The Information-Seeking Habits of Graduate Student Researchers in the Humanities

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This paper summarizes an exploratory research study on the information-seeking habits of graduate student researchers in the humanities. In-depth interviews with a small sample of humanities graduate students were used to explore to what extent humanities graduate students might constitute a user group distinct from faculty and undergraduate models.

INTRODUCTION

User studies continue to be an important area of library research, as studying the information-seeking behavior of specific user groups has contributed to the development of a variety of library services. On university campuses, research into the information-seeking patterns of humanities undergraduates has influenced the design of information literacy programs and reference services. As well, an extensive body of literature on the information-seeking habits of humanities faculty researchers has shaped academic library services. Humanities graduate students, however, have received little attention from library researchers, and as a consequence their information-seeking habits are often assumed to resemble those of either faculty members or undergraduates.

This apparent gap in the library literature suggests that exploratory research is in order to determine to what extent humanities graduate students might constitute a unique user group. Moreover, a better understanding of their research habits might contribute to the designing of appropriate information literacy and bibliographic instruction programs, which if B.T. Fidzani’s survey findings are representative, graduate students are desperately in need of.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A literature search on the topic of the information-seeking behavior of graduate students uncovered few previous studies, two of which are exploratory in nature: Delgadillo and Lynch’s study of history graduate students (1999) and B.T. Fidzani’s survey of graduate students at the University of Botswana (1998). Delgadillo and Lynch’s study sought to determine whether graduate student historians demonstrate the same information-seeking behavior as established scholars. In addition, Delgadillo and Lynch questioned whether newer technological applications were being used by graduate students more frequently than has been reported in studies of established scholars. In the process, Delgadillo and Lynch quite rightly point out that most studies of the information-seeking habits of humanists were carried out before the widespread influence of the Internet in the 1990s. Though their secondary, technological line of questioning led to unclear results, Delgadillo and Lynch conclude that graduate students in history tend to demon-
strate the same information-seeking patterns as faculty historians.

B.T. Fidzani’s study explored graduate students’ information-seeking behavior and their awareness of library resources at the University of Botswana. Based on survey results, Fidzani suggests that many graduate students lack basic skills in effectively using the library and its resources. In addition, Fidzani was able to establish the main sources of literature consulted by survey participants.

In contrast to the limited amount of scholarly attention paid to humanities graduate students, there is an ample body of literature on the information-seeking behavior of humanist scholars in general. Several studies and reviews of literature confirm the “cumulative” nature of humanities scholarship, the significance of the library as the humanist’s “laboratory,” the humanist’s preference for monographs and original source materials, serendipitous information retrieval patterns, a reliance on personal contacts as well as private collections, and a guarded approach to information technology.®

A wealth of material is also available on the information-seeking behavior of undergraduates. Carol Collier Kuhlthau and Constance A. Mellon still are still frequently cited for their modeling of the undergraduate research process. Constance Mellon envisions the undergraduate research process as a series of recurring activities, beginning with confusion and discomfort.7 Other patterns of undergraduate research behavior described by researchers include: a high level of anxiety and low level of success in using libraries, more “coping” than information “seeking,” attempts to minimize research time and social effort, a reluctance to ask for help, a preference for the assistance of instructors over librarians, haphazard research strategies, difficulty framing assignments, and initial periods of confusion and discomfort.²²

STUDY DESIGN

This study was designed as an exploratory study of the information-seeking behavior of humanities graduate students, with reference to existing models of faculty and undergraduate research behavior. The guiding research question was, “Do the information seeking habits of humanities graduate students distinguish them from faculty and undergraduate models? If so, how?”

Data were collected using open-ended interviews with a small sample of humanities graduate students. Interviews were transcribed and coded using grounded theory.

METHODOLOGY

A call for research participants was distributed as an electronic flyer to graduate students in a number of humanities disciplines at the University of Western Ontario in June of 2004. Bulk e-mail addresses were used with the permission of several academic departments.

In all, ten graduate students agreed to participate. Anonymity was assured through assigning each participant a code (Participant A, Participant B, etc.) according to the order of interviews. No names were used in transcribing or data coding.

