Annotated Bibliography on the Information-Seeking Behavior of Scholars & Historians

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**Introduction:** This paper consists of an annotated bibliography which is concentrated on the information-seeking group of scholars and historians. Approximately 40 relevant articles were located. For this assignment, an emphasis was placed on including those 20 articles which offered the best description of the information-seeking characteristics of this user group. A supplemental section contains 20 articles deemed insufficient for the main list. All publications have been verified as scholarly journal publications per the Ulrich database. All listed articles have been copied and are available upon request.

**Entry 1:**


**Official Article Abstract:**

"Longitudinal research conducted between 1992 and 1998 followed the technological progress of 94 academic historians at the four University Centers of the State University of New York at Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, and Stony Brook, concentrating particularly on their use and non-use of electronic information access technologies. A combination of mailed surveys and on-site interviews uncovered lack of time, instruction and information as the primary barriers to the use of these technologies, while fear of lost productivity through time spent learning and using electronic technologies also surfaced as a barrier. Academic historians nonetheless felt almost universally by 1996 that electronic information access technologies such as word processing and electronic mail were critical to their missions, especially when these technologies allowed for verification of bibliographic citations or documents in particular archival collections. Furthermore, while use of World Wide Web resources for teaching was nonexistent in 1992, plans existed at all four sites in 1996 to create home pages not only for departments but for individual instruction, and sites were in place by 1997. Critical success factors that surfaced from the research included the need for departmental mandates and support, as well as the need to provide specialized instruction and information to historians in their academic, research and administrative roles."

**Comment:**

The cited paper is actually a story about research conducted from 1992 until 1998 on the four University Center campuses of the State University of New York. In the chapter entitled,” Historians as Consumers of Information,” the author referenced Uva [see Uva in background articles] and listed Uva’s 5 points of information retrieval. Andersen also discussed environmental factors, which could affect the historian's search for, and usage of information. These work patterns were defined by Andersen as the process by which, “historians, in their search for information, move from topic, to evidence, and then to argument.” The author also found that 80% of historians used word processors but less than 25% used online reference catalogs. This
statistic was quoted by Wiberley [see background articles] but may be outdated as it is based on research from
ten years ago. The reader should be aware that, based on recent advances in technology, the results referenced
in this report do not entirely reflect the current scholarly usage of online databases for information seeking.
Based on my readings of information seeking articles, I believe that the current percentage of current online
catalog use is much higher than that indicated by the author. The author’s article is interesting as the data shows
a gradual increase in the usage of online reference sources for the purpose of information seeking by academic
historians.

**Database:** Google Scholar

**Method of Searching:** Citation Searching-Footnote chasing


**Entry 2:**

Baruchson-Arib, S., & Bronstein, J. (2007). Humanists as information users in
the digital age: The case of Jewish studies scholars in Israel. *Journal of the
American Society for Information Science and Technology, 58* (14), 2269-2279.

**Official Article Abstract:**
“User studies provide libraries with invaluable insight into their users' information needs and behaviors,
allowing them to develop services that correspond to these needs. This insight has become even more important
for libraries since the advent of the Internet. The Internet has brought about a development of information
technologies and electronic information sources that have had a great impact on both the ways users search for
information and the ways libraries manage information. Although humanists represent an important group of
users for academic libraries, research studies into their information-seeking behavior since the advent of the
Internet have been quite scarce (Ellis & Oldman, 2005) in the past decade. This study presents updated research
on a group of humanists, Jewish studies scholars living in Israel, as information users in the digital age based on
two categories: (a) the use of formal and informal information channels, and (b) the use of information
technologies and their impact on humanistic research.”

**Comment:**
The authors found that Jewish scholars generally seek out new information sources thru print media, as opposed
to the electronic format. Per the authors study, it was indicated that Jewish scholars seem to hold a distain for
new technologies. But, in reviewing the survey results, the authors suggested that a lack of rabbinical and
Hebrew material in the electronic format may be the actual reason for the seemingly distain for technology. The
authors also pointed out that the user group indicated an enthusiastic embrace of email. The author’s concluded
by suggesting that advances in scanning techniques would lead to a greater amount of electronic source material
for Jewish studies scholars. As evidenced by my ability to download a large number of scholarly digitized
articles, it is obvious that researchers and scholars of today are able to make very good use of scanning for scholarly research and information seeking.

**Database:** Google Scholar and then ACM Portal [portal.acm.org]

**Method of Searching:** Author Search

**Search Strategy:** Author Search in Google Scholar. Search terms used were:
“bronstein, jenny”

**Entry 3:**


**Official Article Abstract:**
“The information needs and information-seeking behavior of scholars and students in interdisciplinary fields has been studied very little. The few scattered studies available suggest that such fields may require striking and distinctive information-seeking adaptations by researchers that mark this area as different and very much deserving of research. Kinds of research needed at both basic and applied levels and with respect to both scholars and students are discussed.”

**Comment:**
The author discussed the benefits of using multidisciplinary databases such as DIALOG, especially the usage of the “Dialindex”. Reference is made to the Getty Online Searching Project, which is also authored by Bates. [see Annotated Bibliography]. The author recommended citation indexes as useful for research purposes. It was suggested that inter-disciplinary research would be of benefit in the information needs and information-seeking behavior of scholars. The author further suggested that more research is needed to better identify which fields would make the best use of scholarly interdisciplinary research.

