



# COLLABORATING ACROSS CAMPUS TO ARTICULATE THE VALUE OF RESEARCH CONSULTATIONS

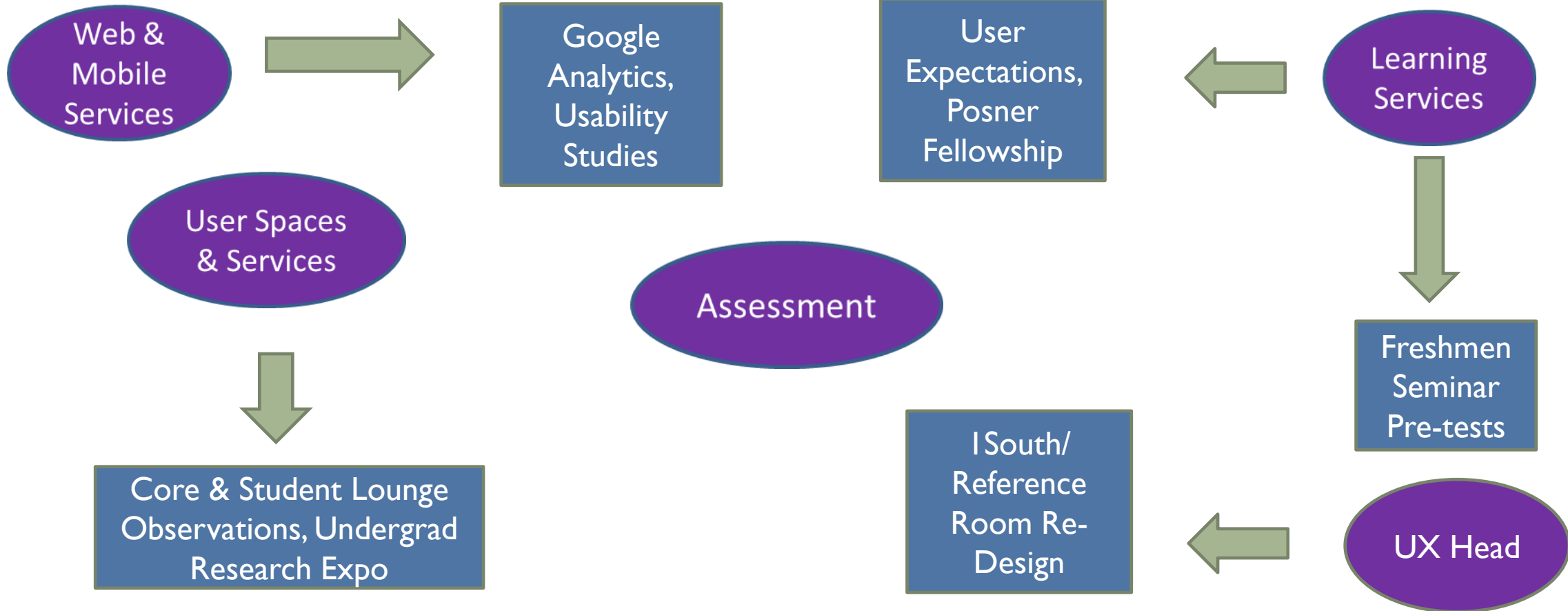
DEVIN SAVAGE, HEAD OF ASSESSMENT, PLANNING AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION



## WHA' HAPPENED?

An informal conversation between members of Northwestern's Office of Fellowships and the Northwestern University Library's User Experience department led to planning for an assessment project that could:

- Obtain observational data on how students utilize research tools to discover sources
- Articulate the value of the pairing of a research consultation with a research fellowship
- Create enhanced CTEC data for the program's self-evaluation
- Create data to support the continuation of funding for university programs