The breadth of research participants can be summarized as follows:

- Three participants were from the department of English, three from History, two from Philosophy, one from Classics, and one from Music (non-performance).
- Of the three MA participants, one was in the first year of a one-year program, one in the second of a two-year program, and one was a recent graduate.
- Of the seven PhD participants, two were in the first year, two in the third, one in the sixth, one preparing for a defense, and one a recent graduate.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted during June and July of 2004 and were tape recorded at an approximate average length of forty minutes. Open-ended questions were used, which loosely followed an interview schedule drawn up in advance. The interview schedule was based on five categories of documented behavior patterns, which can be summarized as follows:

Approach to and Comfort With Information Technology

There is a stereotype that humanist faculty researchers “fear” technology.® However, work by Stephen Wiberley and Stephen Lehmann and Patricia Renfro suggests that humanists are receptive to technology as long as it demonstrates adequate savings in time or effort.® In addition, Delgadillo and Lynch have pointed out that most studies on humanists’ research behavior were conducted before the widespread influence of the Internet in the 1990s.© Researchers portray, by comparison, a widespread acceptance of information technology, especially the Internet, among undergraduates, although many students still prefer print journals and monographs.© Interview questions were designed to explore participants’ use of electronic information resources.

Interpersonal Contact

Though they most often work alone, humanist researchers do rely heavily on the experience and suggestions of colleagues as well as opportunities presented by conferences.© Humanities faculty members often consult with archivists, but seldom with librarians.© Undergraduates, by comparison, lack many of the collegial resources that faculty members take for granted.© Undergraduates also, like faculty, rarely consult librarians when they require assistance, preferring the advice of instructors and friends.© Interview questions were designed to explore the types of interpersonal contact most frequently used by interviewees during research.

Information Sources

It has been observed that humanist scholars often build up considerable private collections which they rely on during research.© In general, monographs are preferred over serials, and a particular interest is taken in original source manuscripts and other forms of primary material.© Faculty researchers also rely on years of accumulated knowledge and experience within their areas of specialty.© Undergraduate researchers similarly prefer books to serials, though it has been speculated that many are not familiar with methods of tracking down journal articles.© They rely heavily on Internet resources,
especially in the initial stages of a research project, but also value print resources. 20 Though most undergraduates lack knowledge and experience in the areas they are studying, when they can they often draw on past subject experience or other course material. 21 Lecture notes, textbooks, and reserve materials are valued sources of information for undergraduates, and it has been suggested that they often seek whatever resources they perceive as allowing them to get in and out of the library as quickly as possible. 22 Interview questions were designed to explore the range of sources consulted by interviewees.

Information Retrieval Patterns

Humanities faculty researchers have been described as slow, haphazard, and serendipitous in their search for information, often “finding their way” through browsing shelves and chasing citations. 23 Undergraduates have also been described as “haphazard” when searching for information, but often report a degree of anxiety and discomfort not found among faculty members. 24 It has also been suggested that undergraduates employ a “coping strategy” in their search for information, often seeking to find “enough” information to fulfill assignment requirements with the “least cost in terms of time or social effort.” 25 Interview questions were designed to explore the information retrieval strategies of participants.

Process of Initiating Research Projects

Humanities faculty researchers often initiate projects in haphazard ways, sometimes beginning a project with only a vague notion of what form the final product might take. 26 Humanists seem quite comfortable with this approach and do not typically report serious anxiety in coping with such uncertainty, nor with the pressures of immediate time constraints. By contrast, undergraduate work is largely assignment driven and thus tends to be more immediately pressing. Undergraduates in general, it has been suggested, cope with considerable anxiety at the initial stages of project development and often have difficulty framing assignments and focusing research questions. 27 Interview questions were designed to explore how participants initiate research projects and to note degrees of comfort or anxiety typically associated with various stages of research.

“All except one strongly disagreed with the stereotype that humanists dislike electronic information technology.”

RESULTS

Approach to and Comfort with Information Technology

Participants generally spoke of electronic information technology as just one of a variety of tools appropriate to their research to be used to a greater or lesser extent depending on the nature of a project. All except one strongly disagreed with the stereotype that humanists dislike electronic information technology. Conversely, participants described a variety of electronic information tools which they frequently make use of, including online journals, OPACs, discipline-specific CD-ROMs, Internet search engines, and Web sites. One participant was completing a Web-based edition of a well-known play.

Most participants reported learning about electronic information resources through supervisors and colleagues, as well as discovering them on their own. Several participants felt that there were a greater number and variety of electronic information resources available now than ever before, and that such sources are increasingly taken to be highly authoritative. Participants spoke of appreciating the efficiency and time-saving qualities of electronic information technology, such as the efficiency of searchable databases over print indexes, the speed of word processing, and the convenience of remote access to full-text journals.

