Spring 2014

Newsletter, Spring 2014

Colgate University Libraries

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Academic library directors have resoundingly reported on the need for their libraries to dedicate their efforts to teaching information literacy to undergraduates. This top finding was just released in the US Library Survey 2013 report involving 499 not-for-profit four-year academic institutions in the U.S., ranging from small liberal arts institutions to big research universities. Undertaken by Ithaka S+R, an organization dedicated to understanding the impact of the digital transition on the scholarly communications ecosystem, this survey serves as a valuable source of information for academic libraries and institutions that are actively rethinking their missions, models, and methods of research, scholarship, and publication.

Further, like 78% of the other library directors responding to the Ithaka survey question, I responded positively to the statement: “Developing the research skills of my undergraduate students related to locating and evaluating scholarly information is principally my library’s responsibility.” My perspective on the increasing necessity for information literacy and research skills instruction has been informed by assessment efforts involving students and faculty here at Colgate.

In April 2010, Colgate sophomores, juniors and seniors participated in a national study of undergraduates called Project Information Literacy conducted by the Information School at the University of Washington. With a response rate of 409 or 20.74% (the highest among the 24 participating campuses), our students told us that:

- 86% have trouble getting started with research
- 81% seek to do a comprehensive investigation of their topic
- 70% had difficulty defining and narrowing a research topic
- 66% needed to improve their research skills
- 60% rarely or never asked a librarian for assistance
- 55% faced obstacles sorting through irrelevant documents for finding useful sources

Also, in the fall of 2011, faculty in Core Communities and Identities worked with Debbie Krahmer, Digital Learning and Media Librarian, to create and administer a survey to determine the extent to which students developed enhanced information literacy and academic research skills after experiencing an information literacy session taught by a librarian. Several student research behaviors improved after participating in an instruction session, including:

- Using library databases over internet search engines
- Using footnotes to cite others’ ideas
- Assessing whether a resource contains a bibliography
- Consulting with a reference librarian

The Libraries plan to do organizational strategic planning in late May. We will seek to map our goals and objectives to the university’s academic directions and this will entail revisiting the Libraries 2011 recommendations that Colgate explore how faculty may best leverage librarians’ knowledge of a rapidly changing information landscape to support learning and research and that additional effort is needed to be more inclusive of the understanding of a range of information literacies.

As we engage in strategic planning, we look forward to partnering with the faculty to determine the best ways in which we may help to improve student information literacy skills at Colgate.
Editor’s Note

The Tar Heel Connection

Just in case anyone’s counting, more Colgate librarians have studied at the University of North Carolina than any other college or university. Four of us went to school there, collectively earning a BA, an MA, and three MLS degrees.

The Newest Digital Learning Module

Librarians Sending Students on a “Quest for Questions”

Jesi Buell, Instructional Design and Web Librarian

Thinking creatively can be difficult. Finding an interesting question to pursue is often the largest stumbling block on the road of research. We generally have the incentive or drive to engage in scholarly conversation but are unsure of which questions to ask in order to spark a dialogue (especially one that would sustain multiple written pages). Luckily, the students of Colgate University have their librarians here to help!

On the Libraries’ homepage, there is a link to our “Beginning Research” page. It houses various materials to assist our patrons with their research. One of the newest additions to these tools is our “Quest for Questions” Digital Learning Object (DLO). Nested under the “Ask Good Questions” link, “Quest for Questions” is an interactive module that helps guide students in their pursuit for a great research question and is based on the chapter “From Topics to Questions” in Booth, Colomb, and Williams’s The Craft of Research (2008).

This interactive DLO walks a student through the process of brainstorming, choosing and assessing a potential research question. It begins by reinforcing the idea of research as a mechanism for scholarly conversation and that there are tools and methods to help students navigate the vast and unruly universe of knowledge at their fingertips.

“Quest for Questions” has a time commitment of between ten and twenty minutes, depending on how long the user spends researching potential topics. The module encourages interaction with Library reference materials in order to familiarize the students with potential topics and questions.

