher than in the other disciplines (M=23.2). While the local collection generally has the journals needed, respondents were less likely to always or almost always find the books needed in the Library. These findings, and others, have helped shape ongoing efforts to provide convenient access to the books, journals and other items which are most useful to local faculty, students and researchers and resulted in a number of specific decisions, including a switch to e-only access for major journals in some disciplines, an adjustment of the ratio of spending on books and journals, and the relocation of foreign language materials for more convenient access.

Our analysis also sheds light on a number of broader issues and questions, including:
• What are the prevailing collection access issues? How might they help us to manage the continued shift from print to electronic format?
• How do faculty and graduate students differ in their use of the collection?
• Can this type of survey provide a framework for collection development decisions informed by the current research interests of local scholars and in tune with disciplinary practices?

The survey and its results targeting assessment of user needs can serve as a model for best practices in collection development for academic librarians interested in focusing on the needs of particular communities of scholars.

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Over time the role of the academic library in the higher education paradigm of teaching, research and service has developed, and in some ways changed, largely due to new and innovative uses of technology. In his recent article, “The Evolution of the Academic Research Library During the 1960s,” Charles Churchwell provides us with clear reminders of how some of these changes came about and our need to continually assess and adapt in order to meet the needs of our library users. Realization of this change is also specifically addressed, by the Association of Research Libraries in its’ Strategic Direction III, Teaching, Learning and Research which states:

“In an environment in which the context, methods, objects, and outputs of research are changing, it is critical for research librarians to continue to enhance their role as academic partners during this evolution. They have the knowledge, experience, skills, and access to the extensive range of content that will ensure that the research library of the future achieves its full potential for support of education and scholarship.”

Assessment of academic library collections and the study of use patterns is one way in which librarians can ensure effective support of the faculty and students they are charged to serve. In the past two decades assessment in academic libraries has played a critical role in transforming services and collections to create a user-centered environment (Wilson, 1995 cited in Hiller, 2001) Within this assessment focused environment, library user surveys have become widespread in academic libraries. Many academic libraries, have turned to using standard assessment tools, e.g. LibQual+, a product of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL.) More than 125,000 respondents participated in the 2003 survey, which was deployed at 308 institutions throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe (ARL website).
This tool has been lauded by many, including the institution of the authors (the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) as one of great value. It has provided librarians with a clearer understanding of our users’ habits and desires and has directly impacted library administrators involved in “big picture” strategic planning, particularly in regard to public services.

LibQUAL+’s popularity among academic librarians centers on ease of distribution and comparative institutional data. “Following years of revision LibQUAL+(TM) has evolved into a protocol consisting of "22 items and a box" (www.libqual.org/About/FAQ/). The 22 items measure user perceptions of Service Affect, Information Control, and Library as Place, giving academic librarians a broad view of campus library users and evolving changes. Beyond their own campus, librarians can compare themselves to peer institutions. In 2004 Hiller and Self, two leaders in assessment research and Visiting ARL Program Directors, compared internally developed surveys to LibQUAL+. They agreed that libraries that have established an integrated program of acquiring and using data wisely will be better positioned to meet [the] challenges of accrediting agencies (Hiller & Self, 2004). This supports Hiller’s 2001 research which stressed the importance of diverse user communities (particularly on large campuses) with differing needs for library resources and services. Hiller advised that “Using a standard instrument to measure service quality across libraries is a powerful one and deserving of institutional support. However, it can not supplant local efforts to work closely with faculty and students to assess collections and services. Local issues at each institution will not likely be addressed in a standardized survey tool” (Hiller, 2001).

User services are enhanced by good collection development and management skills. Developing library collections that are relevant to academic programs and ongoing research enhances the ability of subject specialists to provide effective instruction, reference and information delivery services to their constituencies. In many large libraries, the subject specialist selects materials for a specific discipline. He/she is also the provider of user services; reference and instruction and serving as the liaison to an assigned department, school or college. A general expectation is that the subject specialist will become familiar with the ongoing, long-term research projects and the information seeking behavior of faculty and graduate students. Tina Chrzastowski, UIUC’s Chemistry Librarian has learned a lot about her faculty and students’ needs through her concentration on use studies research. Beginning in 1988, Chrzastowski tracked patterns of use of chemistry scholars, following up in 1993 and 1996, which resulted in a longitudinal study (Chrzastowski and Olesko 1997). This study and others published by Chrzastowski are a seminal body of work, especially important to the strategic planning process in a changing library...
environment. Standing at the vanguard of major scholarly communication changes in the sciences and the UIUC library, Chrzastowski has relied upon the collected data to transition the Chemistry Library to an almost completely electronic collection.