The most common complaint participants had about electronic information technology was the lack of available primary sources. Several reported not feeling as confident or proficient with electronic resources as they could be, and one stated that electronic information technology rarely lives up to expectations. Several participants described a generation gap in their departments, in that graduate students and younger faculty members tend to utilize electronic information technology far more than older faculty members. Concerning the stereotype of humanists disliking electronic information technology, one participant commented: “I think we’re really in the generation where if it’s going to change it’s going to be now.”

Interpersonal Contact

All participants agreed that single authorship is the standard in humanities disciplines, with collaboration occurring rarely outside of editorial and electronic projects. One participant, however, suggested that collaboration is common where projects warrant it.

Though all participants were involved in solo research projects at the time of interviewing, several forms of interpersonal contact were described as providing ongoing support, guidance, and feedback. Of these, the project supervisor was by far the most commonly consulted contact. Supervisors were described as providing valuable advice, encouragement, suggestions concerning resources and research topics, and introductions to other contacts. Participants also described regular contact with specialists outside of their institutions, particularly for advice on what to read. As one participant explained, “people that have worked in the field kind of know what’s more worth your time and what’s less worth your time.” Participants also spoke of incidental conversations with fellow graduate students at home institutions, which frequently provided valuable information and feedback. When asked to compare the value of contact with specialists outside of home institutions and contact with fellow departmental graduate students, one participant answered: “both are useful; I do not think you could have one without the other.”

Several participants mentioned librarians when discussing helpful personal resources, largely on the basis of their ability to track down hard-to-find works. Conferences were also mentioned by a few participants (more commonly those in the latter stages of the PhD) as being a useful context for discussing projects with other researchers.

Information Sources

When discussing the range and variety of information sources used in their research, participants heavily emphasized primary sources. Several participants spoke of primary sources
as essential to validating their theories and hypotheses. This emphasis on primary materials meant that many participants required access to archives and special collections, often necessitating travel from home institutions and sometimes abroad. As one participant explained:

a big chunk of [my research] revolved around what [was] marked in scores in terms of editing his recordings, because he listened to all the tapes of his recordings and then he would decide, you know, to splice from tape 8 to tape 10 to tape 7. And then he actually marked down in the score where he wanted those slices that he made.

Types of primary sources mentioned include contemporary journals, recordings, individual recollections, museum artefacts, original manuscripts, and books.

Several participants spoke of the recurring difficulty in tracking down particular primary sources. In so doing, participants regularly used databases and indexes, browsed the shelves of libraries and bookstores, and tracked citations in other books and papers. Three participants regularly used the Internet search engine Google to find general information on a topic, one participant mentioned the project supervisor as an important information source, and one participant mentioned examining other dissertations.

**“Citation chasing, or...‘books leading to books,’ was by far the most frequently described method of finding materials.”**

**Information Retrieval Patterns**

Most participants described their information-seeking behavior as an idiosyncratic process of constant reading, “digging,” searching, and following leads. Citation chasing, or in the words of one participant “books leading to books,” was by far the most frequently described method of finding materials. One participant described this as an “informal search engine” among academics. Participants described citation chasing as a means of dealing with information overload, as one simply cannot read everything on a topic. “The more people footnote something,” explained one participant, “the more important, well, the more influential it’s been. It doesn’t necessarily mean it’s more valid, but it’s more worth your time.” Participants also described increasing their use of citation chasing as they have gained scholarly experience. “At the undergrad and MA level,” explained one participant,

I would go to the Philosophers’ Index and get a list of what I intended to read and I would read that and that would be it. It would be just a single phase in the research. Whereas now, I start with this, you know, broad skimming, and the articles that hook me I then look at their works cited list and go after those.

Several participants frequently browsed through the shelves of libraries and bookstores to locate information on their research topics. Said one participant, “you don’t know what you’re going to find until you get into the stacks.” Another participant explained that the information a researcher seeks is sometimes not captured in the title or description of a book or article, and thus actually leafing through pages of vaguely relevant works can be an important activity. “It’s not the main subject of books,” the participant explained, “it’s always the chapter of the book or it’s always a sub-chapter of a chapter.” Another participant suggested that there is “no real guidance in terms of what to read,” and that often researchers are left browsing “for titles that make sense.” Two participants described becoming more “instinctual” with their browsing as they gained scholarly experience. Said one, “you get to be like a kind of bloodhound. You catch a sniff of something that’s good and then you just go for it. But that takes a lot. It takes a while.”