**Database:** Eric [Dialog] and later ISI Web of Science

**Method of Searching:** Keyword Searching

**Search Strategy:** ? ss (INFORMATION SEEKING) AND SCHOLARS AND RESEARCH NEEDS AND INFORMATION RETRIEVAL
Entry 4:


**Official Article Abstract:**
“The Getty Online Searching Project studied the end-user searching behavior of 27 humanities scholars over a two-year period. Surprising results were that a number of scholars anticipated--and found--that they were already familiar with a very high percentage of the records their searches retrieved. Previous familiarity with documents has been mentioned in discussion of relevance and information retrieval theory, but has generally not been considered a significant factor. These experiences, however, indicate that high document familiarity can be a significant factor in searching. Some implications are drawn regarding the impact of high document familiarity on relevance and information retrieval theory. Finally, some speculations are made regarding high document familiarity and Bradford's Law.”

**Comment:**
Per the author’s survey, it was revealed that humanities scholars gather information via a “berrypicking” mode. “Berrypicking” was described as the action of roaming through the forest while picking berries off of bushes. This concept is used to describe the information search where researcher queries dictate a designated systematic search of online databases. The Getty study results showed that researchers placed a high value on using online searching, including the use of DIALOG. The Getty scholars found a number of relevant articles in databases considered to be remote from their regular interests. I found this article to be worth including as Bates is a well known humanities author and her “berrypicking” concept was interesting with regards to information retrieval.

**Database:** ACM Portal [portal.acm.org] and then Worldcat FirstSearch.

[note This article was challenging to locate]

**Method of Searching:** Citation Search-Footnote chasing

Entry 5:


**Official Article Abstract:**

“This study explored the perspectives and information behaviors of scholars in the humanities. The following general questions were examined: How do humanities scholars think about, organize, and perform their research? How are information sources used throughout the research process? And, how do electronic information sources affect work practices? In addition, the research also looked at two specific questions related to research library collections and services: What functions and characteristics make one resource better than another? And, how can the traditional role of the library as a repository for printed works be reconciled with the provision of virtual, unallocated resources? Participants were 33 humanities scholars from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the University of Chicago. Data were collected by project-based semi-structured interviews, selected case studies, and follow-up semi-structured interviews. Findings are reported in the following areas: (1) ways of reading, including chaining to enable reading; (2) collaborative networking; (3) researching and searching, including collections as capital, many states of primary materials, multitude of sources, access tools for speed and scope, diverse skills and strategies, generic searching problems, and browsing across collections and tools; and (4) ways of writing, including information management, accretion, and refinement, as well as oscillating and overlapping synthesis work. One of the last sections is entitled, "Trends: The Evolving Information Environment for Humanists."

**Comment:**

Brockman comments how the rapid development of new technologies is changing the information environment in a very dramatic way. The author notes that the information environment is exploding with continually added sources of scholarly material. Brockman observed that as the scholarly information environment changes, so do the increased needs expectations and behaviors of users. The author cited his study which showed how scholars adapted to, and benefited, from the rapidly as well as dynamically changing environment. Brockman, based on his user group study, concluded that with the harnessing of information technologies, scholars are becoming accustomed to faster access to scholarly information. In addition, this increased demand for information is forcing some scholars who are perhaps not adept at electronic data retrieval, to embrace and adapt the new technologies to their respective fields. Per my usage of Eric Online, Google Scholar, and other online databases, it is apparent to me how information seeking objectives of scholars are being facilitated by the usage of robust online databases.

**Database:** Eric [Dialog] and then Eric online [eric.ed.gov]

**Method of Searching:** Controlled Vocabulary Search

**Search Strategy:** ss (information seeking) /de AND (information sources)/de and (research skills)
Entry 6:


**Official Article Abstract:**

“This study reports the application of Ellis's behavioral model to the information seeking behavior of Jewish studies scholars. A qualitative study in which twenty-five scholars from four universities in Israel were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide in which participants were encouraged to talk about different aspects of their information seeking behavior. Data were analyzed using the grounded theory approach. This method consists of identifying incidents, events and activities and coding them into their respective categories by constantly comparing them to the properties of the emerging category to develop and saturate the category. Findings point to a strong relationship between the information activities used and the stage of the research or purpose of the search.

The proposed innovation positions of each of Ellis's information activities within a time frame or relating them to a specific type of scholarly activity. The proposed revision gives a comprehensive view of the active stages of the information seeking process through the information activities used at each research phase.”

**Comments:**

The author sought to investigate the information seeking behavior of Jewish studies scholars. The author conducted a series of interviews concentrating on the information gathering process. A flow-chart was developed to plot the information gathering process of the group of scholars. Browsing, extracting, and citation tracking were the three key information gathering actions examined. Based on his survey results, Bronstein found a strong relationship between information activities used and the stage of the research or purpose of the search. Bronstein also noted that, per his survey results, advances in newer information technologies and electronic sources have assisted scholars in their research quests. Bronstein stated how this has radically transformed the nature of informal communication between scholars. Bronstein found that his findings of scholarly informal communication, contradicts studies done by Wiberley & Jones (1994) [see Annotated Bibliography]. Bronstein also noted that his findings concurred with Meho’s (2003) [see Annotated Bibliography] information strategy of networking. This article was interesting as it demonstrates how, due to the existence of online electronic databases, scholars in the US and overseas, can engage in effective information seeking endeavors.