The purpose of this study is to begin to build an in-house collection of use data, specific to four social science disciplines that will be used in making collection management decisions. In doing so, the authors, both subject specialists, will be better prepared as changes in scholarly communications continue and turbulent financial times (like the present) persist. Questions about the use of books and journals on the surface seem simple, but results over time will provide unique set of data with the benefit of locally significant indicators of use. This data will more concretely justify collection decisions when new programs or initiatives commence and will (hopefully) foster a stronger, more cooperative relationship with faculty and graduate students who rely on the strength of the collections to support their research and teaching efforts.

Initially, this project was conceived in the wake of campus-wide budget cuts which impacted nearly all library materials funds. Great effort was exerted to conceive a plan to ensure faculty and students would still have access to journals though it was clear we could no longer afford as many subscriptions. Serials prices were rising faster than any of us in the library or the larger library world could handle—without spinning and becoming dizzy. As a new librarian Sutton, the Psychology and Social Work Subject Specialist found herself in the position of transferring funds from her monograph fund to her serials fund. It was indeed a constant battle to cover serials costs. The recurrence of this scenario and conversations with faculty in the Department of Psychology left Sutton wondering more often about book usage. Discussions with Jacoby, the Anthropology and Sociology Subject Specialist led to negotiations to share cost for a few journals and databases—a new venture, quickly becoming the norm increasingly difficult struggle to sustain and to grow the collections in support of new initiatives and subfields. The prevailing question Sutton and Jacoby asked: What kind of book and journal use is typical within the social sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign?

This question informed the decision to do a survey of local researchers that focused on collection issues in a range of social science disciplines. A focus on user studies was not always or the only approach to justifying collection decisions as Mary Folster documented in her 1995 review of the prior three decades. The mid 1960s saw an emergence of studies that looked at information seeking behaviors of social scientists, but the studies drew largely upon research methodologies that involved a review of the
literature through citation analysis. Researchers concluded that while they could serve as an indicator of actual cited use, they did not measure potential use or background information gathering activities (Folster, 1995.) The 70s, Folster goes on to report, saw increasing attempts to design research beyond the descriptive aspects of materials usage and to develop profiles of users and their needs. The most notable among these were the Information Requirements of the Social Sciences (INFROSS) project studies, designed to assess the needs of British social scientist (Line, 1971). The intent of the Bath study, one of the major INFROSS initiatives, was largely the assessment of how information was retrieved and not on what materials were most/least desirable. Patricia Stenstrom and Ruth McBride, UIUC librarians, in 1979 conducted a survey of social science faculty in 13 departments on campus, including anthropology, psychology, social work and sociology (Stenstrom & McBride, 1979). Their survey focused on serial needs and patterns of use as well as the usefulness of specified services. This study further ignited authors’ interest in surveying the UIUC social science researchers to collect locally relevant data that could be used to trace longitudinal trends and might also be of interest beyond the campus borders.

The importance of collection assessment to gaining a more accurate understanding of the scope, depth, and utility of collections was not as often debated as were the methods. In 1978 the ARL Spec Kit #41, Collection Assessment reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of specific measures; user opinions was one of four reviewed. The description put forth indicated that collecting user opinions requires a survey of users via interviews or questionnaires. Three advantages listed were that it relates directly to the needs of the users, and thus to the goals or objectives of the library and reflects changing interests and trends. Noted disadvantages include a) users are often subjective, inconsistent and passive and; b) user interest may be focused more narrowly than the collection development policy. In 2000, Gorman and Miller observe in that “…user centered methods tend not to be objective measures that many would have us believe.” They modify their judgment stating that “…all collection evaluation can provide guidance in collection management, not infallible guidelines, hence [sic] action should be based on its’ need to be undertaken with this in mind.(Gorman and Miller, 2000) Library surveys are frequently large-scale, top-down exercises, or tightly focus on a particular discipline, user population, or issues. The present survey focused on a middle range between these extremes, gathering data relevant to a group of inter-related disciplines and focusing on local needs in order to supplement (and serve as a corrective to) day-to-day assumptions, which tend to be weighted toward the needs of the most vocal or most visible users.

SETTING
The Education and Social Science Library (ESSL) is one of more than 40 departmental libraries within the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) library system. ESSL is one of the larger departmental libraries with a collection of approximately 149,000 books, 1,700 serial titles and 557,000 microforms. The unit serves a cluster of social science disciplines including anthropology, education, political science, psychology, social work, sociology, and speech communication. Four of these disciplines (anthropology, psychology, social work, sociology) were targeted in this study.