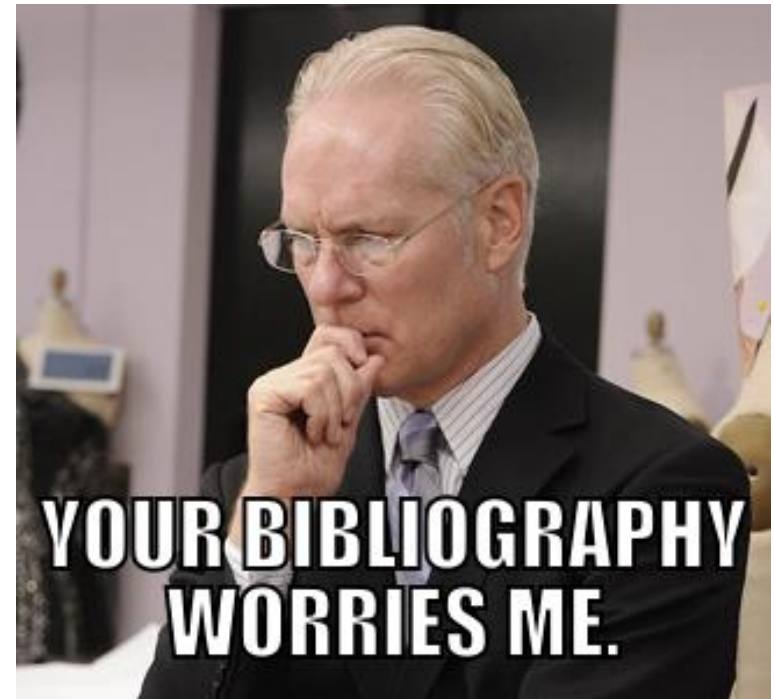
FINDING WAYS TO UNDERSTAND OUR USERS,  
2012-2013

# RESEARCH CONSULTATIONS

## Definition

“...a reference service in which the librarian meets with a student in a scheduled session away from the reference desk.”

- Magi, Trina J., and Patricia E. Mardeusz. “What Students Need from Reference Librarians Exploring the Complexity of the Individual Consultation.” *College & Research Libraries News* 74, no. 6 (June 1, 2013): 288



# DEFINING TERMS

## Posner & Davee Summer Fellowships

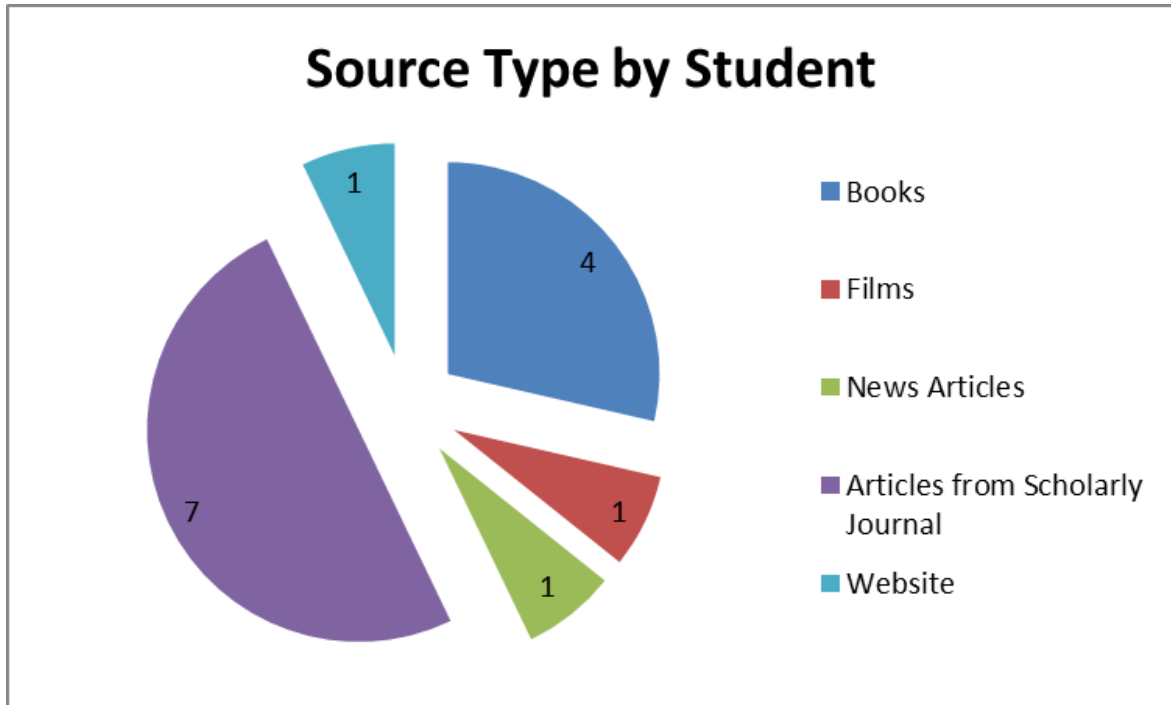
- The program is aimed at students who are rising sophomores in Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences. Nominations of students from underrepresented backgrounds are solicited from faculty. The students spend eight weeks in the summer shaping a scholarly project from beginning to end with the help of a faculty mentor.