**Database:** Eric [DIALOG] and then Web of Science

**Method of Searching:** Keyword Searching in Dialog

**Search Strategy:** "ss information AND seeking AND behavior AND scholars"
Entry 7:

Official Article Abstract:
“This paper investigates the information seeking of humanities academics and scholars using digital libraries. It furthers existing work by updating our knowledge of the information seeking techniques used by humanities scholars, where the current work predates the wide availability of the Internet. We also report some of the patterns observed in query and term usage by humanities scholars, and relate this to the patterns they report in their own information seeking and the problems that they encounter. This insight is used to reveal the current gap between the skills of information seekers and the technologies that they use. Searches for the phrase “discipline terms” proved to be particularly problematic. “

Comments:
The authors conducted a funded user study to examine the information seeking skills and strategies of 18 humanities academics. “Citation chaining,” a key method for searching sources, was used by the test subjects in locating academic research literature. Another key search method was to check for a homepage of a specific author for published citations. One test subject reported fatigue in doing extensive citation searching. Interestingly, the same test subject inadvertently located a new area of research due to his persistent research queries. The author’s suggested that better citation chaining tools would be of help to scholars in their information seeking research efforts. I found this article to be interesting as some of the search methodologies mentioned above mirrored the strategies used in researching the LIS 510 paper.

Database: Google Scholar, Eric [eric.ed.gov] and then Web of Science

Method of Searching: Keyword Searching in Google Scholar Advanced Search

Search Strategy: used keywords “information seeking” and humanities scholars” in [with the exact phrase] search box.

Entry 8:

Official Article Abstract:
“As electronic text files increase in number and diversity, the problem of devising a more effective information retrieval interface grows more important. Future designs may draw upon cognitive theories at categorization and metaphor to understand how users interact with text - both paper and electronic. Relevant literature in cognitive psychology and information science suggests the importance of the user's physical environment in thinking about abstract entities, such as categories of documents. Empirical studies have established a basis for
understanding how we think about, file, remember, and locate text. Results from a study of 20 historians - an exemplary group in terms of their close studies of texts and the broad scope of their inquiries - imply the importance of metaphors for storage and retrieval of documents. The study found that metaphors and subjective categories were frequently applied to documents collected and created by these scholars. Two physical factors - spatial configuration and document form - were often considered before topic in determining document storage locations in the office. Developers of information systems should consider qualitative aspects of cognition in their designs. System developers might also consider segmenting the audience for computer interfaces, as well as designing generic tools that apply to all users.”

Comment:
This was a study done of electronic file retrieval by historians. Due to advances in technology and databases, this study would be considered a bit dated. Regardless, the author is astute is recommending that future databases facilitate user-friendly cues to assist researchers in identifying and locating relevant data. These desired cues include form, purpose, and quality. The ability to retrieve relevant textual summaries is also stressed. This article has been included as it is widely cited, in older as well as in more recent articles, by other authors.

Database:  Eric [Dialog] and then Google Scholar

Method of Searching:  Author Search, and later Citation-Footnote chasing

Search Strategy:  s au=case, donald ?

Footnote later found in:

Entry 9:

[note: maiden name of primary author is Stieg. Cited under “Stieg” by some sources]

Official Article Abstract:
“This article reports on a survey of historians and a citation analysis undertaken to revisit the questions treated in Margaret F. Stieg’s [see Dalton in annotated bibliography] 1981 article published in College & Research Libraries. It examines which materials historians consider to be the most important and how they discover them. Their attitudes toward and use of electronic materials were also studied. Many characteristics of historians’ information needs and use have not changed in a generation: informal means of discovery like book reviews and browsing remain important, as does the need for comprehensive searches. Print continues to be the principal format. What has changed is that the advent of electronic resources has increased historians’ use of catalogs and indexes in their efforts to identify appropriate primary and secondary sources of information.”
Comment:
The authors found that historians tended to place a priority on book reviews. Historians also appear to place an emphasis on citation analysis. The authors suggested, based on their survey data, of the preference by historians on the use of databases and other finding for systematic bibliographic searches. Dalton & Charnigo found that historians had a greater knowledge of indexes and abstracts than found in a previous 1981 study by Stieg. The survey results found historians embracing new technology while still feeling somewhat apprehensive regarding search methodologies and search syntax. An overall summary of the article would be that, due to advances in technology, source material is becoming easier to identify and locate. Thus, historians are finding that their information-seeking needs are being met along with a decrease in required time and energy.

Database: Google Scholar

Method of Searching: Citation Searching-Footnote chasing

Search Strategy: Footnote found in:

Entry 10:

[Note: Ulrich lists this publication as being an academic scholarly journal]

Official Article Abstract:
‘The paper reports on a mail questionnaire survey that gathered information about historians’ use of archival resources in the process of researching historical material. The survey population consisted of all faculty members (1185 prospective participants) in history departments of degree-granting institutions in Canada. Based on responses from 52 percent of the survey population, the findings indicate that historians rate finding aids, footnotes, and archivists very highly as sources for becoming aware of and locating information in their research. In addition, the overwhelming majority of historians want to see and use historical sources in their original format. However, the study also indicates that electronic access and digital reproductions have great, untapped potential.”

Comments:
Duff’s study found geographic location, lack of finding aids, and fragile condition of original texts, as the 3 largest barriers to accessing information. The survey found a 93% approval rating for the ability to locate source material via electronic means. But, interestingly, the authors study also found that historians, while desiring access to these electronic reference aids, still prefer referring to the original informational source. In fact, 85% of those studied stated this as a preference. It should also be noted that the authors were very positive regarding the advances in digital technology which has aided historians in their online information seeking of reference material. As an observation, my completion of this assignment was assisted due to the ability to access online material by electronic means. And, some of my
classmates, who are located in remote locations, were undoubtedly reliant on such access for their information seeking queries.

**Database:** Eric [eric.ed.gov], and then Web of Science

**Method of Searching:** Author Search

**Search Strategy:** Searched using criteria:
Author=(Duff) AND Author=(craig) AND Author=(cherry)

Article later retrieved from online website. Retrieved 3/2/08 from:

**Entry 11:**


**Official Article Abstract:**
“This article reports on a qualitative research study of the information-seeking behavior of historians. Based on semi-structured interviews with ten mid-career historians, it investigates how they locate primary sources, carry out their research, and use archival material. The study identified four different types of information-seeking activities, including (1) orienting oneself to archives, finding aids, sources, or a collection; (2) seeking known material; (3) building contextual knowledge; and (4) identifying relevant material.”