**Anthropology.** The anthropology collection supports a four-field department covering archaeology, sociocultural anthropology, biological anthropology, and anthropological linguistics. The Department has recently resolved to “move from a top-tier to an elite program” and added six new faculty lines in the past two years, making Illinois one of the two or three largest anthropology departments in the country. Last year, the College of Medicine provided permanent funding for two new faculty lines to teach gross anatomy to first year medical students, building on existing strengths in biological anthropology (including human anatomy, adaptation, and evolution) and articulating with the Campus's strategic priority to become a leader in health research. The majority of the faculty and students of the department are sociocultural anthropologists, however, with a more humanistic orientation. The department has close ties to campus interdisciplinary centers, with members serving as directors of campus-wide programs such as the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, Spurlock Museum, East Asian Languages and Cultures, Latina/o Studies, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Native American House, and Ethnography of the University. Approximately 175 serials, four major indexes and/or full-text sources, and books from publishers not covered on the approval plan are supported by the anthropology fund, but collection relies on many other subject funds for support, especially the area studies programs. Recently published and heavily used anthropology journals and books are housed in the Education and Social Science Library, along with core reference sources, but most of the estimated 100,000 volume collection is located in the Main Stacks, and many important resources are located in other campus libraries. With one foot in the humanities and the other in the sciences, and tradition of in-depth scholarship published in monographs, the fund exposed to a variety of budgetary pressures and has been hit by successive waves of inflation—first as double-
digit inflation hit science journals in the 1990s, and now as social science journals have their turn. The main challenges are maintaining a healthy monograph budget while protecting core serials and keeping pace with a rapidly growing faculty.

**Psychology.** The roots of psychology as a discipline are tied to physiology and philosophy. Over the years it has experienced exponential growth, creating an environment with even less unity than most sciences (David Myers, 1995). On the UIUC campus psychology faculty and students have wide-ranging interests. The Department of Psychology is currently organized into nine divisions; biological, brain & cognition, clinical/community, cognitive, developmental, industrial/organizational, quantitative, social & personality and visual cognition and human performance, serving approximately 1200 students, with graduate students numbers fluctuating between 175 and 250. The Department of Psychology is one of the largest on the University of Illinois campus and is consistently ranked in the top five among competitive psychology programs in the United States. Research of the cognitive and neuroscience nature has grown exponentially, causing the eventual split of the cognitive division into three divisions focused on various aspects of cognition. Many of the faculty in these divisions, and a few in others, hold joint appointments in the Beckman Institute for Science and Technology where the focus is on human computer intelligent interaction research. Studies in the area of human factors and ergonomics, aviation psychology and artificial intelligence are a few examples of the work of these scholars. **Faculties in the Biological Division are also members of the campus wide Neuroscience program.** Other growing subfields in which joint appointments are common include psycholinguistics, language production and acquisition. Faculty affiliation with the Department of Speech Communications aids in the advancement of this research. Additionally, the importance of the role of the psychologist in assessing workplace issues has ushered in a growing interest in research that centers on the labor force and organizational culture. This has led to the creation of a separate industrial/organization division and a firm partnership with the Institute of Labor Relations. **Other members of the faculty and students engaged in interdisciplinary projects or study have affiliations or appointments with the Women’s Studies Program, the Asian American Studies Program, the Human resource Education department and the Center on Democracy in a Multiracial Society and the campus-wide Promoting Family Resiliency initiative [UIUC website].** The
Library’s psychology collection supports the teaching and research programs of the Department of Psychology with funds appropriated for firm orders and books received and reviewed through the Library’s approval plan. As the field has evolved the field of psychology has developed a profile that looks more like those of disciplines in the “hard sciences,” resulting in a strain on materials budgets. Providing access to about 400 journal title, with new areas of research and courses developing has been especially challenging in recent years as the serials fund has not seen increases that keep up with rising serials cost. Inflation increases experienced by the psychology serials fund has averaged 8.86% in the last five years. Negotiating and collaborating with other fund selectors to purchase databases and honor faculty request is a necessary strategy. With the closure of the Beckman Center Library a few years ago and the impending closure (after more than 30 years) of the Stout Psychology Reading Room, however, the strain to adequately support programs has increased. Some loss in coverage of more than a handful of titles appears inevitable.