## The Proposal

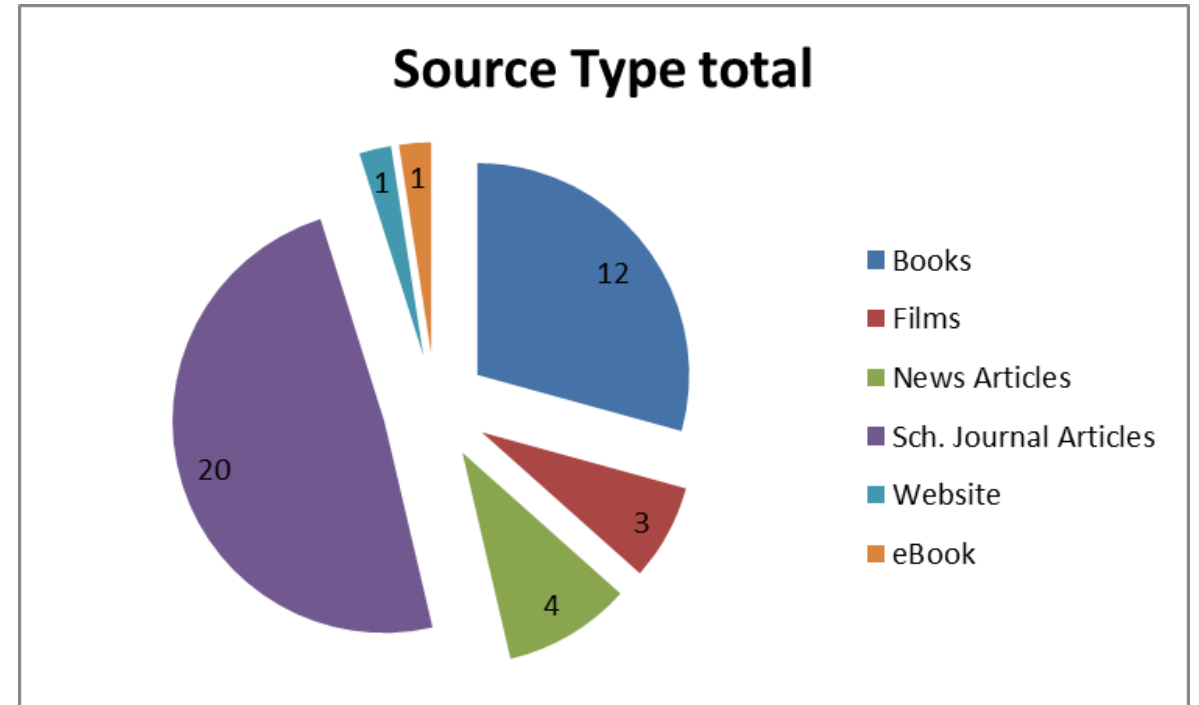
- The students would provide an initial working bibliography, which they would bring to a Research Consultation with a library subject specialist. **Students would spend a few minutes literally searching online while the librarian observes where they're going and how they're searching;** then the librarian would ask and record questions about the logic of searching and then make some suggestions.
- Individual specialists and the Coordinator of Research Consultations would deliver the data to me, so that I would not have any personally identifiable information to maintain.
- Then, later in the summer, the students deposited their bibliographies into a folder which will be viewed by the librarian in order to put together an aggregate list of sources.