With what they have learned from these reference tools, the students explore different ways to approach a topic and formulate questions about it. They are prompted by various questions and input their own answers. At the end, the students have an option to print their results, which is beneficial to the student and potentially useful for the professor as well.

Faculty members who embrace a blended learning approach can assign this module before class and then discuss the results with the students in class. Those classes using this module as a pre-library instruction session assignment could better prepare their students for more productive library classes.

This DLO offers beginning researchers a structured means to approach the daunting task of research. It also allows professors to see how their students are utilizing lessons and materials in their assignments. “Quest for Questions” engages students through content, design, and multimodal interactivity that leaves them with the tangible result of their own brainstorming and pre-research.

Further questions or comments can be directed to Jesi Buell, jbuell@colgate.edu. Check it out for yourself here – http://exlibris.colgate.edu/beginningresearch/QuestforQuestions/story.html
Communicating Visually and Thinking Critically

Debbie Krahmer, Digital Learning and Media Librarian

Research posters are found all over Colgate campus, from the halls of the Ho Science Center to the basement of Persson Hall. More faculty are assigning posters as a way to encourage students to think visually in a media-rich world, as well as challenging them to express themselves more efficiently. When asked what her students found to be the hardest part of creating a research poster, Professor Aisha Musa didn’t hesitate to say, “The word limit.”

“For students who are used to writing a term paper and used to writing a lot, a word limit is really challenging.”

Since starting at Colgate as an Assistant Professor of Religion and Middle Eastern Studies & Islamic Civilization, Aisha Musa has transformed her traditional research assignments into podcasts, videos, posters, and Wikipedia editing assignments with the help of the Collaboration for Enhanced Learning (CEL). This fall, she assigned a poster project to her Life of Muhammad course. It was her first time using posters in a course.

“Podcasts are about words. Term papers are about words. Wikipedia mixes words and images. Videos mix words and images, but they’re used to using a lot of words.” Posters, on the other hand, are primarily a visual medium. There’s no soundtrack or narration, and if the posters are displayed outside of a poster salon, the students aren’t present to defend or supplement their visual work. Using the medium of the poster, Professor Musa forced her students to tell a story with images as the main rhetorical device.

In addition to a research-focused librarian-led workshop, students in the class attended a visual literacy/poster creation session. There, the students learned the basics of communicating visually and practiced evaluating posters. Poster assignments differ between disciplines and courses, with some concentrated more on presenting data, maps or other visualizations while others follow a strict textual approach. For her assignment, Professor Musa focused on a limited amount of words, and asked her students to use images, color and design to convey the rest of the story.

“It’s good for them to think about what are the most important things I need to express. How can I use color to express it? How can I use pictures to express it? What is it that I want to show to people? How can I show it to people without using words?”

Because of the word limit, students had to be creative with what they were presenting. One particular group wanted to convey the warmth that existed in Mohammad’s family relationships, but they didn’t want to spend their limited amount of words on it. They wound up using warm yellows and oranges in their design to express the warmth in the relationships they were displaying on the posters. During their oral presentations and in class discussions, all students in the course talked about how they used images, color and design to tell a bigger story than what they could present in just words.

In the end, the students are doing as much research and writing as they would for a regular research paper. Along with several milestone projects over the semester, the students were also required to give oral presentations and defend their choices in creating the poster. “One of the things that was really impressive about the poster project, even though it’s not something as public as Wikipedia or a video that goes up on YouTube, is they put a lot of thought into it.”

If you’re interested in working with CEL to transform a research project through technology, please contact the co-chairs Debbie Krahmer and Sarah Kunze at cel@colgate.edu.
The more students make use of the Libraries’ resources, the more successful they will be at Colgate. It is also important to realize that college libraries are very daunting environments for entering first-year students. Incoming students struggle with the larger size of college libraries, the vast array of digital and print offerings as well as the higher expectations for collegiate-level research. Libraries are a kind of hybrid learning space; combining the intimacy and direction of the classroom and the autonomy of a social, public space where students study, work, and interact. Libraries house important student services as well as information resources that impact student success and retention. Therefore, it is important to find ways of introducing library resources to students in interesting and effective ways.