**Social Work.** In the late 1930s a UIUC sociology professor with an eye on government and societal trends, began to assert to campus administration the need for courses in public welfare administration. By the mid 1940s the University established a graduate curriculum for professional training in social work as part of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Two years later the program was transferred to the newly established Division of Social Welfare Administration, to be administered as part of the Graduate School and the two-year degree was accredited by the American Association of Schools of Social Work (now the Council on Social Work Education). In the years following the School of Social Work achieved independent status and acquired new facilities. The curriculum originally was designed to give students the knowledge, attitudes and skills basic to all social work practice, is organized into four general areas: human growth and behavior, social work practice, the social services and research. During the 60s an undergraduate program was set up and later was disbanded. The establishment of a doctoral program in 1970 the social work program affirmed the School’s commitment to providing an even higher level of education in the discipline. [Campus Unit Histories, UIUC Archives] The mission of the School has morphed and expanded to includes a commitment to developing and disseminating knowledge that contributes to responsive social welfare policies, programs, and practices, promoting the values of the social work profession through its commitment to diversity
and social justice, places a focus on reciprocal interactions between people and their ecological systems, and an emphasis on the use of research-based practice with vulnerable and marginalized populations. Through research conducted in the Children and family Research Center, the School serves the citizens of Illinois by linking knowledge development to community needs, by educating students for public service in child welfare, health care, mental health, and school settings, and by sharing the School’s resources with the community [School of Social Work website].

A top ranked social work program the School serves about 300 students who specialize in child welfare, advocacy, leadership, and social change, community mental health, health care and school social work. The social work collection supports the teaching and research requirements of the UIUC School of Social Work. To this end, comprehensive collections are maintained for all areas of concentration within the School. In the recent five years there has been an increased emphasis on community mental health as a subfield, aligned with what is occurring nationally and on the UIUC campus. While the monograph funds are slowly decreasing, inflation rates for serials have skyrocketed, jumping an average of 11.41%, having a devastating impact on the ability of the subject specialist to maintain a premiere collection.

**Sociology.** The sociology collection in the UIUC Library supports the teaching and research programs in sociology and its subdisciplines, such as demography and social ecology, social psychology, and urban and community studies. In addition, the fund buys materials pertaining to general social science methods and topics. Current areas of focus within the department include: Social Dynamics and Structure, Race, Class, and Gender, Science, Technology, Environment, and Society, and Transnational Studies. Current English-language books, as well as the core journals in sociology, social science methodology, and social theory are housed in the Education and Social Science Library, but the majority of the estimated 85,000 volumes held in the field of sociology are located in the central bookstacks of the Main Library. Over the past five years, the rate of journal inflation on this fund has averaged over 10%.

At the University of Illinois Libraries, subject specialist serve as fund managers, as well as departmental liaisons, instruction librarians, and providers of both front-line and in-depth reference
assistance. As fund managers, we are responsible for both book and journal funds. Faced with serials inflation at or near the double digits, the librarians needed information to make informed choices about the right balance between canceling serials and maintaining a healthy monograph budget. The survey was intended to gather data about the appropriate ratio in each discipline, geared toward local research needs. In addition, we hoped to get some insight into changing research habits in an increasingly online environment, and use this information to provide the mode of access most attuned to the research habits of the disciplines served.

METHODOLOGY

The survey instrument was loosely modeled on recent surveys asking about usage of online and print materials, as well as previous studies looking at information needs of scholars. Specific questions added regarding relative usage of books and journals in teaching and research, and core journals and theorists, with an attempt to keep the length of the survey under 15 minutes for most respondents. The instrument went through two rounds of pre-testing by librarians (4), graduate students (4) and faculty members (2) from other departments. Some questions were changed in response to comments and suggestions from the pre-testers, e.g., a suite of questions about the search process were eliminated because they were duplicated elsewhere and questions about the researcher’s area of focus were added to establish a reference point for subsequent questions referring to library collection in “your research area.” Also during pre-testing, a question about use of databases/indexes & abstracts to find journals was eliminated when the non-librarian pre-testers evinced confusion over the distinctions between the various ways of searching for and getting access to journals. These faculty members did not distinguish between publisher’s platform like ScienceDirect and an A&I source like Scopus. To them, it’s all online access to journals, so we respected their collapsing of these categories, despite their importance to librarians.

All faculty, graduate students, and academic staff in the targeted departments (anthropology, psychology, social work and sociology) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign were invited to respond to the survey, with prior approval from the local Institutional Review Board. Departmental mailing lists were used to distribute the survey by email and a flyer was placed in the campus mailboxes at each department. Respondents were given the option of completing an online survey (n= 120) or filling out a paper version (n=2). The chance to win one of four $50 gift certificates from the campus bookstore.
in a random drawing was offered as an incentive. One follow-up reminder was sent half through the survey period.