# WHAT THEY HAD FOUND

14 students brought sources to the Research Consultation



Articles from Scholarly Journals made up less than half of the total sources

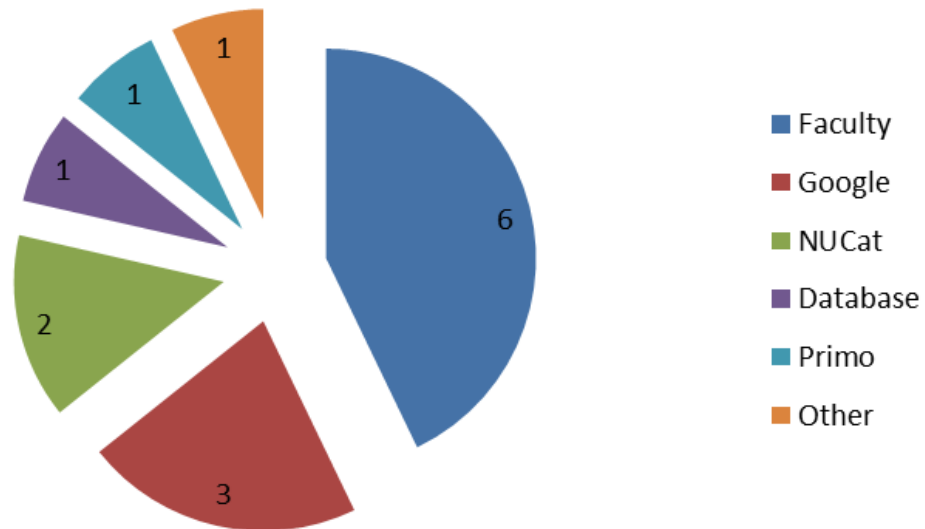


# WHERE THEY GOT IT

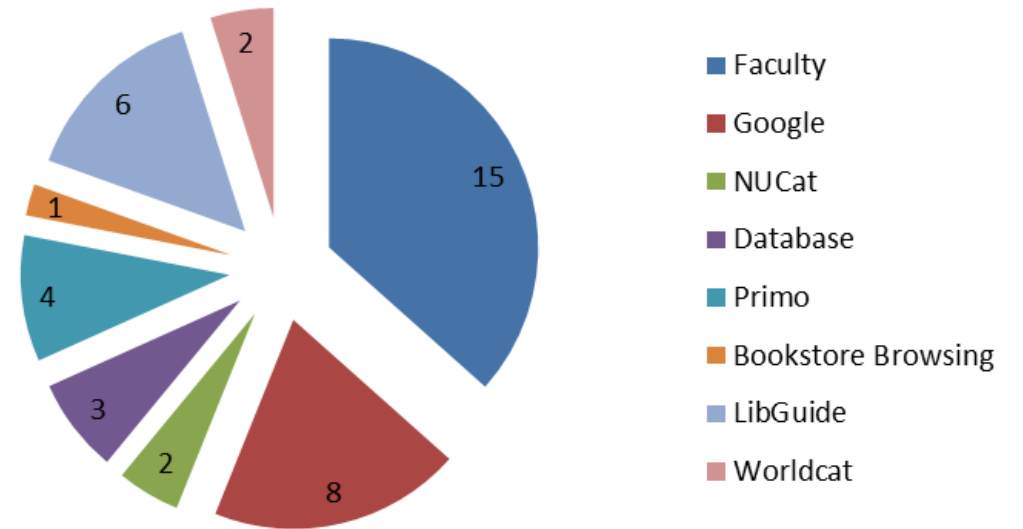
Instructor recommendations and Google were the dominant methods of discovery