Colgate Library Orientation ’13 sought to gradually introduce first-year students to a higher level library experience by first getting students acquainted with a new environment. We realize students have just arrived to campus. They are meeting new people in a new place and learning complex tasks, all of which may impact the rest of their lives. Pouring on the details of information literacy instruction so soon would stress out young people already in transition. Instead, the Libraries decided an independent exploration of the library was an appropriate introduction and welcome to college for first-year students.

Students’ success in college really depends on how well they are able to take advantage of the resources available to them. The information landscape is vast and varied. Finding one’s way around takes time and practice. Understanding this landscape is vital to successful research. First-year students enter a college library vastly different from their high school’s media center. The size and complexity of the average college library dwarfs many of the best high schools. The library is a major resource for students, crucial to their success on a variety of levels.

First-year library orientation was designed to begin a positive relationship between students and the library. Library Orientation ’13 had three very simple goals. First, acquaint students with library facilities and services. Second, show students that librarians and staff are available to help them. Finally, students’ participation in orientation would be active and engaging. The only information literacy instruction involved showing students how to retrieve a book. We felt it was important to make students comfortable using the library very quickly on a basic level. To this end, Library Orientation ’13 featured less lecture and a lot more exploring.

The main feature of Library Orientation 2013 took the form of a photo safari. Groups of students explored the building to find the location of specific facilities, then photographed themselves in the location with their smartphones. In addition, students registered for Interlibrary loan and the bibliographic management tool, Refworks. During the course of Orientation, students retrieved a library book from the stacks. For many first-year students, this was their first exposure to Library of Congress call numbers.

Upperclass-student Links also participated in Library Orientation. Besides providing a student perspective on research in Colgate libraries, the Links were responsible for scheduling and encouraging their FSEM groups to attend Library Orientation ’13. Thanks to the Links’ efforts, over 88% of Class of ’17 attended Library Orientation, an increase over Orientation ’12 which reached 73% of the first-year class. According to our 2012 exit surveys, many in Class of ’16 still had questions about the physical layout of the libraries and how to find and check out books. For Orientation ’13, we restructured orientation to feature the physical layout of the library, retrieving library materials and showing that librarians are helpful people. Adding the photo safari invited students to tour the library in an active and purposeful way.

Why this approach? It was important to keep orientation concise and effective. We had an hour to create a favorable impression on incoming students and provide them with some useful information. Having students explore the library with their peers in a photo scavenger hunt provided a more memorable experience than a guided tour or a lecture. Creating a favorable first impression was most important. Students spend a great deal of time in the library. Library resources are important to academic success and most students work independently in the library. Orientation ’13 provided a little guidance for students to begin exploring Colgate University Libraries in a way that was engaging and active. Students may have even had a little fun.
There is a Librarian in My Moodle!

Peter Rogers, Information Literacy and Social Sciences Librarian

Many courses at Colgate make use of the university’s learning management system (LMS), Moodle, and at the same time, the library works to provide online specialized course and subject guides. This spring, a pilot program examining how the library can provide better support for student scholarship through Moodle has been underway. The Colgate University Libraries (CUL), the Core Communities and Identities program, and Information Technology (IT) have worked together so that librarians can create customizable library resource blocks with links to email the librarian working with the class and to the class’s library resource page. Librarians can also read instructor-created material but have no access to student information or work, or the ability to edit a Moodle page other than the customizable library block.

Previously, CUL and IT tried a couple of different approaches to providing library information on Moodle. We have used both an automated system that populated a library block in Moodle with course-specific information based on a spreadsheet of all the courses taught in a term and a more generic library block that linked students to general library resources. From the library point of view, neither of these approaches provided exactly what we were looking for, the ability to reliably provide students with library and information resources specific to their classes and assignments.

