

Value of Scholarly Reading to Graduate Work: An Academic Survey of 3 U.S. Universities

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IMLS Lib-Value Scholarly Reading project:

- What are article reading patterns by students?
- What is the value and outcome of scholarly reading for students?
- What is the role of the academic library collections?
- Are there differences in reading patterns by demographic factors of readers?

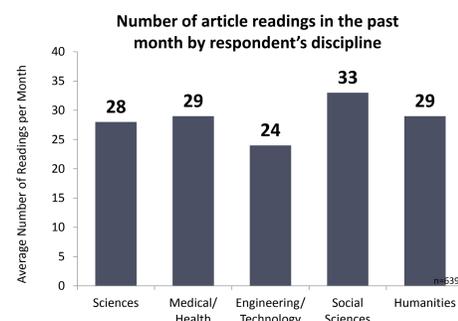
Methodology/Previous Studies:

- Builds upon Tenopir & King reading and scholarship surveys conducted since 1977 in the U.S. and internationally
- Measures purpose, outcome, and value from scholarly reading by focusing on critical incident of last reading
- Includes all reading (from library and not)
- Open ended questions provide another dimension
- Funding by the Institute of Museum and Library Services

About the project:

- 3 U.S. universities: University of Colorado, Boulder; University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Seton Hall University
- Online survey (e-mail) sent to graduate students in spring 2012.
- 897 responses
- Asks 3 types of questions: (Gives insight into readers and readings)
 - Demographic
 - Recollection
 - Critical Incident

“The following questions in this section refer to the **SCHOLARLY ARTICLE YOU READ MOST RECENTLY**, even if you had read it previously. Note that this last reading may not be typical, but will help us establish the range of patterns in reading.”



Value and Outcomes of Scholarly Reading:

“Value is demonstrated by time invested in reading, by purpose of reading, by value to purpose, by outcomes of reading, and by how library services contribute to the mission of the institution”

Findings:

Graduate students read A LOT!

- The average student reads 27 articles per month and spends 39 minutes per reading.
- That is the equivalent of 211 hours per year or 26 eight-hour work days.

Students become aware of articles through their instructors or the library

- A third of readings are found through an instructor or course outline.
- A quarter of the readings are found through the library's search and discovery tools.

The library's electronic subscriptions are vital sources of scholarly articles.

- 58% of readings are obtained from the library's e-collection.

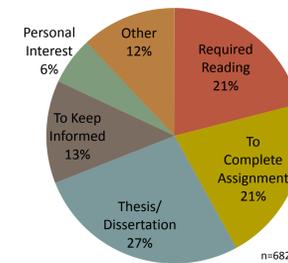
Older articles are important to graduate work, in addition to current publications.

- A third (34%) of readings are in the first eighteen months of publication and 19% are over ten years old.

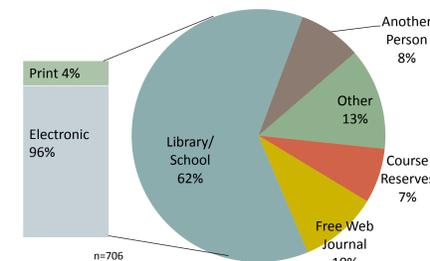
Article readings add value to the core activities of graduate students.

- 41% of readings are considered 'very important' or 'absolutely essential' to the principal purpose of reading, and only 2% are considered 'not at all important'.

Principal purpose of the last article reading



Source of last article reading



Graduate Students Speak!

I use [e-resources] every day looking up articles and doing research for my thesis. The library provides free access to a lot of major publications that I wouldn't be able to get otherwise.



They play a significant role, as I am currently living out of state with my family while writing my dissertation. E-resources provide the main link back to my university.



If it isn't electronic, it doesn't get read.



[E-resources are] essential, especially for interacting with other scientists through Twitter and blogs, reading papers through my library's subscriptions, and interacting and working with my colleagues via e-mail and Google Docs



The Role of the Library:

Findings:

The library's subscriptions support all graduate students.

- The majority of readings in each discipline are obtained from the library's subscriptions.

Library-provided readings support graduate work.

- Readings for thesis/dissertation work or to help complete a course assignment are more likely to be obtained from the library than another source.

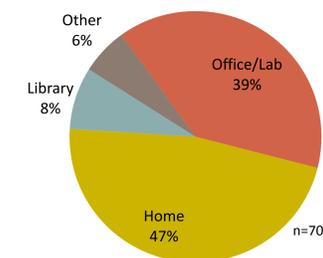
E-journal collections save the readers' time

- Electronic sources allow the reader to obtain the article from their office or lab.
- They rarely read in the physical library.

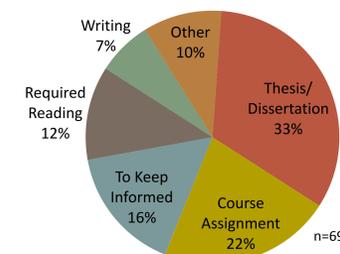
Students cannot always differentiate library-provided material from sources.

- Library-provided articles include: 35% from library subscription, 25% from school/department subscription, and 2% from interlibrary loan.

Where graduate students read library-provided articles



Principal purpose of library-provided readings



Future Studies & Further Questions:

- Reading surveys currently being conducted in the U.S. in 2012 with faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates.
- Issues with transparency of library services—good for user, bad for assessing 'value.'
- Does the obvious success of e-journals mean there is a market for e-books?
- What does the dominance of e-library mean for the physical library space? What is the role of the librarian?
- Will new technologies (e.g. Social media, Blackboards, mobile devices) affect how the library's collections are presented?

For further information:

<http://libvalue.cci.utk.edu>

Bibliography:

- Tenopir, C. and King, D.W. *Towards Electronic Journals: Realities for Scientist, Librarians and Publishers*. Washington D.C: Special Libraries Association, 2000.
- Tenopir, C., S. Wilson, P. Vakkari, S. Talja, and D.W. King. "Cross Country Comparison of Scholarly E-Reading Patterns in Australia, Finland and the United States." *Australian Academic & Research Libraries (AARL)* 41, no. 1 (2010): 26-41.