Research Practices of Humanists

IMPLICATIONS FOR LIBRARY DESIGN, COLLECTIONS, AND SERVICES
What the Cool Kids are Doing
AND HOW WE CAN HELP THEM... OR, AT LEAST NOT GET IN THEIR WAY...
Quantifying Quality

- How do we capture the characteristics that define humanistic research?
- How do we “count” the qualities of researchers’ behaviors, beliefs, needs, and preferences?
Goals

- Hear directly from faculty
- Understand research behaviors, processes, requirements, wishes
- Identify & test assumptions
- Establish / reinforce principles
- Plan library renovation that reflects these principles
Background

- Survey current state of humanities librarianship at Hopkins
- Identify assumptions:
  - Old school & trendy
- Environmental Scan / Literature Review
- Examine previous inquiry:
  - Pathway to a PhD
  - Website Redesign
Pathway to a PhD

Key / Legend
- Orientation / Library Basics
- Research Tools & Methods
- Problem Solving
- Bibliographic Support
- Resource Acquisition & Access
- Advanced Library Logistics
Website Redesign

Total Participants: 39

By Year
- Freshman: 9
- Sophomores: 5
- Juniors: 11
- Seniors: 3
- PhD: 11

By Discipline
- Science: 16
- Social Science: 9
- Humanities: 14

The Sheridan Libraries

Databases
- by name
- by topic

Tools + Tips
- links

Search
- more unclear search title
- lack of diversity

Guides
- human support
- more search options

Ask a Librarian

Twitter
- tweets

Blog
- posts
Develop New Inquiry

- “Research Practices of Humanists”
- Small & Strategic
  - Part of a UX continuum
  - Doesn’t need to be a panacea
- Give humanities scholars room to express themselves
- Capture their stories
Recruitment

- Very small group: 8 faculty members
- Ensure representation based on:
  - Field of study:
    - Classics, English, French, Film Studies, Art History (Medieval, Modern), Philosophy, & Writing
  - Point in career:
    - Junior faculty, mid-career, later-career
Method

- In-person interviews
- Script that is specific but flexible
- Allow faculty members to take the lead
- Let their stories be told!
Questions are open-ended and will primarily concern how you conduct research. For this project our focus is not the substance of your research, but your processes and workflows.

Because we want to be thorough in our documentation, we ask that you assume no previous knowledge of your work.

These are the areas we hope to touch upon:
- Describe your research process
- Describe the resources that are essential to your work
- Describe an ideal research environment
Observations

- Elicit their:
  - Needs & Requirements
  - Desires & Preferences
- Behaviors & Statements
“...always...
...always...”
“...emotionally pleasurable...”
“...a book-length thought...”
Implications

- Space
  - Variety of spaces / diverse working styles
  - Flexibility / adaptability
  - Comfortable / spacious
- Collections
  - Browsing stacks for discovery
  - Interdisciplinary needs / proximity to many fields of study
- Services
  - Subject Specialist / Liaison Librarians
  - Greater librarian involvement at key moments
What since?

- Continuation & growth of UX Team
- Applying UX principles broadly
- Collection Assessment activities
  - Collection Size & Use
  - Heat Maps
- ITHAKA S & R Projects
  - Research Support Services: Language & Literature
  - Teaching with Primary Sources
Collection Size & Use

Outer Circle: % of N-NX Collection

Middle Circle: % that Circulates

Inner Circle: % Used In-House
Collection Heat Maps
What’s Next?

- Continued Planning for Building Renovation
- Reinforce Principles & Standards
- Present Qualitative Data Clearly & Simply
- Keep Talking & Listening
- Keep Faculty Members Engaged!
Got a question? We'd love to hear from you. Send us a message and we'll respond as soon as possible.

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Message
Thanks! And contact me any time! 😊