

Proposal to Study Academic User Behaviors around Print and Digital Monographs

Introduction

The landscape for scholarly monograph use has undergone substantial transformation; more books are available in digital format, new forms of scholarship are emerging, the use of mobile devices is growing, as is the number of mass digitization programs, and library services are shifting to an increasingly networked, virtual environment. With these changes, the ways in which scholars interact with monographs, both digital and print, is also evolving. To develop the best services and strategies for managing and providing access to existing and prospective monograph collections, academic libraries need to better understand the ways in which scholars use monographs.

The proposed project will study academic user behaviors around print and digital monographs at various points during the research lifecycle. The study will be carried out through focus groups with graduate students from social sciences, arts and humanities disciplines at the University of California (UC), Santa Cruz. The project will explore when, why and how the graduate students integrate print and digital books into their academic work.

Project Impact

A better understanding of access barriers and how print and digital scholarly monographs are used will allow academic libraries to adopt discovery and delivery services, digitization programs, and collection development strategies that better support scholars' current and desired monographs uses.

This study will benefit the management of existing digital and electronic book collections, and will assist librarians with purchasing and future collection building to meet user needs. This research will also assist with decision-making around the development of digitization and shared print programs to ensure ongoing stewardship and preservation of monographs.

Research Question

The study will focus on the following exploratory research question:

What monograph format(s) do graduate students use during their research for their academic work, and why?

Through this primary research question, the project will explore the following factors to better understand the impact and reasons for users' format choices: book use frequency, discovery channels, format availability and delivery, format functionalities and features, content type, different research activities and disciplinary differences.

The outcome of this research will help us answer questions on monograph use, including: How do scholars use print and digital books differently? When do scholars prefer one or both formats and why? What are the barriers of accessing and using either format? Has new digital technology changed how scholars discover and use book content?

Research Design and Methodology

Study Population

The study population includes UC Santa Cruz graduate students from four social sciences and arts & humanities disciplines: Literature, History, Arts and Education.

Sampling Design

The sampling design method will be purposive sampling. The subjects will be grouped by their discipline. In total, there will be four samples from four different disciplines.

Data Collection Instrument

The research will be carried out through four user focus groups. Each focus group will include 8-10 graduate students.

Project Schedule

Time Table	Activities
Q3 2015	Planning focus group study
Q4 2015	Schedule and conduct four focus groups
Q1 2016	Reporting and publishing

Project Resources: Budget, Personnel and Management

Recruiting methods

A variety of communication channels will be used for recruiting participants.

- UCSC department managers, department graduate student coordinators will distribute call for participation emails directly to students
- The study will be highlighted on both UCSC website home page and CDL Info article.
- UCSC Graduate Council representative will promote the study in their Graduate Council meeting and over their listserv.
- UCSC librarians will promote the study through information session, relevant classes and orientations for graduate students.
- The flyers of the letter will be available at UCSC library main service desks.
- We will also promote it in relevant classes and orientations.

The interviewees will be identified and selected based on their responses.

Subjects will include

- 32-40 Graduate students from Literature, History, Arts and Education disciplines at UCSC

Budget

The proposed budget will cover the focus group incentives, snacks and drinks. The possible ideas for incentives are café gift cards, bookstore gift cards, and amazon gift cards.

CDL Project Staff

- Chan Li, Sr. Collection Data Analyst (Project lead)
- Danielle Watters Westbrook, Shared Print Collections Analyst

UCSC Project Staff

- Elizabeth Cowell, University Librarian (Faculty sponsor)
- Kerry Scott, Collection Development Librarian
- Sarah Troy, Head of User Services & Resource Sharing

CDL Advisory Team

- Ivy Anderson, Collection Development & Management Director (Principal Investigator)
- Emily Stambaugh, Shared Print Manager
- Felicia Poe, User Experience Design Manager/Consultant

IRB Review Process

A request for an exemption from IRB review will be submitted to UCSC Institutional Review Board in September 2015.