Participants also described finding information through supervisor’s suggestions, conferences, and through searching subject-specific bibliographies, OPACs, and databases.

**Process of Initiating Research Projects**

Very few participants reported having a clear sense of what they would research upon entering their graduate programs. Though most had to state an area of interest when making applications, these statements tended to be vague. One participant, for example, entered a graduate program with the intention of working in “modernist literature: about 1885ish to 1945ish.” Several participants did not end up pursuing research projects within areas initially stated upon entering their programs.

Among participants, the three most common starting points for MA and PhD thesis projects were coursework, supervisors, and recognition of “gaps” in the literature. Several participants could trace their initial project ideas back to graduate-level coursework seminars and presentations. A few participants mentioned project ideas emerging out of independent reading courses, and two mentioned ideas emerging out of doctoral-level reading courses designed to produce a dissertation prospectus.

All participants except one strongly credited instructors and other faculty members with helping to launch project ideas. Several participants described being pointed in a clearer research direction after discussing general ideas with an instructor. Some participants mentioned course instructors getting “excited” about a particular assignment submission and suggesting ideas for turning it into a larger research project. “This reading course really excited me and the professor that I worked with,” recalled one participant, “so it really was fortuitous to have gone through that process because it really launched the entire dissertation.” Most participants selected as project supervisors those instructors who had initially encouraged them. One participant mentioned dropping a research project because a supervisor had “lost interest” in it.

Most participants described finding a “gap” in the secondary literature, or were made aware of such by a supervisor, which their research was designed to start filling. Several participants uncovered specific areas with little existing secondary literature while researching coursework assignments. One participant referred to the search for such gaps as a usual part of the research process. “You can often find a way into an interesting argument by locating a contradiction,” he explained, “especially a repeated pattern of contradictions in old arguments […] that’s one way of deciding you’ve got something.” Some participants described “creating” gaps by putting familiar works or arguments into new contexts. “Working with play texts in a new media,” explained one participant, “lets you think about the original media in ways

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that others might not have.” Another described himself as a “contextually comparative researcher and thinker”: “that’s just the way I try to shape my ideas [...] by taking something and trying to place it in a context that’s new and original. To me that’s the whole point of what I’m doing.”

Other sources of origin for research projects included MA thesis work, long-term research interests, funding proposals, work experience, and considerations of marketability.

**Shaping and Focusing Research Projects**

Several participants considered time constraints to be a significant factor in shaping and focusing their research projects, especially for those in the latter stages of their programs. The “clock ran out,” said one participant, exemplifying a common experience among several participants who decided to concentrate more on writing up projects than researching them as defense deadlines appeared on the horizon. “I had to kind of arbitrarily cut it off at some point” explained another participant, “or else it just goes on forever.” Similarly, another explained how “a lot of the time we start writing it up when the deadline approaches whether we’re finished or not.” Some participants managed this pressure by reading “only what was crucial” as the project deadline approached. None of the participants, however, reported feeling dissatisfied or disappointed due to time running out on a project. “No work of art is ever competed,” one participant added, “only abandoned.”

Several participants managed time constraints and swelling research projects by separating and collecting divergent research threads that could form the basis of future projects. One participant mentioned having “a whole list of other ideas around this dissertation that could be worked into articles.” “You’ve got all that stuff in your back pocket,” said another, “you go back, take a look at it, and what you have is much in the way of ongoing research.” Several participants described how such “threads” develop as one’s thinking about a topic necessarily changes over the course of what can often be years of research.

**Self Perception**

All participants, when asked, sharply differentiated their own research process from that of undergraduates. The most commonly cited difference was “knowing how to do things” and being familiar with a greater variety of resources. Several participants reported feeling more confident as graduate students than as undergraduates, and one felt that being a graduate student meant being taken more seriously. Some participants considered time constraints to be a significant factor in shaping and focusing their research. That said, several interviewees differentiated themselves from undergraduate students in that undergraduates often “have a mistaken belief that everything in the library is also on the [inter]net.” As well, several participants described themselves as having a greater awareness of the range of electronic resources at their disposal than most undergraduates.

It is worth adding that while most previous studies on humanists’ response to electronic information technology have focused on how humanists have adopted technology as a tool, humanists are increasingly looking at electronic information technology as the subject of research. Two participants in the present study, for example, were actively engaged in projects involving electronic contexts. As one participant explained, “my dissertation is almost an information technology project that has crossed paths with literature.”