**Comments:**
While the author’s study used a rather small study group, the results and analysis proved to be informative as well as enlightening. The authors found that historians, as like other researchers, are often vague about their initial information seeking needs. Duff & Johnson’s study found that the research methods used appeared to be methodical in nature. These research methods, using print as well as electronic indexes, appeared to gradually steer the historian towards his or her intended source material. The authors noted that as those researchers acquired additional research experience, their ability to locate the desired material increased exponentially. This article was interesting as it shed some light on the information seeking skills, i.e. the search methodology, used to locate relevant research material.

**Database:** Eric [Dialog], and then Eric Online [eric.ed.gov], and Web of Science

**Method of Searching:** Controlled Vocabulary, and later Citation-Footnote chasing

**Search Strategy:** ss (Historians)/de and (Information Seeking)/de

Footnote later found in:
Entry 12:


**Official Article Abstract:**

“This paper reviews the existing literature on the information behavior of researchers in the humanities, in order to develop a set of learning objectives which can be used in the planning of information literacy training programs for this group of library users.”

**Comment:**

This article was useful for its current list of historian research citations. The author engaged in a review of past research studies. This review of past studies found that most scholars tended to place a priority on locating citations in relevant books journal articles. These citations were considered to be the most valuable source of references. The author points out that the information environment is in a state of rapid change. Within this changing environment, increased information seeking skills are needed by scholars to locate their desired sources. East’s study found that older reference material continues to be used and valued by humanities scholars. The study also found a preference by scholars for controlled vocabulary to aid in the searching of databases. The usage of Boolean operators is also mentioned as an important tool for obtaining information from databases. East cites the authors, Stieg and Wiberley [see annotated bibliography] in his observations. I found this article to be interesting as it ties in several information seeking concepts mentioned by other authors in my annotated bibliography.

**Database:** Google Scholar

**Method of Searching:** Citation Searching-Footnote chasing

**Search Strategy:** Citation found in:


Entry 13:


**Official Article Abstract:**

“Serendipity” has both a classical origin in literature and a more modern manifestation where it is found in the descriptions of the problem solving and knowledge acquisition of humanities and science scholars. Studies of information retrieval and information seeking have also discussed the utility of the notion of serendipity. Some
have implied that it may be stimulated, or that certain people may "encounter" serendipitous information more than others. All to some extent accept the classical definition of serendipity as a "fortuitous" accident. The analysis presented here is part of a larger study concerning the information-seeking behavior of interdisciplinary scholars. This paper considers the nature of serendipity in information-seeking contexts, and reinterprets the notion of serendipity as a phenomenon arising from both conditions and strategies - as both a purposive and a non-purposive component of information seeking and related knowledge acquisition.”

**Comment:**

The authors engaged in a study of 45 academic historians. As a result of the study, the authors concluded that the art of “fortuitous discovery” or creative research methods, should not be discounted in the course of information seeking. Foster & Ford cited Delgadillo and Lynch [see Background Article] in confirming the value of serendipity in the quest of research material by humanities scholars. This artistic stimulation, or thinking “outside of the box” is cited by the author as a method of assisting the scholar in locating new informational sources. Foster & Ford found that, based on their study results, that those scholars who mentally ignored identification in a certain discipline, were able to more effectively keep an open attitude towards using new search term methodologies and/or databases.

**Database:** Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ABI/Inform Global

**Method of Searching:** Keyword Searching, and later Citation-Footnote chasing

**Search Strategy:** “information seeking” and “serendipity”

Footnote later found in:


**Entry 14:**


**Official Article Abstract:**

“Humanities scholars often locate literature sources by following bibliographic references from documents already known to them or to their colleagues. In contrast, they tend not to make regular use of formal bibliographic tools. The soundness of this approach resides in the scholars’ familiarity with the literature of their specialization, the role of the literature especially primary sources-in humanities scholarship, the importance of peer influence, and vocabulary softness on the humanities. An evaluation of the humanist’s preferred approach, based on following bibliographic references from documents known to be relevant to twelve scholarly humanities questions, revealed that the approach compliments, and in some ways surpasses, more formal approaches by identifying relevant literature not covered by standard bibliographic tools and by providing a more appropriate level of analytic access than the formal bibliographic apparatus. The following of bibliographic references depends critically, however, on the identification, of appropriate source documents.”
Comment:
This article mirrors the pattern observed while researching the scholarly articles for inclusion in this [LIS 510 course] annotated bibliography. In terms of the information-seeking scholarly group, a sizable number of scholarly authors appear to routinely cite other scholarly authors whose works are either present or related to the same subject. Green’s article contains a number of citations that are present in other topically related articles.

Database: Google Scholar, then Eric Online [eric.ed.gov], and Web of Science

Method of Searching: Citation Searching-Footnote chasing

Search Strategy: Footnote found in:

Entry 15:

Official Article Abstract:
“The object of the explorative investigation was to study the information-seeking behaviour and information needs of scholars in the humanities from a holistic perspective. Focused interviewing was used on 64 randomly selected scholars. The results of the investigation show that the scholars in the humanities do not have a homogeneous information-seeking behaviour or homogeneous information needs. Variations from discipline to discipline can be seen, especially in scholars doing research in linguistics or languages.”

