Bridging the Information Gap:
Libraries’ Inclusion of the LGBT Community
An Annotated Bibliography

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Introduction and Scope

This bibliography explores services libraries are providing and the limitations of these services to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) populations. The articles found in this bibliography discuss which types of services are beneficial and should be available to these individuals through their local libraries. The research delves into the unique information needs of each group from an early age continuing through adulthood. After understanding the needs of this population some of the research takes the next step towards recommending collection development procedures, appropriate subject heading allocation, as well as creating a safe space where these individuals can feel comfortable accessing the information they need. The research found in this bibliography was published mostly in North America between 1999 and 2010 to ensure that the most recent data was included. People who identify as bisexual and transgender are drastically underrepresented in this field and, therefore, most of the research presented focuses on gay and lesbian individuals and their experiences with the library.

Description

Throughout history the LGBT community has overcome and continues to encounter many obstacles in society including but not limited to physical and verbal harassment, discriminating laws and homophobic individuals and governments. The American Library Association has acknowledged in its interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights that individuals and library materials should not be discriminated against or censored based on sexual orientation (Curry, 2005, p. 66). It is one thing for the association to layout the groundwork but it is another for libraries to follow through with this promise, especially given the overly conservative political/religious culture of some communities. The research in this bibliography lays the groundwork for what has been done in regards to collection development, outreach, inclusion and the improvements that are desired. The voices of the LGBT individuals as well as participating librarians have been documented to provide thoughtful ways to create an inclusive environment for the entire community. The general consensus amongst all of the research is that more needs to be done in order to have a firm grasp on this subject.
This paper focuses on the LGBT community, however, it should be noted that there are members of the queer community who do not identify with any of these particular adjectives. These individuals prefer no labels or prefer to identify with adjectives that better suit them. Their needs and information use should be respected the same as any individual in our community and should also be included in the research. For the purpose of this paper the term LGBT is applied because this is the term most regularly used in research, it is not meant to leave any member of the community out.

Summary of Findings

The research explains that the LGBT population is an invisible minority (Mehra & Braquet, 2007, p. 253). Unlike many other minorities in the world you cannot tell who they are based on outward appearance or whether a member of the community you serve identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Oftentimes people will think that no one from the LGBT population lives in their community and therefore it is unnecessary to provide information or services relating to LGBT issues. On the other hand the rising visibility of the LGBT population in the media and marketing services has demonstrated that there is a large audience waiting to be reached out to (Norman, 1999, p. 189).

LGBT youth are particularly vulnerable in today’s society. Curry points out that, “one-third of gay and lesbian youth say they have attempted suicide at least once, about 30 percent have dropped out of school and as many as 40 percent of homeless youth are gay” (Curry, 2005, p. 67). These children need safe spaces as well as literature depicting people similar to themselves to identify with (Curry, 2005). It is the responsibility of the library to treat all of these youth with respect and to have an open mind. Furthermore, it requires that the library have resources such as fiction and nonfiction books, websites, support services, information on the “coming out” process, LGBT events, social networking, health and legal information available and on hand to provide when asked (Mehra & Braquet, 2006 & 2007). Curry (2005) noted that librarians need to be trained on what resources are available and where to find them.

Libraries need to evaluate their collections and determine if the information they are providing is inclusive. Boon and Howard (2004) found that Canadian libraries are inconsistent
in their collection development. The quality of the collection is dependent upon the location of
the library within the country. Goldthorp (2007) acknowledges that lesbian fiction is
underrepresented in Scotland and that these women will oftentimes order their books from the
internet as opposed to going to their library. The studies done on collection development are
few, however, more work needs to be done to figure out a successful way to measure the
quality of the collection. Moss (2008) uses an inductive check-list method to analyze the
collection at the Louisville Free Public Library which seems to be the most accurate method
used thus far. There needs to be more inductive studies done to be able to compare results
and set a standard for what is “good enough.”

Once libraries have established sizeable collections it is necessary that one be able to
locate the information within it. A couple of studies have been done evaluating the subject
headings used over time to categorize LGBT information. McClary (2007) acknowledges that
LGBT individuals are not likely to seek help when looking for information for fear of
embarrassment, outing themselves in public, or breaches of confidentiality, therefore it is
necessary that information be accessible (p. 158). In her study she finds that adult titles had
more specific subject headings than young adult titles which were labeled “homosexuality”
(McClary, 2007). This brings up an excellent point of consistency and whether it is better to be
more specific and inconsistent or broad and consistent. McClary (2007) also brings up the idea
of social tagging to make information accessible. Carmichael (2002) finds that information
regarding Gay published works has increased drastically and is available through subject
heading searches on WorldCat, however, he notes that these subject headings also bring up
offensive works regarding the LGBT community. He wonders, “how works can be clearly
identified by subject in such a way as to not offend the tenets of intellectual freedom, one
interpretation of which would consider a subdivision of “Homosexuality” such as “homophobic
works” a form of labeling that would constitute censorship” (Carmichael, 2002, p. 86). Similar
to subject headings, placement is also key to accessibility. Norman (1999) finds that creating a
central location that is well labeled creates more awareness and a user friendly way to find
information that is not stigmatizing.
The research shows that there needs to be dialog between librarians and the LGBT community. Lukenbill (2002) discusses the ramifications of letting things continue as they are. His research focuses on the preservation of LGBT history and the terrible situation these archives find themselves in because of lack of funding but also because of a lack of networking with the general population as well as professional librarians. Lukenbill (2002) calls for bringing together these groups to be able to present a comprehensive history of the LGBT population for the world. In a different vein, Pruitt (2010) argues that there needs to be dialog as well. His research focuses on gay book groups and public libraries and how the lack of dialog has resulted in a misunderstanding between these two groups in Wisconsin. Dialog is the only way that we as a society are going to be able to learn about each other and work together to achieve positive results.