**Respondents**

Overall, 15.68% of the target population responded, with a response rate of 32.1% of the faculty, 13.6% of the graduate students and 9.8% of the academic staff (Table 1). This response rate is inline with recent surveys on campus—15.4% for a 2004 library-wide survey of all graduate students, and 10.9% for a 2006 survey of all faculty and staff. In all cases, the expected number of respondents (from the Department of Management Information's Campus Profile <http://www.dmi.uiuc.edu/cp/> ) overestimates the numbers of people who actually received the survey. Faculty who were in the field, on sabbatical, or on other leave were included in the total headcount, but were unlikely to have actually received the survey. At least 4 of 24 anthropology faculty members were on leave or doing fieldwork during the study, for instance. Similarly, a number of grad students were away from campus doing internships or fieldwork.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Total Faculty</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Faculty Response Rate</th>
<th>Total Academic Staff</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Academic Staff Response Rate</th>
<th>Total Graduate Students</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Graduate Students Response Rate</th>
<th>Total By Dept</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Department Response Rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>182</td>
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<td>25.8%</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>297</td>
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<td>337</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
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<td>31.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Depts</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Total headcount and response rate by department and status.

Social Work is an interesting case, with a very high response rate (50%) from faculty, but very low response (5.4%) from students. The low response rate from the Social Work graduate students may be due to the fact that roughly half are enrolled in off-campus programs. Prior interactions with the off-campus students suggest that they tend to make use of using other academic libraries located closer to where they reside and take classes. Across the departments, faculty response was generally higher than that of the students or the academic professionals (the latter of which often have short-term contracts), perhaps because faculty have a long-term investment in the library collections and services.
When considering the overall responses in the analysis below, it should be noted that fully half of the survey respondents came from the psychology department, due both to the size of the department (265 faculty, academic staff and graduate students) and relatively high response rate (23.0%). Also, the small number of academic staff respondents precludes generalizing the results from these respondents.

SOME KEY FINDINGS

Overall trends across all disciplines

The faculty, graduate students and academic professionals reported that the Library played a key role in the research process. One respondent reported having checked out more than 150 books from the library in the past year, and the survey respondents reported a mean of 23.2 books checked out per person in the past year. Eighty-one percent of the respondents reported that the social science collection was very or extremely important to their research. As gratifying as this may be, the more interesting question is how the remaining 19% find information needed for their research and teaching? Figures 1-3 provide some insight by plotting responses to questions pertaining to how users access materials in relation to perceived importance of the library collection. Although the plots show clear patterns, there are no strong linear correlations (see $R^2$ values in figure legend) and correlations by subpopulation (i.e., department and status) will be considered later in the paper. Figure 3C suggests it is possible that those who don’t think the Library collection is important to their research may believe that “everything I need is available online” (to quote a new faculty member in biological anthropology explaining why he thought it didn’t matter what journals the Library licensed).

For the majority of the respondents (92.6%), the library was one of the first places they went to find books and the library catalog was used more commonly (M=4.43, n=121 with 1 being “never use” and 5 being “always use”) than search engines such as Google (M=3.30, n=112), colleagues (M=3.14, n=116), or retail or online bookstores (M=2.67, n=113) to locate the books they need for their research and teaching (Figure 4). The respondents also reported frequent use of interlibrary loan services to acquire books, but much less frequent use of this service for journal articles (Figure 5 and 6). This suggests that they rely primarily on either the Library or their personal collection for access to the core journals in their disciplines. The former hypothesis (reliance on Library collections for core journals) is further supported by the finding that the respondents subscribed to only 1.3 (n=107) of the core journals
in their research area on average. Indeed, 90% of respondents reported that the library “Always or almost always has the journals I need” while only 76.9% reported that the books they needed were “almost always available” (Figure 7). The most frequent mode of access is electronic (M=4.3), followed by photocopying/reading or borrowing the library copy (M=3.4) (Figure 6).

Overall, the respondents rely on interlibrary loan to fulfill their extensive literature needs and the comments suggest that the respondents generally have a high level of satisfaction with this service, though a few comments indicated that some individuals feel that the local collection should have all of the books they might need and they find requesting materials from off campus to be an inconvenience. Specific comments noted that access was not always seamless (“I wish that there where a direct connection from UIUC catalog to those systems [Inter-Illinois Library (sic) and ILL]”), but subsequent to the survey, improvements have been made to make movement between the local and statewide collection more seamless (I-Share updates).

As a whole, the respondents indicated that they were more likely to use the library catalog to place an online request than to come to the library to retrieve a book, making use of the longstanding (and very popular) service that delivers the books to campus mail boxes. 66.1% of the respondents use this service often or always, while 41.5% often or always check-out books in the library (see Figure 5). The value placed on the convenience of the mail delivery option is apparent in comments like that of a respondent who wrote “I appreciate being able to request books online and have them delivered via campus mail. That is a really good service and is critical to my teaching and research to have that level of service.”