Comment:
The author’s study found the existence of two main types of information-seeking among humanities researchers. Those researchers familiar with the subject conducted their research in a very specific manner. And those researchers not familiar with the subject conducted their research in a broader fashion. Both forms of research involved extensive chain searching of bibliographies and citations. These findings are rather interesting as they mirror some of the efforts used to locate the articles obtained for the LIS 510 assignment. The survey results also found a majority of interviewees expressing a desire for additional user education in the areas of library usage and information retrieval. One can speculate that an important factor for this request for continuing education may be the recent rapid technological advances in information technology impacting database retrieval systems.

Database: Google Scholar

Method of Searching: Citation Searching-Footnote chasing

Search Strategy: Footnote found in:
Entry 16:


Official Article Abstract:
This paper develops a conceptual framework for the description of types and levels of information sharing in relation to document retrieval in academic communities. The concepts of strategic information sharing, paradigmatic information sharing, directive information sharing, and social information sharing are introduced to describe differences in the goals and purposes of information sharing in different groups and contexts of interaction. The study consisted of 44 academic scholars in 4 different disciplines.

Comment:
As background information, the author advises the reader how past studies in scholarly information seeking have established that researchers prefer informal information sources and channels over formal searches. We are also advised that information sharing is as omnipresent a method of information acquisition in academic environments as is information encountering. The author’s study found that some scholars are super-sharers. These super-sharers, depending on the extent of their desire for collective seeking, regularly engage in various levels of formal and informal levels of networking and sharing. The author defines this information sharing as paradigmatic information sharing.

Database: Google Scholar & OCLC Worldcat

Method of Searching: Citation Searching-Footnote chasing

Search Strategy: Footnote found in:

Article later located at author’s website: (www.info.uta.fi/talja/)

Entry 17:


Official Article Abstract:
“Previous research has shown that there are major differences in the search methods used in different disciplines, and that the use of electronic journals and databases likewise varies according to domain. Previous studies have not, however, explored whether, or how, this variation is possibly related to factors such as domain size, the degree of scatter in a domain or domain-specific relevance criteria. The aim of this paper is to contribute to the development of a domain analytic approach for explaining the use and non-use of e-journals and databases. We identify and define factors to account for disciplinary differences in e-journal use, outline hypotheses to be tested more rigorously in future research, and test them initially on a limited data set. The
empirical data was gathered as a part of a wider qualitative study exploring scholars' use of networked resources in… literature/cultural studies, as well as history. The findings suggest that e-journals and databases are likely to be used most heavily in fields in which directed searching is the dominant search method and topical relevance the primary relevance type, and less in fields in which browsing and chaining are the dominant search methods…”

Comment:
The author’s research into past user studies shows that usage of e-journals and electronic systems is dependent upon the scholar’s familiarity with, and acceptance of, digital source material. The authors cite Bates regarding the various patterns of scholarly information seeking. It is suggested that e-journals and databases are more likely to be used in fields which “topical relevance” is the “primary relevance criterion.” The author’s also explained how the “professional orientations” of scholars vary within each field. It is suggested that information seeking strategies and e-journal usage are heavily influenced by a number of factors, including whether the scholar is approaching the task as a teacher vs. researcher. Interestingly, the authors noted that internationally oriented historians and scholars tended to heavily use the internet for source material. Per the study, those historians who indicated a low interest in e-journals and databases did so based on their inability to locate relevant source material as identified in their citation sources. This illustrates the continued need for digitization efforts to increase the amount of scholarly material available online. In selecting this article, I was influenced by Professor Talja’s global perspective on the needs of information seeking scholars. She teaches at the University of Finland.

Database:  Web of Science

Method of Searching:  Author Search

Search Strategy: Used search query of:  Author=(Talja) AND Author=(Maula)

Entry 18:


Accessed from: http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/544220.544222

Official Article Abstract:

“This paper describes the first phase of an international project that is exploring how historians locate primary resource materials in the digital age, what they are teaching their Ph.D. students about finding research materials, and what archivists are doing to facilitate access to these materials. Preliminary findings are presented from a survey of 300 historians studying American History from leading institutions of higher education in the U.S. Tentative conclusions indicate the need to provide multiple pathways of access to historical research materials including paper-based approaches and newer digital ones. The need for user education, especially in regard to electronic search methodologies is indicated.”
Comment:
The author used a large survey of 300 historians. The survey found that as a user group, historians are highly respected. The study found that historians rely on citations in printed sources, printed bibliographies, printed finding aids, and printed repository guides. The author noted that recent advances in digital technologies, within the last 3-4 years, have resulted in a number of print sources being made available online in an electronic format.

The survey also found a strong inclination by the historians to make use of online finding aids. These finding aids included public access catalog or OPAC’s, use of OCLC and RLIN, as well as search engines such as Google Scholar. The study was summarized with the observation that the flow of information (print & electronic) is increasing and historians need to make use of all available tools for their information seeking tasks. The study also noted that many historians appeared to be unaware of EAD (encoded archival description) finding aids. I found this article to be informative regarding its assessment of how historians are gradually becoming more adept with the use of online finding aids and catalogues. It is apparent that the author has taken a very careful look at how online tools are helping to facilitate the information seeking objectives of historians.

Database: Google Scholar, then Portal, and Worldcat

Method of Searching: Author Search

Search Strategy: Used author specific search query: Author=tibbo,h

Note: Author’s article later found on Portal online.

Entry 19:

*RQ*, 34 (2), 203-216.

Official Article Abstract:

“Studies of the research methods of academic humanities scholars indicate that they typically work alone and interact with research materials with a 'grazing' methodology. They prefer to use references in primary sources rather than bibliographic tools or other secondary services. The portrait of the humanities scholar that was drawn by Stone in 1982 included the characteristics of working alone, needing to browse collections, and adopting a variety of approaches to identifying material. A review of the 1983-1992 literature suggests that a more complete understanding is now possible of the information needs and uses, and of the information-seeking behavior, of this library clientele. A current portrait of the humanities scholar suggests that this client group is more diverse than previously assumed.”