**Interpersonal Contact**

Participants in this study reflect both faculty and undergraduate patterns of interpersonal contact during research. Like faculty, several participants regularly consult with colleagues and attend conferences. Like undergraduates, however, many rely heavily on instructors and supervisors, particularly during the initial stages a research project. It would appear that the “invisible college” is alive and well among graduate students just as it is with faculty, as several participants described consulting with distant colleagues. It would also appear that the gateway to this “invisible college” lies, for many graduate students, through project supervisors, whom several partic-
participants credited with pointing them to relevant experts in the field. As has been described in both faculty and undergraduate models, study participants do not rely heavily on librarians, although many pointed out the value of librarians and archivists in helping to locate hard-to-find materials.

Information Sources

The participants’ reliance on primary sources aligns them with the faculty model of research behavior, and several participants mentioned travelling to other locations and spending considerable time in archives and special collections. None of the participants, however, reported relying heavily on personal collections, which has been described as a feature of faculty research behavior. Though some participants had more prior subject knowledge than others at the outset of their projects, it could not be said that any participants began with “substantial” experience in their areas of research, which has also been described as a key feature of faculty behavior. It is also worth mentioning that several participants’ use of generic search engines such as Google is not consistent with any previous studies of faculty research behavior, though has been noted as a tendency among undergraduates.

Information Retrieval Patterns

None of the participants reported strong feelings of anxiety associated with tracking down research materials, which has commonly been described among undergraduates. In this regard, participants’ behavior reflects that of faculty members: a non-linear research process of scanning the shelves of libraries and bookstores and chasing citations which Karl J. Weintraub portrays as a type of detective work. As well, that many participants described themselves as “constantly reading” in their subject areas reflects Donald Case’s observation that humanist scholars monitor a continuous flow of information from various established sources.

Several participants described using databases and bibliographies during the initial stages of their research projects and using citation chasing with greater frequency as they gained subject experience. This tendency reflects Stephen Wiberley’s observation that humanist scholars generally consult databases and bibliographies more frequently when they step outside their traditional areas of research, preferring citation chasing once they become more familiar with the literature.

Process of Initiating Research Projects

Several participants described haphazard origins to their research projects, often starting out with only a vague notion of a project’s final form and shape. As one participant explained, it can be difficult for students in the early stages of a program to comprehend what a finished project might look like:

this week I’ve been spending the majority of my time actually reading a friend’s dissertation… I’ve actually found it to be a tremendously useful exercise because I now know what a dissertation looks like: a lot of people never read one before they start writing one.

Despite such uncertainty, participants did not report any substantial anxiety associated with the beginning stages of their research projects, nor did descriptions of their research habits imply “coping” strategies or a restriction of time or effort, all of which tendencies have been observed in undergraduates. However, participants also did not display faculty tendencies such as initiating projects with substantial subject knowledge and experience. Donald O. Case, for example, characterizes humanists as researchers who commonly “have a great deal of background knowledge of both literature of people, monitor a continuous flow if information from various sources, and have developed their own large bibliographic files based on footnotes and bibliographies.”

Focusing Research Projects

Participants’ reports of time pressures and impending deadlines reflect the undergraduate, assignment-driven research model more than that of humanities faculty researchers. However, the types of pressures and anxieties described do not reflect the undergraduate model, inasmuch as no participants reported being concerned about the quality of their work or the possibility of failing to meet assignment requirements.

Time pressures reported by faculty tend to be less about specific deadlines and more about finding time to research in a busy schedule. And while several graduate students also reported that finding time to research can be difficult, especially for those involved in teaching and conference projects, many agreed that graduate students have less research time overall than do many faculty researchers. “We’re forced to do this in a shorter period,” explained one participant, “I mean, some people work for ten years on a book; we don’t have ten years [and] writing a [doctoral] thesis is writing a book.” Several participants added that undergraduates often have less time than graduate students to complete assignments due to more numerous deadlines.