Looking at the total number of sources showed a diversity students searches

### Source Discovery by Student

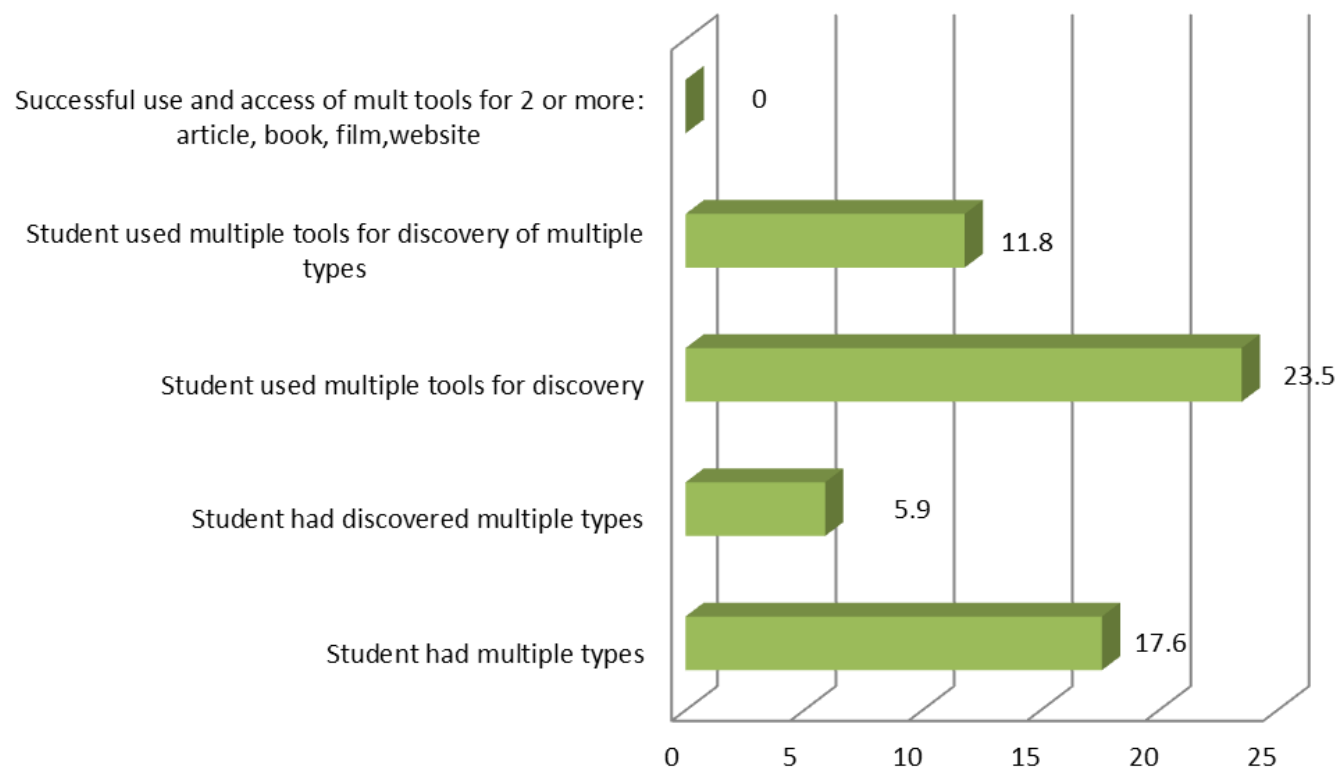


### Source Discovery total methods



# HOWEVER!

## Student Source Type and Discovery Percentages

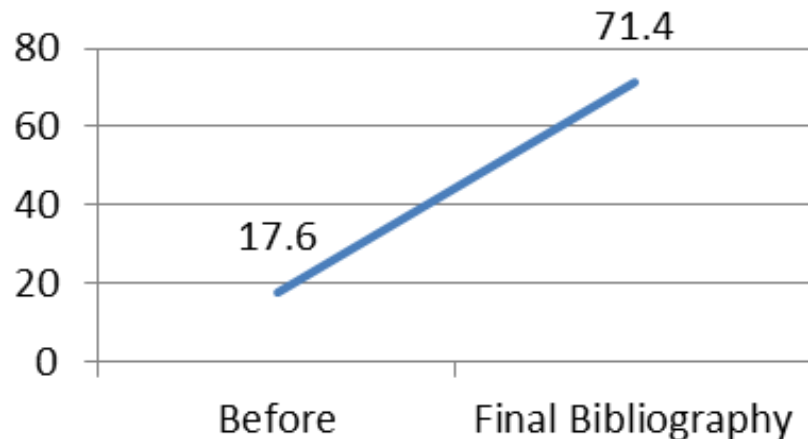


Searching in more than one area was unusual, and success with multiple tools was nearly non-existent. Only one