Comment:
As background for this article, the author did an extensive review of humanities scholarly literature for the time period primarily covering 1983-1992. Her conclusions were as follows: Scholarly researchers are not adverse to learning new computer skills for use in database and OPAC access. They prefer to emotionally “graze” rather than “jump” when it comes to discovering new source material. Watson quoted Wiberley & Jones [see annotated bibliography] and commented on how scholars, when necessary, have no hesitation to contact reference librarians. Watson also emphasized that scholars are open minded regarding new technologies and
would welcome time saving reference tools. This article, while a bit dated, offers an interesting “window in time” for an analysis of the user group of humanities scholars and how they have been open-minded towards new time saving databases and OPAC’s. Per Watson’s article, it is obvious that humanities scholars have been, and continue to be, interested in learning how to use any reference tool which will further their information-seeking goals.

**Database:** Eric [Dialog] and later Eric Online

**Method of Searching:** Keyword Searching, later Citation Search-Footnote chasing

**Search Strategy:** ss Information()Needs and Humanities()Schnolars


**Entry 20:**


**Official Article Abstract:**

“This paper describes how humanists in a small, interdisciplinary group seek information. The humanists confirm findings of previous research, although with significant variations. Humanists ignore online databases and seldom consult reference librarians, but they do rely on archivists and special collections librarians. They limit use of formal bibliography to one or two sources and employ it intensively only when exploring new topics. Often they disregard bibliography and find information by going to the person or location that can supply it. The paper concludes with questions for future research and suggestions for library practice.”

**Comment:**

The authors quoted earlier studies to support his argument that scholars tend to rely on references in publications, communication with colleagues, and formal bibliography research. The authors found that the survey group displayed a great deal of expertise in the known literature of their field. Among the survey group, a number of the scholars were found to be in the process of pursuing research projects requiring interpretation of documented sources. The authors noted that the survey group made heavy usage of computers for word processing. The reader should note that one of the author’s findings, limited usage of online databases by the survey group, has changed with time. The authors do state that computer usage was expected to increase over time. This article was interesting to read as it apparently predicted the eventual increased usage of computers as a tool for information seeking.

**Database:** Web of Science and Google Scholar

**Method of Searching:** Author Search

**Search Strategy:** Author=(Wiberley) AND Author=(Jones)
Background Articles

Citation 1:


Official Article Abstract:

“Based on the results of a two-year study of online searching by humanities scholars, conducted by the Getty Art History Information Program, implications are drawn for the design of information products for the humanities. Scientists and humanities scholars not only have different kinds of information needs, they also relate to their own literatures in fundamentally different ways. As a result, humanities researchers need information products that do not arise out of the conventional assumptions and framework that have produced the familiar databases and other information products in the sciences and industry. These characteristic differences of humanities scholars are first discussed; then design implications are considered in the following areas: design and content of databases, indexing vocabulary in humanities resources, and interfaces and command languages.”

Database: Google Advanced

Method of Searching: citation search-Footnote chasing

Search Strategy: Footnote found in:


Citation 2:


Official Article Abstract:

“Use of online databases by humanities scholars searching as end-users was monitored in a 2-year project conducted by the Getty Art History Information Program. Visiting scholars at the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities in Santa Monica, California were offered the opportunity to do unlimited subsidized searching of DIALOG databases. This third report from the project presents results of interviews conducted with the scholars regarding their experiences with searching, the role the searching took in their broader research activities, and their attitudes about the future of online searching in the humanities. Scholars found the experience stimulating and novel, with comments ranging from its "addictive" properties to a "Sorcerer’s Apprentice" quality to complaints about the "industrialization of scholarship." Generally, the scholars saw DIALOG searching as supplementing their usual research methods, and not changing them in a fundamental way. Online searching was seen as particularly useful for interdisciplinary research, and as possibly setting a new standard for the extent of literature that should be reviewed. Identified problems were about equally
divided between difficulties with the search interface and lack of desired types of resources. All foresaw online searching being used in the future by arts and humanities scholars.”

Comment:
The Getty survey results concluded a general disdain for the complex DIALOG interface. There was also a complaint regarding the unavailability of some resources within DIALOG. Positive comments were received regarding the greater ease of interdisciplinary research online. The scholars generally felt that DIALOG would supplement their online searching and would facilitate a positive addition to their current and projected research behavior. Bates concluded by suggesting the scholars appeared to have a learning curve for usage of DIALOG but felt that usage of this online resource would exponentially increase with time. Despite the age of this article, I decided to include this article as Dialog was an important aspect of my class. My experience in learning how to use Dialog seems to mirror the author’s survey results. These results indicated a learning curve for new Dialog users. This article showed an upward trend as scholars became aware of new database technology and sought to take advantage of these tools. The surveyed scholars felt that databases such as Dialog could assist them in advancing their information seeking objectives.

Database: Eric [Dialog] and then Web of Science

Method of Searching: used keyword search

Search Strategy: *ss getty and online and research and project

Citation 3:


Official Article Abstract:
“This article describes a study of 20 American historians that was conducted in order to better understand the nature of research in history. Respondents were asked about their choice of research topics, specific projects in progress, use of archives, categorization of materials collected, writing habits, and use of computers. Suggestions for future study of historians are offered and implications for libraries are explored.”

Comments:
The author’s study found an almost universal preference to organize topics. These topics and notes were typically sequenced in a linear and/or hierarchical order appropriate for the type of document being composed. Case found that his study group’s research investigations were chosen less by sources and more by identified questions or problems. Case suggests that more in-depth studies of scholarly information needs, lies in further probing of their specific research activities. This author’s article, while admittedly a dated text, has been cited by the majority of the sources in this annotated bibliography.