Before proposing any changes to the current system, we conducted a literature search and email list survey to determine how other academic libraries work with Moodle and other LMS. All of the articles we read and all the institutions we heard from are wresting with our brave new world of providing some degree of information literacy instruction online, and many different avenues are being explored. However from the literature, we received a consistent message of the importance of librarian access to the campus LMS, and half of the respondents to our informal survey either had general librarian access to classes on their LMS or a librarian LMS administrator who could add other librarians to LMS classes.

At a meeting of the Committee for Information Technology (CIT), it was agreed that a pilot project granting librarians access to a limited set of class Moodle pages was the best route to follow. We also agreed to the strict limits on librarian access to Moodle laid out above: read-only access to instructor-created material, no access to student information or work, and the ability to only edit the customizable library block.

The interim Chair of Core CI is a member of CIT and Core CI classes are an important part of the libraries’ information literacy program, so it made sense for the pilot project to focus on these classes. At the start of the spring term, librarians were assigned to each of the seventeen Core CI classes, and these librarians created class resources guides for each in consultation with the teaching faculty. Twelve of the seventeen classes made use of Moodle, and specialized library blocks were created for all twelve.

Right now, we are getting feedback from teaching faculty and students, and we will be doing additional assessment over the summer looking at how students in these classes used online library material. Since we have not received any negative feedback about this new system, we anticipate going back to the CIT and getting permission to this approach university-wide.

NEW LIBRARIANS

Allyson Smally

Allyson Smally began a two-year term as a Processing Archivist with Special Collection and University Archives in November 2013. Her focus is on organizing and describing Colgate’s University Archives materials to ensure that they are in good order in the years leading up to Colgate’s Bicentennial in 2019. Allyson has an undergraduate degree in History from the University of Chicago, an MA in Public History from North Carolina State University, and an MLS from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As a graduate student, she worked at NC State, UNC, and Duke University. She also completed internships at the Connecticut Historical Society and the Hartford (Connecticut) History Center.

Matthew Smith

Matthew Smith is the new Head of User Services. He earned his MLS from the University at Albany (SUNY). Matt has been working in academic libraries since 2005 and prior to that he was an operations manager for a Fortune 500 company. He has coordinated consortial projects, served on system-level committees, implemented copyright compliance policies, chaired committees through two Middle States accreditations, served as parliamentarian of faculty council and institutional representative to the statewide faculty council, served as a union officer, and taught extensively as adjunct faculty and as a librarian. Also, he is a member of the paintball team that holds the 2011 Woodsball World Cup Amateur Division title.
As most of you know, Colgate University will celebrate its bicentennial in 2019. While this might seem like a long way off, preparations for such festivities begin years in advance, and the anniversary is sure to bring an increased interest in university history. Fortunately for researchers, Colgate’s University Archives, located in Case Library and Geyer Center for Information Technology, has an impressive array of material on this topic.

To ensure that researchers can take full advantage of this wealth of resources, the university created a two-year Processing Archivist position to organize and describe the historic documents in the Archives, and manage the influx of new university records being acquired by the Archives. I began work in this position in November 2013 after three years in North Carolina, where I earned an MA in Public History from North Carolina State University and an MLS from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The Archives include material generated by students, faculty, staff, and administrators during their time at Colgate. As you might imagine, this covers a wide range of items related to many different aspects of life at Colgate over the past two centuries. It encompasses material as diverse as academic departmental records, faculty committee minutes, student publications, scrapbooks, Colgate memorabilia (such as beanies, footballs and letter jackets), film reels, videocassette tapes, audio recordings, and many, many photographs.

The first step in organizing this material was to conduct a general survey of the Archives to determine what is there and where it is located. This included creating collections, a method that archivists often use to organize records. A collection is normally a group of documents that come from a common creator, such as a particular department, organization, or office.