student successfully found a Scholarly Journal article and a News Article using two separate searches (Google and a database). Others tried to use the Library Search Tool, but reverted to Google when results were deemed “overwhelming.”



# THE FINAL BIBLIOGRAPHIES CONTAINED MULTIPLE TYPES OF SOURCES (YAY!)

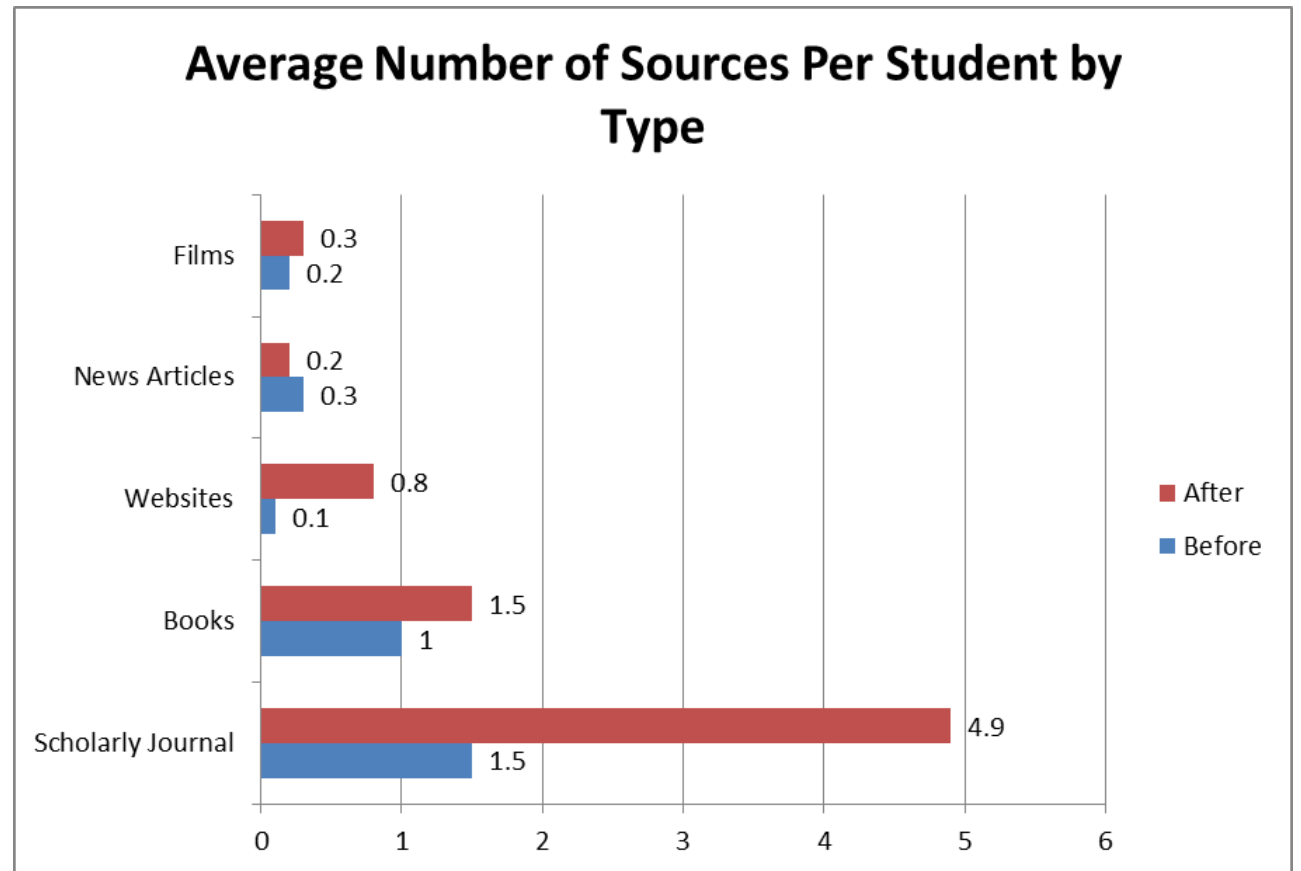
## Percentage of students that had multiple types of sources