Database: Eric [eric.ed.gov] and Dialog

Method of Searching: used controlled vocabulary (descriptors) in Dialog
Citation 4:

Official Article Abstract:
This paper examines how history graduate students at one university seek information and how they use the university library in their information-seeking process. The general question framing the study was whether graduate students in history demonstrate the same information-seeking behavior as established scholars. Related questions explored the use of new technologies and the reliance that history graduate students place on reference librarians and librarians in special collections.

Database: Google Advanced

Method of Searching: citation-Footnote chasing

Search Strategy: Footnote found in:

Citation 5:

Official Article Abstract:
“The present study results… users will take advantage of digital resources and of network, data, and support services where resources and services are readily available and appear to meet users’ information requirements. Accordingly, any strategy which aims to encourage scholarly exploitation of IT must rest fundamentally on a good understanding of scholars’ information requirements, and it is these requirements which focus this investigation.”

Comment:
This article was placed in the background section due to its age and short length, (8 pages). Though this study is a bit dated, the conclusions reached appear to still be valid in today’s age of ongoing technological advancements in the realm of information digitization. The study found that scholars wok closely with libraries and archives and that they (scholars) have an interest in further developing these crucial inter-relationships within the digital arena.

Method of Searching: Bookshelf and title browsing

Search Strategy: Articles searched with terms, “Information technology” and “scholarly”
Citation 6:

Comment:
The author discusses the scholarly usage of digital material. This article is a bit dated and is being placed in the background section.

Database: Google Advanced

Method of Searching: citation-Footnote chasing

Search Strategy: Footnote found in:

Citation 7:

Official Article Abstract:
Discussion of how scholars work and how they use information focuses on a case study of the use of new electronic resources by humanist scholars. Interviews with humanists at the University of Pennsylvania about their experiences with the RLIN (Research Libraries Information Network) database are discussed, including content, connectivity, user friendliness, and cost.

Comment: Brevity of article (4 pages) precluded it from being included in regular annotated list. The author found that when cost was not a consideration, access to the databases was found to be quite useful to the scholars. One educator noticed how the databases were not only of benefit for researchers, but for academic students as well.

Database: Eric [eric.ed.gov] and Google Scholar

Method of Searching: Citation Searching-Footnote chasing

Citation 8:

**Official Article Abstract:**
This paper revises David Ellis's information-seeking behavior model of social scientists, which includes six generic features: starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, and extracting. The paper uses social science faculty researching stateless nations as the study population. The description and analysis of the information-seeking behavior of this group of scholars is based on data collected through structured and semi-structured electronic mail interviews. Sixty faculty members from 14 different countries were interviewed by e-mail. For reality check purposes, face-to-face interviews with five faculty members were also conducted. Although the study confirmed Ellis's model, it found that a fuller description of the information-seeking process of social scientists studying stateless nations should include four additional features besides those identified by Ellis. These new features are: accessing, networking, verifying, and information managing. In view of that, the study develops a new model, which, unlike Ellis's, groups all the features into four interrelated stages: searching, accessing, processing, and ending. This new model is fully described and its implications on research and practice are discussed.

**Comment:**
I included this article as Ellis has been referred to in several articles for the information-seeking group of scholars and historians. I found the article to be appropriate for the information-seeking group of scholars as the authors brought up a number of issues impacting on this user group. The authors identified four new information-seeking behavior features in their study. They included: accessing, networking, verifying, and information managing. The authors suggest that enhancements in the design of existing information systems and services are needed in order to better facilitate the above four behavioral features. The authors go on to suggest that additional collaboration and networking could go a long way towards alleviating problems of data access. The authors observed a limit of digitized scholarly material and included in their summary a recommendation that current digitalization efforts be expanded.

**Database:** Eric [Dialog], Web of Science, and Eric online [eric.ed.gov]

**Method of Searching:** used controlled vocabulary and later citation-Footnote chasing

**Search Strategy:** Used controlled descriptors of:
ss (information seeking)/de AND (search strategies)/de AND (social scientists)/de

Citation 9:

Official Article Abstract:
“The logs of four universities using the OhioLink journal system were evaluated for a period of fifteen months using deep log analysis methods in order to compare and contrast the information seeking behavior of their users. Large differences were found, especially between the research and teaching universities. Methodological problems associated with making the comparisons are discussed in some detail especially in terms of defining online sessions.”

Comment:
The author of this article noted that this study data is still in the process of being fully analyzed. The author’s evaluation, while of interest for database usage, appeared to be quite limited in scope. Due to the lack of information-seeking analysis, this article is being placed in the supplemental section.

Database: Eric [eric.ed.gov] and Google Scholar

Method of Searching: keyword searching

Search Strategy: Used descriptor in Eric “information seeking”, and located article as Eric#EJ780465.

Citation 10:

Official Article Abstract:
“This paper discusses the information-seeking behaviour of academics in relation to the productivity of academics in South African Universities, with particular reference to the University of Zululand, through a survey of 105 academics. It was established that the nature of the discipline and the rank of the academic, which normally corresponds with the academic qualification, experience, exposure and research productivity level, largely determine the information-seeking behaviour. Academics mainly need information for career development, and occupational and professional needs. Furthermore, university libraries, which currently face budget cuts on acquisitions, still play a pivotal role in information access by the academics. It is confirmed that the use of “local environment” is dominant for intra- and inter-university information access network and system. It is recommended that avenues that work colleagues can use to interact should be supported, and career challenges that stimulate productivity by academics, such as research and publication, should be maintained and sustained.”
Comment:
This author has been cited by a number of information-seeking articles which focus on the user group of scholars and historians. I found the article’s final introductory sentence to be crystal clear in its definition of the article’s objectives. “It is our intention to show who, when, why, how and where academics seek information in order to underpin their pivotal role in research and development as well as advise on suitable information systems and services that can support their work.” This article was interesting as it stressed the importance of informal information exchanges of research information among the peer group of scholars and historians.

