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Reading Habits Across Disciplines: A Study of Student E-book Use

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Reading Habits Across Disciplines
A Study of Student E-book Use

Lee Cummings | Anne Larrivee | Leslie Vega
BU at a glance

University Demographic

- 13,000 Undergrads
- 3,000 Grads

Library Stats

- 2.5 million texts
- Over 475,000 electronic texts
Hypothesis

The data obtained will assess preferences in regards to print vs. e-book usage.

- **Aiding collection development**
- **Observing subject-specific trends**
- **Conclusions drawn = previous assumptions?**
Methodology + Survey Design

- 9 Questions
- 3 BU colleges
- 2 months (Oct-Nov)

Influential Articles


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline / Departments</th>
<th>Total Population of department</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>Percent of Population who responded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❖ <strong>Art &amp; Art History</strong></td>
<td>185</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ <strong>College of Community and Public Affairs (CCPA)</strong></td>
<td>772</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>10.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ <strong>Watson School of Engineering &amp; Applied Science</strong></td>
<td>2,747</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>5.3 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is your class or academic rank?

**Art & Art History:** 55.6% Graduate Students

**Engineering:** 32.9% Graduate Students

**CCPA:** 73.8% Graduate Students
With which department are you primarily affiliated?

**Participation**

- **Art & Art History**
  - 15%
  - 27 respondents/185

- **Engineering**
  - 5%
  - 146 respondents/2.745

- **CCPA**
  - 11%
  - 81 respondents/755
In the course of your academic studies, have you used books from the collections of Binghamton University Libraries?

- **Art & Art History**: 93% YES
- **Engineering**: 52% NO
- **CCPA**: 65% YES

58% students have used physical books
When using books from the libraries, do you prefer print or electronic books (e-books)?

Note: For the purposes of this survey, e-books include electronic versions of any books which can be read electronically and accessed through the libraries' catalog, Find It!, or the subscription databases. Please exclude electronic journal articles, government documents, and e-books available freely on other websites.
Art & Art History:
More than 5 times a semester = 37.5%, never = 16.7%

Engineering:
More than 5 times a semester = 9.4%, never = 37.5%

CCPA:
More than 5 times a semester = 17.6%, never = 17.6%

How often do you use e-books from the libraries?
Total e-book usage across departments

- Less than once per semester
- 1-5 X per semester
- More than 5 X per semester
- Never
Important E-book Features

- Easy navigation of chapters / sections
- Ability to download the e-book
- E-book is always accessible (multiple concurrent users)
- Ability to print from the e-book
- PDF version available
- Other (please specify)

**Most important feature**
- PDF availability

**Least important feature**
- Printing (Engineering & Arts)
- Downloading (CCPA)

**Overall Differences**
Do you have a preferred e-book platform?

**Art & Art History**
1. JSTOR, Project Muse
1. ACLS Humanities E-books

**Engineering**
1. PDF
2. Safari books

**CCPA**
5. EBSCO or EBSCOhost
1. JSTOR
1. Oxford Scholarship Online
1. PDF version
When accessing e-books from the libraries, what type of device do you most often use?

Desktop computer, Laptop computer, E-book reader (i.e. Kindle, Nook), Tablet computer (i.e. iPad, Galaxy Tab), Mobile Phone

**Art & Art History**
Laptop Computer 68.4%

**Engineering**
Laptop Computer 76.9%

**CCPA**
Laptop Computer 48.7%
Almost half of readers under 30 read an e-book in the past year
Among those in each age group who read at least one book in the past year, the % who read an e-book during that time

Review of the E-book Literature

“If it’s too inconvenient, I’m not going after it.”
(Connaway et al., 2011)

E-book use and attitudes
❖ Arts
❖ Engineering
❖ Social Sciences
❖ Comparative Studies

“A Snapshot of Reading in America in 2013”
January 16, 2014
by Kathryn Zickuhr and Lee Rainie
Frequently Mentioned

ACCESS (14)
- Convenience
- Location

Complaints (13)
- E-book features (9)
- Selection (4)

Unaware (5)

Frequent Terms:
- E-book readers (5)
- Textbooks (7)
- Convenience (8)
- Access (11)
Format Preference Comments

**Print** - selection, read anywhere, can write inside, image quality, kinesthetics, not a screen, sift-able

**E-books** - convenient, accessible, weight, ease of searching, e-highlighting and notes

**Journals** - easier to cite
“Print books are particularly important to art historians and others who look at images frequently.”  ART HISTORY

“Just have everything available online please.”  ENGINEERING

“… Ebooks are hard to navigate and crosslink. I always preferred printed books. However, if there's an efficient way to crosslink related topics in ebooks, I think it will be helpful.”  ENGINEERING

“End of print books = End of Civilization”  CCPA