**Use of Collections and Mode of Access by Status**

Not surprisingly, faculty are more likely to hold subscriptions to core journals in their research area. On average, faculty subscribed to 2.7 of the five journals they identified as core to their research, while graduate students subscribed to an average of .66 of their five most important journals (Figure 7). Figure 6B shows a similar pattern, with graduate students being less likely to access journals by means of a personal subscription. Graduate students are also more likely to rely on the online catalog (M=4.53) than faculty (M=4.18, see Figure 5).

**Book & Journal Use by Department.**
Respondents were asked to specify the frequency with which book and journals where used for teaching and research, respectively (Figure 8). Books are heavily used for teaching in all four disciplines surveyed, while journals are generally more important for research, especially among the more science-oriented specializations within anthropology and psychology. Even within these two disciplines, however, there are a large number of scholars who rely heavily on books and monographs. Indeed, the average number of books checked out per person each year (Figure 10) in anthropology (M=54.0) is significantly higher than in the other disciplines (M=23.2). While the local collection generally has the journals needed, respondents were less likely to always or almost always find the books needed in the Library (Figure 9). The psychology faculty and graduate students were less likely than the other discipline to find the books needed, perhaps due to the size of the department (n=265) and the challenge of having sufficient copies of heavily used materials on hand. Graduate students in sociology, as well as social work faculty and graduate students all reported that the Library has the journal needed less often than respondents in other disciplines (Figure 6B), which informed a decision to purchase *SocINDEX Fulltext.*

Quality of Library and Importance of Library Collections

Figure 11 shows that the respondents generally find the Library collections to be important to their research and of sufficiently high quality to support research in their areas of interest. The survey also included two open-ended questions eliciting opinions about the strength of the Library’s collections within their area of expertise, which will be considered in-depth in another paper. For the present discussion, the questions are listed below with a small selection of the comments received:

5. *Within your research specialization, are there any areas where the UIUC Library collections are weak, i.e., where you aren’t able to find the materials you need? Please specify the areas where the collections are insufficient.*

- I was recently putting together a syllabus on ethnographic and qualitative methods and more than half of the books I wanted to look at I had to request from off campus
- I would like to see more books that do critical theories of Whiteness
- Although there are books that address parenting and pregnant teens, they were often checked out for extended periods of time or not on the shelf. Additional copies may allow for more productive use.
• I'm starting a new project on Cape Verde. I've just started using the library and have found some materials I've needed but not all. I expect I'll have to draw on other libraries as I get deeper into the project.
• It could follow in a more timely fashion the Africanist literature published in France
• We have an extremely weak collection of foreign language and non-north american resources.
• Journals published overseas
• Our electronic journal access for psychology at UIUC journals is substantially less than UIC.
• health services research journals

6. **Within your research specialization, are there any areas where the UIUC Library collections are strong, i.e., where you can find everything you need? Please specify the areas where the collections are particularly robust.**

• Online journal collection is fantastic; this resource is almost invaluable to me.
• Women's studies; African Studies--but generally better for anglophone than francophone Africa
• I generally can find everything that I need--if something isn't there, I just order it from another library. Since I've been here, I've always been able to get references one way or another without too much trouble.

A few themes emerge from these open-ended responses regarding the strength of collections. Researchers in all departments generally have access to the journals they need, but some find the Library’s collection of monographs insufficient to support in-depth research. The need for materials published outside the U.S. and in languages other than English are recurrent themes (and particularly relevant to the Library’s mission to support international research). Partly, this an unavoidable consequence of the famously extensive literature needs in the social science (Clark and Clark 1982, Gould and Handler 1989, Ogburn 1996) but may point to a need for better communication about collection management priorities and responsibilities within a library environment were collection development is
highly distributed. For example, consider the francophone literature mentioned above. Who is responsible? Modern languages? Africana? The subject selector?

Another area mentioned as insufficient by more than one respondent are health sciences and biomedical literature. Health and human biology is a new and rapidly growing area of focus campus-wide and excellence in this area was identified as a strategic priority around the time the survey was distributed. The new health sciences initiative directly impacts the Library’s historical reliance on the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) medical collections. The University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign are members of the same state university system, however, each operates as a highly independent campus. For many years UIC and UIUC have shared a Health Sciences Library, a branch library of the UIC which is located on the UIUC campus. Though UIUC faculty and students, including a significant number in the social sciences, use the Health Sciences Library, all funding, selection and services are provided by UIC librarians. Not surprisingly, the open-ended comments from this survey included a number of statements indicating a reliance on the Health Sciences Library (the UIC collection) and stressing its’ importance to the respondents’ research.