I have completed the general survey and will now be going back to take a closer look at many of the collections, with input from my colleagues in Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) and the assistance of three hardworking student employees. We will be creating more detailed descriptions of the material to make it easier for researchers and staff to find what they are looking for in the Archives.

As these more detailed descriptions are created, we produce “finding aids” - guides that provide insight into the contents, origin, and organization of archival collections. Many are already available on SCUA’s website at http://exlibris.colgate.edu/speccoll/findaids.html, and we plan to add many more in the upcoming months. Making these guides available online gives researchers an opportunity to get a head start on their research before coming to the Archives and lets them evaluate for themselves how to best make use of the resources we have available.

Since coming to Colgate in November, I also have had the opportunity to work on a number of reference requests involving University Archives material. Photographs are some of the most commonly requested materials in the Archives. The Archives’ photograph collection documents everything from athletics to academics to special events on campus and includes official university photographs as well as student, alumni, and community work. The photographs illustrate how Colgate and its students have changed over the years and are a wonderful resource for potential researchers. Ensuring that the photographs are well-organized and described is one of our highest priorities moving forward.

As I continue my work in the Archives, I look forward to coming across more interesting documents and learning more about Colgate’s history. Anyone with a question on any aspect of Colgate history should feel free to contact me at asmally@colgate.edu.
In 2013, Colgate University Libraries officially made its foray into social media through our new Twitter and Tumblr accounts. With tools like Facebook now over a decade old, the idea to create these accounts is not particularly revolutionary. So why was it important for Colgate Libraries to do join the world of social media now?

The two major benefits to utilizing social media really speak to the heart of librarianship itself: promotion and discovery. We have the materials and we endeavor to create as many access points to them as possible. We also have the knowledge and pedagogical background to help students use, analyze, and understand these resources as well as present their findings. Twitter and Tumblr allow us to promote programming at the Libraries, stimulate interest in resources of which our users may be unaware, and ultimately give our users another way to engage with content.

Being good librarians, we did our research and perused recent scholarship to determine which platforms would best suit our needs. From there, we developed our own social media policy and implemented Twitter and Tumblr with an understanding of numerical data and best practices from our readings.

Twitter was chosen as our global reach tool in that it encompasses news, promotion, and discovery for the Libraries as a whole. Tumblr, on the other hand, specifically promotes Special Collections and University Archives materials that faculty, students, and other users may not know are included in our holdings. Tumblr gives a sneak peek into our unique collections and Colgate’s history. Using these mediums, our digital audiences are more diverse than those we can reach through traditional methods; about half of our followers are students and the rest are alumni, library professionals, and community members.

To those who frequent Case or Cooley, it is obvious that our Libraries are changing with the technological tides and the multifarious new ways users consume information. Libraries are no longer just a place for books; we house materials for the spectrum of literacies. Librarians are no longer shuffling through card catalogs; we are pioneering digital pedagogy and new approaches to the science of information. When we found that students already know how to imbibe content from these platforms as well as create and disseminate knowledge using them, we knew we had to be a part of this world as a source of support and advice. Librarians are increasingly developing technological expertise in order to support information literacy in and through these new mediums. It is important for us and other teaching faculty to reach students in these digital spaces to promote and support these modern literacies.

That being said, please –
Follow us on Twitter – @ColgateULibs
Follow us on Tumblr – http://scuacolgate.tumblr.com

* Since this article was written, Melissa has accepted the position of Team Leader, Scholarly Resources & Special Collections at Case Western University’s Kevin Smith Library. We’d like to wish her the best of luck there.
New Journals for Curricular Support

Emily Hutton-Hughes, Head of Collection Development

Last year, the Colgate Libraries petitioned the Dean of the Faculty for additional funds to support the curricular needs of incremental faculty positions hired over the past several years. Over the last decade the materials budget had been challenged by years of periodical price inflation at a rate of six to eight percent per year. We have experienced many years of not being able to add new subscriptions without canceling a subscription of equal value and thus were excited when those additional funds came through.

