

What Would Patrons Do? Information Seeking Behaviors in the Music Library  
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NB: This paper will be published later this year (I hope!) and will include the survey instrument.

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Slide 1

No notes

Slide 2

There are more options than ever for finding and accessing music scores and recordings. This study incorporated a survey and focus groups conducted at our library last year to illuminate how students are using the library and interacting (or not) with the library's resources. I won't have time to go into all of the details of our results today, but I plan to submit this for publication later this spring. This will be the first in a series of related studies.

Slide 3

We used a web-based survey that was accessible via our library homepage. Students had to login with their NetID so we know that everyone who responded is a student and only took the survey once.

You can see response rates by year here. We had 79 responses, which is about 10% of our student population, making it statistically significant. We also tracked area of study and most responses were from performers (44%) and music ed students (37%), which mirrors our population. The next largest group were music history at (15%) and the other categories each coming in at single digit percentages.

Slide 4

One of the baseline questions we asked was how often students look for scores or recordings in a average week. In general they look for **recordings** more often than **scores**.

16 students say they frequently look for **recordings**—11 are grad students and 5 are undergrads. Twelve are performers.

Frequent **score** seekers are split evenly between grads and undergrads, again with the majority being performers.

The student who never searches for **scores** is a music ed graduate student and the two students who never look for **recordings** are undergrad performers. I don't know if they truly never use recordings, as it seems hard to believe.

Slide 5

Students don't care about specific performances as much as we might think, given that 44% said that they are rarely seeking a specific performance.

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However, there isn't a lot of surprise in what does matter to them. Given the option to write in other criteria, some respondents indicated that **length and year are important**.

#### Slide 7

We asked students how frequently they are looking for a specific edition of a score.

38%= **frequently** are mostly performers and music ed students. I was expecting more musicologists to be particular about scores.

More than half, or 55% =**sometimes** or **rarely** looking for specific score.

Of six respondents who stated that they **never** search for a specific edition or version of a score, three were performers.

#### Slide 8

Moving from the physical to the digital, we asked students whether they use any of our subscription streaming tools. While our usage stats of CML are especially good and the others reasonably so, given these survey results, it might only be a small percentage of people using them, or it could be a lot of professors and others on campus making up the bulk of our usage stats. This is a really good example of why one set of numbers doesn't tell the whole story when you are assessing things.

Further studies could investigate why more students aren't using them—is it a marketing issue, or do the current tools not have the content they need/want?

Of the students using SGS, none (?) indicated an ethno concentration.

#### Slide 9

I was particularly interested to learn what non-library sources students are using to find scores and recordings. These were the most popular, with other more specialized sites such as Eastman and Werner Icking also getting write-in mentions. I know that Library Music Source is a library resource in that we subscribe to it, but I grouped it here for context with IMSLP.

#### Slide 10

We asked students whether the catalog is one of the tools they use to locate scores and records and 96% say they do. For various reasons we've had two catalog interfaces since 2009. Overall students are fairly evenly split between usage of the two, but it's no surprise that upperclassmen and graduate students use the classic catalog and the newer students prefer the new interface. We primarily introduce the new catalog in instruction sessions.

#### Slide 11

Regardless of which catalog interface they choose, patrons are not fully aware of what the catalog can do—and bemoaned not being able to do things that it can in fact do (limit by format, sort by date, etc.)

#### Slide 12

We asked students whether they get frustrated when searching for scores and recordings. Answers encompassed both online search issues and physically locating items in our collection (which is large and has Dewey and LC). Not surprising then that they go beyond the library to find scores and recordings.

#### Slide 13

I'd read studies that confirmed that students and others use Amazon to discover books and then look for them in the library catalog. I was curious about whether students did this for recordings or scores. Although 22% responded that they do this frequently (more than 50% of the time) and 23% said they do this sometimes (25% to 49% of the time), 43% said they do this rarely (24% of the time or less), and 13% said they never do this.

#### Slide 14

It's not necessarily the first year students avoiding the library. Of the 25 students who indicated that they use Wikipedia, ten were graduate students, twelve were 3rd year or above undergraduates, and three were 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year undergraduates. Of the students who indicated that they use Amazon, 17 were graduate students, twelve were 3<sup>rd</sup> year or above undergraduates, and four were 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year undergraduates.

#### Slide 15

Is it possible the more advanced students (upperclassmen/grad students) have devised ways that they think embody the motto "work smarter, not harder"? This could also be nature of undergrad vs. graduate work and the tools they need or choose to use. Undergrads are often provided with recordings and scores by their professors either as course reserves or otherwise and they may not need to find others on their own much.

#### Slide 16

This semester we've launched an MPAL module of Easy Search—which is our local web discovery layer. It allows users to search across our catalog, WorldCat, RILM, Music Index, IIMP, our streaming subscriptions, and more to determine the best place to start with their research. We now link to it on our homepage.

But prior to this semester students could go to the main library gateway and search the "big" Easy Search, which wasn't linked to a lot of music resources. Over half of respondents say they don't use it which isn't surprising given that we hadn't done any PR at the time of the survey. However, 23% say they use it for music scores and recordings and 30% say they use it for books and journals. The majority were undergraduates in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year or higher or grad students.

#### Slide 17

But only 39% of the students who had library instruction answered that they got frustrated with searching

#### Slide 18

This includes asking for help finding things in the catalog and on the shelf. Since we have DDC and LC, several students complained about how hard it is to find things on the shelf.

Slide 19

There may be several factors at play here—they think they know what they are doing or should know what they are doing and are afraid to ask. It could also be related to our high percentage of Asian grad students, who may not have previous experience with the concept of a reference desk. This could be worth a follow-up study.

Slide 20

No notes

Slide 21

The survey gave us baseline data, but surveys aren't the best tool for indicating past or predicting future behavior. Instead, we need to observe how students use the tools and note what barriers they encounter.