Of the fourteen bibliographies that I was able to access, only four of them provided just one type of source. All four solely utilized scholarly journals, and actually provided some of the clearest final bibliographies.

## THE NUMBER OF SCHOLARLY SOURCES ROSE

- This confirms our hope that, after meeting with a librarian subject specialist, students would be able to discover more types of high-quality sources than the single type that they had found previous to the Research Consultation.





# TWO PATHS DIVERGED IN A YELLOW WOOD

## This project continues at NU Library

- The pieces have changed, but the Posner Research Consultation Assessment project continues on at Northwestern, with faculty and Associate Dean expressing desires for the project to be repeated.
- Before I left, I passed on my contacts and activities to the Head of User Experience, the Outreach & Community Services Librarian and the Assistant Head of Research and Information Services (who coordinates RC requests).

## Launching Research Consultation at IIT

- Co-coordinator of Liaison Renovation Group
- Provided post-RC survey
- Using new service as part of template for outreach and engagement of faculty
- In talks with History faculty and Digital Humanities program to identify possible curricular touchpoints and best opportunities for broader RC assessment
- Working with IIT IRB for expedited approval of new process, project for publication.

- Bergen, K, and B MacAdam. “One-to-One: Term Paper Assistance Programs.” *RQ* 24, no. 3 (1985): 333–40.
- Gale, Crystal D., and Betty S. Evans. “Face-to-Face: The Implementation and Analysis of a Research Consultation Service.” *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 14, no. 3 (September 2007): 85–101.
- Lee, Deborah. “Research Consultations: Enhancing Library Research Skills.” *Reference Librarian* 41, no. 85 (January 2004): 169–80.
- Magi, Trina J., and Patricia E. Mardeusz. “What Students Need from Reference Librarians Exploring the Complexity of the Individual Consultation.” *College & Research Libraries News* 74, no. 6 (June 1, 2013): 288–91.
- ———. “Why Some Students Continue to Value Individual, Face-to-Face Research Consultations in a Technology-Rich World.” *College & Research Libraries* 74, no. 6 (November 1, 2013): 605–18.
- Reinsfelder, Thomas L. “Citation Analysis as a Tool to Measure the Impact of Individual Research Consultations.” *College & Research Libraries* 73, no. 3 (May 1, 2012): 263–77.
- “Research Consultations Revived at Northwestern.” *Library Journal* 107, no. 10 (May 15, 1982): 930.

MORE READING ON RESEARCH CONSULTATIONS  
(SOURCES!)

THANK YOU!

Devin Savage

Head of Assessment, Planning, and Scholarly Communication

Paul V. Galvin Library

*Driving Innovation through Knowledge and Scholarship*

Illinois Institute of Technology

35 West 33rd Street

Chicago, IL 60616

(312) 567-3615

dsavage@iit.edu

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