In December, after consultation with the Library Advisory Committee (LAC), librarian liaisons contacted the chairs of the affected departments (based upon a list of incremental faculty supplied by the Dean’s office) and asked for a short list of journals that were most needed for curricular support. Some of the new faculty were content with current subscriptions without canceling a subscription of equal value and thus were glad to bring to our attention journals which were needed for curricular support.

We gathered information about pricing, licensing, indexing, and local availability and in January a committee composed of Emily Hutton-Hughes and Mike Poulin from the Libraries and William Meyer, the LAC faculty representative, met to review all requests.

All journal requests were evaluated on the following criteria:

- Extent to which the title supports the Colgate curriculum. Special note will be taken of areas that are not well supported by other current journals in our collection.
- The number of students and faculty who would be likely to use the journal.
- The reputation of editors, contributors, and the publisher.
- Whether or not the journal is indexed in any of our databases. The more articles that are discoverable, the more likely the journal will be used.
- Price. Would it be more cost effective to interlibrary loan articles @ $30 per article?

The Committee evaluated requests for 20 journals and agreed to subscribe to 15 for a total of $15,365 annually. There are still some funds remaining, but we are waiting to hear from the two forthcoming faculty in Global Women’s Studies and Sustainable Technology before allocating the balance. While not all requests were granted, each faculty who responded was granted the journal they most desired for curricular support. Almost all of the new journals are now available for use and many of the online subscriptions come with several years of back file.

Bonus Economics Department Funding

In the course of discussions with the Chair of Economics, the department proposed a number of exchanges. They had a current subscription to S & P Compustat which they wished to cancel. They used the funds from that to purchase a new business and financial database called Mergent (see “Digital Developments” on the right). Additionally the library had a statistical monographic series which was no longer needed, and funds from that paid for four new journals, two of which were requested by the new incremental hire in Economics. So all told, we picked up one database and an additional four journals using funds outside the scope of this incremental serials project.

New Digital Resources

MergentOnline and Archives, Hoover’s Online, and FirstResearch

These new digital resources from Mergent (Dun and Bradstreet) support economics, investment, and corporate research. They provide immediate access to data on more than 10,000 NYSE, AMEX, NASDAQ and other select regional exchange companies. Coverage includes: history, business description, properties, subsidiaries, officers, directors, long-term debt, Moody’s rating, capital stock, income statement, balance sheet, statements of cash flow, number of employees, number of shareholders, annual stock price ranges, stock splits, and Moody’s news reports. These databases are provided with the support of the Economics Department.

Cambridge Edition of the Complete Works of Ben Jonson Online

The digital edition presents Jonson’s complete writings for readers of the twenty-first century, in the light of current editorial thinking and recent scholarly interpretation and discovery.

International Newsstand (Proquest)

This database replaces World News Connection which has transitioned to archive status due to the cutting of federal government funding for the program that provided the translated news articles. The new database provides information from more than 660 of the world’s top newspapers including The Bangkok Post, El Norte, Financial Times, The Guardian, Jerusalem Post, South China Morning Post, The Daily Telegraph, and Asian Wall Street Journal.

Roper Center for Public Opinion Research and iPOLL

The iPOLL Databank is a comprehensive, up-to-date resource for US public opinion poll data. RoperExpress allows download of datasets for more than 3,400 studies in ASCII or SPSS formats.

Upgraded Databases

Artimis

Artimis is an improved interface from Gale which allows simultaneous searching of the contents of Literature Resource Center and the literature reference titles within the Gale Virtual Reference Library.

Literature Online (LION)

LION is a fully searchable library of over 350,000 full-text works of English and American literature. Coverage of literary criticism includes access to the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature and 383 full-text journals. The interface for this valuable resource has been extensively revised, improving the discoverability of its content.