Database: Google Scholar, Eric online [eric.ed.gov], and Web of Science

Method of Searching: keyword searching

Search Strategy: keywords used: “information-seeking” and “behaviour”

Citation 11:

Official Article Abstract:
“Interdisciplinary inquiry has become more pervasive in recent decades, yet we still know little about the conduct of this type of research or the information problems associated with it. Through a qualitative study of the work practices of interdisciplinary humanities scholars, we examined the activities and resources involved in scholarship that crosses disciplinary boundaries. The results highlight fundamental features of work in the humanities in relation to the interdisciplinary processes scholars use to extend their knowledge base and craft texts for new audiences. Relying heavily on informal collaborative relationships, scholars manage their interdisciplinary information work by developing strategies for exploring and translating information from unfamiliar domains. The networks of activities and resources built by interdisciplinary humanities scholars offer a working framework for developing digital research libraries to support complex and integrative scholarly work.”

Comment:
Palmer and Neumann developed a rather interesting analysis of the information-seeking efforts of the scholarly group. A pie chart, labeled as “hybrid intellectual domain”, divided the scholarly group into two subgroups, information exploration and information translation. The authors noted that scholars place an emphasis on establishing a cooperative approach to their information gathering. This discourse, using various means of communication, allowed these scholars to move into new disciplines as they follow research leads. The authors also noted that scholars tended to be adopters of new technology, depending on which means, (i.e. that of print or electronic), were most likely to advance their productivity. An important observation was made of how writing is centrally critical for scholars as it permits them to share their ideas via published articles and books.

Database: Eric [Dialog], Eric online [eric.ed.gov], and Web of Science
Method of Searching: controlled vocabulary

Search Strategy: ss (scholarly communication)/de AND (scholarly writing)/de AND (academic achievement)/de

Citation 12:

Citation 13:

Official Article Abstract:
“The Getty Art History Information Program carried out a two-year project to study how advanced humanities scholars operate as end users of online databases. Visiting Scholars at the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities in Santa Monica, California, were offered the opportunity to do unlimited subsidized searching of DIALOG® databases. The second report from the project analyzes how much searching the scholars did, the kinds of search techniques and DIALOG features they used, and their learning curves. Search features studied included commands, Boolean logic, types of vocabulary, and proximity operators. Error rates were calculated, as well as how often the scholars used elementary search formulations and introduced new search features and capabilities into their searches. The amount of searching done ranged from none at all to dozens of hours. A typical search tended to be simple, using one-word search terms and little or no Boolean logic. Starting with a full day of DIALOG training, the scholars began their search experience at a reasonably high level of competence; in general, they maintained a stable level of competence throughout the early hours of their search experience.”

Database: Eric [Dialog], Eric online [eric.ed.gov], and Web of Science

Method of Searching: keyword search

Search Strategy: ? ss getty and online and research and project
Citation 14:

**Comment:**
This is an older article which focuses on online access for humanities researchers.

**Database:** Google advanced, Eric online [eric.ed.gov], and Web of Science

**Method of Searching:** keyword searching

**Search Strategy:** keywords used: "information-seeking" and “behaviour”

Citation 15:

**Comment:**
This article is considered too old to be in the main section. However, a number of the author’s peers cite this article.

Citation 16:

**Comment:**
This article is very short, so it does not qualify for the annotated bibliography section.

Citation 17:

**Official Article Abstract:**
Humanists use a wide variety of textual, graphic and aural materials in their research. Each type of material presents special indexing challenges. Research into the nature of these materials and humanists’ information seeking behaviors indicate that indexing and surrogate models from the sciences are no longer adequate to meet the humanist’s information access needs. New controlled vocabularies and indexing frameworks that reflect the nature of humanistic scholarship are needed.
Database: Eric Online

Method of Searching: Citation Searching-Footnote chasing


Citation 18:


Citation 19:


Official Article Abstract:

“The research study analyzed the information-gathering habits of academic historians. It is hoped that the research will lead to an understanding of the role of information in the research process and will ultimately be of use in the design of new information systems or the reorganization of existing systems. The first section contains a review of previous research, including studies which considered historians' use of sources through citation analysis. Fifty-two academic historians, representing faculties at Cornell University and the University of Rochester, were surveyed. The main objective was to identify the specific stages of research in progress and to isolate different sources of information behavior at each point in the research process. Methodology involved the critical incident technique applied in a self-administered mailed questionnaire. Five stages of research were identified as problem selection, detailed planning, data collection, analysis and interpretation, and writing-rewriting. Some conclusions were that there are different information needs associated with the different stages, and that primary materials or data of historical research, are the most important information source in almost every stage.”

Comment: Older article which I have included as this author is cited in the annotated bibliography.

Database: Eric [eric.ed.gov] and Google Scholar

Method of Searching: Citation Searching-Footnote chasing

Citation 20:


Official Article Abstract:

Reviews studies of humanists' use of information and discusses three characteristics of the behavior of humanists in relation to trends in the application of new information technologies to the humanities: (1) reluctance to ask questions of reference librarians; (2) regard for influential peers; and (3) concentration on research specializations.

Comment: Brevity of this article (5 pages) precluded it from being included in regular annotated list. This author is widely cited in his field and it was felt that inclusion would be appropriate.

Database: Eric [online] and Google Scholar

Method of Searching: Citation Search-Footnote chasing