Discussion

The research question guiding this study was “Do the information seeking habits of humanities graduate students distinguish them from faculty and undergraduate models? If so, how?” The short answer to this question is that certain aspects of their information-seeking behavior do distinguish graduate students from undergraduates and faculty. Although there are substantial areas of overlap, the model of graduate student information-seeking behavior that emerges from this study is not a clear reflection of either faculty or undergraduate models. Some broad points of comparison illustrate the following:

Much like faculty, graduate students in the humanities:

• rely on subject experts at other universities and colleagues at home institutions for feedback and suggestions;
• are interested principally in primary materials and will travel to remote locations to obtain access to them;

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are comfortable with a “detective”-like approach to information seeking, involving browsing, citation chasing, and constantly reading within a subject, without substantial anxiety about deadlines or meeting assignment requirements; and

- tend to initiate research projects in haphazard, serendipitous ways.

Much like undergraduates, graduate students in the humanities:

- regularly use electronic information technology and often utilize generic Internet search engines to find general information on a topic;

- rely heavily on the advice and guidance of instructors and on course materials (where course assignments develop into theses and dissertations); and

- lack personal collections and substantial subject experience in the areas they are researching during the early stages of their programs.

Humanities graduate students are distinct from faculty and undergraduates inasmuch as they:

- rely very heavily on research supervisors during the initiation and development of their major research projects. The importance of this mentorship to the initiation, progress, and completion of humanities graduate students’ research projects cannot be overstated; and

- deal with time pressures unique to the progression of their programs, including comprehensive examination schedules, prospectus deadlines, and expectations of timely project progression and completion.

It is, however, potentially misleading to consider graduate students to be a single unique user group. Rather, a more accurate depiction would be a group constituting a unique series of stages. For example, a first year masters student may initially appear to have little in common with a PhD candidate preparing for defense. However, both students do appear to follow fairly predictable patterns as they progress through established stages of their programs. One such stage is the so-called “ABD” (all but dissertation) phase of the PhD program. Participants who have been through this stage all spoke of it as a unique period in their graduate careers, where an important transition takes place as students shift from coursework and comprehensive examinations towards concentration on their own major research projects.

“...potentially misleading to consider graduate students to be a single user group... more accurate description would be a group constituting a unique series of stages.”

Participants described this stage as a period of “taking stock,” breathing an “enormous sigh of relief,” and coping with “exhaustion,” all of which combine to make initiating dissertation projects somewhat overwhelming: “A lot of PhD students at this point seem to settle into a very comfortable state and crank out chapters very slowly,” said one participant, “[they] get distracted by doing a lot of other side projects.” Several participants also spoke of experiencing difficulty in meeting departmental pressure to be well into dissertation planning and research shortly after completing comprehensive examinations. Thus, while certain broad points of comparison distinguish humanities graduate students from undergraduate and faculty models, more work remains to be done in exploring the subtler points of comparison between particular stages of the graduate career. Areas worth exploring include coursework phases at year 1 of the MA and PhD, comprehensive examinations at the PhD level, thesis/dissertation initiation at the MA and PhD level, and the broader post-initiation/pre-defense period for MA and PhD programs.

Significance for Librarians

As this study suggests, humanities graduate students share common approaches to research that librarians should be aware of, but display differing needs at differing stages of their programs. Thus, it would be a profitable approach for librarians to begin thinking about services to graduate students in terms of particular “zones of intervention,” to borrow Carol Kuhlthau’s phrasing: by recognizing patterns in humanities graduate student research behavior at particular program stages, librarians can better provide key services to targeted groups. For example, most participants of this study utilized librarians mainly for tracking down specific works: a valuable service yes, but one that does not reach out to those in the more formative, early stages of their programs. Moreover, the results of this study suggest that those who have reached the stage of tracking down specific works have already passed the more critical stages of topic selection, focusing, and project initiation, and are thus, comparatively speaking, far less in need of help.

The results of this study also suggest that graduate students are passing through some extremely formative years in their academic careers, where evolving research habits will influence a lifetime of scholarship to follow. Moreover, the research threads and tangents that graduate students compile as they approach the end of their programs often provide the foundation of their research for the next five to ten years as professional scholars. As such, it would seem prudent for librarians to increase their profile and relevance among graduate students as a means of investing themselves in the research habits of future humanities faculty members.

Notes and References

1. This paper is dedicated to the valuable advice of my research supervisor, Dr. Lynne McKechnie, of the University of Western Ontario’s Faculty of Information and Media Studies.


17. Ibid.


20. Dilevko and Gottlieb, “Print Sources.”


22. Ibid.


24. Kuhlthau, “Students.”


30. Leckie, “Desperately Seeking.”

31. Dilevko and Gottlieb, “Print Sources.”


33. Weintraub, “The Humanist Scholar.”

34. Wiberley, “Habits.”