Access to a viable health sciences/biomedical collection is a priority for local social scientists, especially within certain research areas. There are now at least 9 faculty in the anthropology department working in the area of human biology and evolution, of both past and present populations. Two of these are recent hires who were funded by the College of Medicine in exchange for directing the teaching all gross anatomy classes. These faculty have begun attracting more and more PhD students, and as the critical mass builds, this area of the department will continue to grow. Additionally, many of the faculty and students in the Department of Psychology and the School of Social Work conduct research which depend on access to health science journals. This is particularly true of faculty and students conducting research in the areas of neuroscience, psychopathology, well-being, language processing, cognition and developmental psychology. Similar needs exists for faculty and graduate students whose work centers on social work in the mental health field.

Quality of library collections by status. Faculty rated the quality of the collections in their research areas much more highly than graduate students, perhaps because the Library collections are more closely aligned to faculty research interests. In addition, graduate students lack the large personal libraries often
collected by established scholars and have more extensive information needs because they are working on literature-intensive dissertations.

**DISCUSSION**

**Limitations of study.** The overall response rate (15.68% overall) suggests there may be some bias in the results and limits the generalizability of the results, even locally. Most likely, we heard mostly from those who are very satisfied and avid library users, and those who are highly dissatisfied. The faculty response rate was (32.1%) was higher than for any other group, but still represents less than a third of the stakeholders.

**Relationship to recent library-wide survey of faculty and graduate students.** Starting in 2004, the University of Illinois Library’s Services Advisory Committee undertook a three-year program of patron surveys to determine attitudes towards library services, facilities, and collections. The first group surveyed (spring 2004) consisted of graduate and professional students, followed by undergraduate students (spring 2005), and then faculty and academic professionals (spring 2006). Results, summaries, and recommendations from the first two of these surveys are posted on a publicly-accessible website ([http://www.library.uiuc.edu/learn/assessment/surveys.html](http://www.library.uiuc.edu/learn/assessment/surveys.html)), but analysis was still in progress for the third at the time of this writing. Of the results available, the graduate and professional survey is most relevant and reveals trends that are largely consistent with our findings. Specifically, the library wide survey of graduate students showed a clear preference for electronic access to journals, a high value placed on the library catalog, and an almost balanced emphasis on books and journals as top priorities across the sample. The present study provides a finer-grained view of these trends, demonstrating the variation in the relative use of book and journals across departments.

**Longitudinal trends: Stenstrom and McBride Study.** There were distinct differences between the current study and previous research. Most notable is the use of personal collections versus the library collection. In the 1979 survey conducted by Stenstrom and McBride, former University of Illinois librarians, most faculty seemed to use the library to supplement their personal collection; 88% subscribed to one or more of the journals they regularly read. In a more recent study published in 2005 by Joyce Mayfield and Joy Thomas respondents ranked the Library’s journal collection as equivalent to their own personal libraries in importance as an information source. (Mayfield and Thomas, 2005). According to the results of the current survey, the UIUC social science faculty have a tendency to keep, on average,
personal subscriptions to fewer than 3 of the five most important titles in their research area. Another interesting trend is an apparent decrease in reliance on informal information channels. In their landmark study of *Information Needs in the Social Sciences* in 1989, Gould and Handler noted that across the disciplines, social scientists tended to rely primarily on established networks of professional colleagues to keep abreast of current research, but that this was becoming increasingly difficult as the number of researchers, degree of specialization, and sheer volume of the literature increased (Gould and Handler 1989:47). Figure 4 shows that, among our respondents, researchers in all four disciplines use the library catalog to locate and identify books more often than books reviews or colleagues/cohorts. Similarly, Figure 7 shows that the formerly common practice of requesting a reprint of a journal article from the author is seldom or never used, and the respondents seldom borrow journals from colleagues. This is a marked change from the practices observed by Stenstrom study of local faculty in these departments in the late 1970s.

**RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE**

The survey of book and journal use among social scientists has informed collection development priorities. The anthropology and sociology librarian took several specific actions based on the survey results: 1) restored a subscription to a serial which had been cancelled in the early 1990s and was identified as a core source by a number of respondents; 2) switched to e-only access for Wiley and Kluwer titles in archaeology and biological anthropology, and 3) relocated select foreign language serials from Main Stacks to ESSL for easier access to these titles, which are much in demand by the polyglots in the departments served. The psychology and social work librarian 1) subscribed to PsycARTICLES, gaining access to all APA journals; in the process she dropped two of three print subscriptions to an expensive organizational behavior journal, based upon the clear preference for electronic access; other print subscriptions are under consideration for cancellation; The psychology and social work librarian; 2) subscribed to MITCognet to expand coverage and improve access to neuroscience titles, especially reference materials and grey literature. 3) renewed a dormant agreement to exchange the French journal, *L'année psychologique: Revue De Psychologie Cognitive* with for the *American Journal of Psychology*, published by the University of Illinois Press. Both librarians have committed to beginning a more aggressive review of international titles that arrive via the EBO approval plan and spearheaded an effort for multiple selectors to jointly fund a site license for *SocINDEX Fulltext.*
The first question in the survey asked the respondents to describe their research areas – this information alone very helpful for collection development in that the specific responses have helped guide the scope and focus of ongoing collection choices. It also firmly grounded the subsequent questions in the research practice of the individual respondents. The survey also encouraged the respondents to think of themselves as stakeholders, with a voice and a responsibility.

FURTHER STUDY

In another paper based on other questions/different analysis of the survey results that we will be presenting at the EBSS Research Forum at ALA Annual in D.C., we will explore some additional questions of specific interest to subject specialists in the social sciences:

• What are the locally-defined core journals in each discipline?
  • How dispersed is the core within each discipline?
  • Is there any overlap in the core journals among the disciplines?
  • Are there differences between faculty and grad core journals?
  • Do the survey-identified titles make an adequate core journal list for the Library? Why or why not?

• What importance does our constituency attach to having books and journals featuring materials by and about classic or contemporary theorists in their areas of interest?

• What specific books & journal considered ‘most important’ by social science faculty & graduate students fall within or outside of the scope of the collection?
  • Differences/commonalities among the disciplines? Between faculty and grads?

• Do the faculty/grad responses to this survey provide a meaningful benchmark for collections?

NOTES

¹Graduate students is used here to include both graduate and professional students, the latter classification is used locally in reference to the Master of Social Work degree, as well as advanced medical and legal degrees. Also, those who selected “Instructors” as one of there additional statuses were classified as graduate assistants because in all cases the individuals also indicated that they were graduate students as their first-order status.
Postdoctoral students were included in academic staff for a number of reasons. This is how they self-
identified, selecting “Academic Professional” as their “Academic Status” and “Postdoctoral Scholar” as
their “Additional Status” on the survey. This is consistent with the way they are classified within the
Campus’ Department of Management Information, and makes sense in terms of this survey as both
classifications are typically grant-funded, research-oriented position with term contracts and thus have
similar information needs.

REFERENCES


93.


Hiller, S. (2001). Assessing user needs, satisfaction, and library performance at the University of


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**APPENDIX**

Survey Instrument available online at
https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/jacoby/Book%26JournalUseSurvey/BookAndJournalPrintVersion.doc
Figure 1. Bubble plots of responses to questions pertaining to how users locate books in relation to perceived importance of the library collection. Area of each circle corresponds to the relative percentage of respondents. Correlations between each question and the perceived importance, along with number of respondents are: A. n=120, R²=0.1879; B. n=108, R²=0.0474; C. n=107, R²=0.0176; D. n=112, R²=0.0011; E. n=111, R²=0.0121; F. n=110, R²=0.0037; G. n=112, R²=0.0179; H. n=115, R²=0.0074.
Figure 2. Bubble plots of responses to questions pertaining to how users check out books in relation to perceived importance of the library collection. Area of each circle corresponds to the relative percentage of respondents. Correlations between each question and the perceived importance, along with number of respondents are: A. n=114, $R^2=0.0595$; B. n=110, $R^2=0.0295$; C. n=100, $R^2=0.0072$; D. n=109, $R^2=0.0016$; E. n=120, $R^2=0.1237$; F. n=120, $R^2=0.0694$. 

Figure 3. Bubble plots of responses to questions pertaining to how users obtain journals/journal articles in relation to perceived importance of the library collection. Area of each circle corresponds to the relative percentage of respondents. Correlations between each question and the perceived importance, along with number of respondents are: A. n=115, $R^2=0.0857$; B. n=113, $R^2<0.0001$; C. n=118, $R^2=0.0252$; D. n=116, $R^2=0.0253$; G. n=120, $R^2=0.0111$. 
Figure 4. How respondents locate books (Q11a-h).
Figure 5. How respondents get books from library (Q12a-d, 15).
Figure 6. How respondents locate journal articles (Q18a-f).
Figure 7. Personal subscriptions to “5 most important” journals in respondent’s research area (Q17).
Figure 8. Type of material used most often for teaching and research (Q21,22).
Figure 9. Library has books and journals needed (Q14,19).
Figure 10. Books checked out per person each year, based on the two years prior (Q13).
Figure 11. Quality and importance of library collections (Q1-3).