One group that is rarely mentioned in the research is those who identify as transgender. These individuals are oftentimes bunched under the LGBT heading and yet their needs are often ignored (Beiriger & Rose, 2007; Taylor, 2002). Most of the research focuses on the medical, health, and legal information this group often seeks when undergoing transition or researching to fulfill their general information needs. Beiriger and Rose (2007) make excellent recommendations based on their findings that are often overlooked by libraries and can be fairly easy to implement. These recommendations include providing safe spaces, creating gender neutral bathrooms, eliminating or making optional the gender category on a library card and being inclusive and informative (p. 59).

Burke (2008) indicates that the opinions of the LGBT population are growing in positivity over the years. This is great not only for the LGBT community but also for libraries who may face resistance from communities that are not open minded and welcoming (Burke, 2008). Librarians can use this information to assess the impact of having certain materials in the library that are challenged by certain groups or individuals. They can make more informed choices and know that they have the support of the community behind them while they are providing services to LGBT individuals.

Bibliography

**Abstract:** “Researchers set out to determine, through a community needs assessment, whether there are specific informational needs within the Transgender population of a metropolitan area that have not been identified or are not being adequately addressed by libraries. Information regarding the unique types of material, format, and modes of accessibility the members of the local Transgendered community prefer also was assessed. This article presents findings of the survey and the resulting recommendations as they pertain to library collection development.”

**Annotation:** This article is important to the research done in the field of library science and the LGBT community mainly because it focuses its energy on the transgender community which is often forgotten. This relatively recent study provides incredibly useful information on the information needs of those individuals. While it is specific to those individuals living in Portland, OR it sets up a model for assessing a city’s population and the important things to keep in mind while working with people who identify as transgender. The language used in this article was appropriate, you could tell that Beiriger and Jackson listened to the community they were working with.

**Search Strategy:** I used Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) because this database contains a number of scholarly sources within the field of Library Science. I limited the search by title/abstract in order to weed through articles that were not relevant.

**Database:** Library and Information Science Abstracts

**Method of Searching:** Title Search

**Search String:** Library services or Libr* in Abstracts AND Gay or Lesbian or Bisexual or Transgender or Transsexual or LGBT in Title


**Abstract:** “Analyzes selected Canadian public libraries’ holdings of young adult fiction with gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender content published between 1998 and 2002 in order to measure access to such fiction and to determine whether any evidence of bias on the part of selectors exists. Identifies 35 titles published between 1998 between 1998 and 2002, a slight decrease from the previous five year period. These titles attracted 34 percent fewer reviews per title as compared to a randomly selected control group of non-lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender fiction for teens (LGBT) titles. On average, in nine Canadian public libraries studied, significantly fewer copies of each LGBT title were held, as compared to the list of control titles. Without further investigation, the paper could not conclude whether
this difference constitutes evidence of significant bias on the part of selectors. However, the data do show that certain libraries are significantly more likely to purchase the control titles than the LGBT titles, and that access to these titles varies according to one’s location in Canada.”

Annotation: Boon and Howard are sited frequently throughout research regarding LGBT individuals and libraries. This article provides information on collection development and whether or not the LGBT population is appropriately represented in these collections. It also looks at subject headings and the importance of accessibility. The study was comprehensive; however, bisexual and transgender individuals were underrepresented in their research. It was useful to learn about reviews and the influence on purchasing.

Search Strategy: I used Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) because this database contains a number of scholarly sources within the field of Library Science. I limited the search by title/abstract in order to weed through articles that were not relevant.

Database: Library and Information Science Abstracts

Method of Searching: Title Search

Search String: Library services or Libr* in Abstracts AND Gay or Lesbian or Bisexual or Transgender or Transsexual or LGBT in Title


Abstract: “Gay images have slowly become integrated into mainstream cultural venues over the last forty years, including publishing. Studies show that gay-themed materials in libraries are targets of censorship attempts. Are these attempts reflections of the opinions of the majority of the population or of a vocal minority? The information in this study contributes over thirty years of trend data on the general public’s view of the censorship of gay-themed materials in libraries. This information can be useful to library policy makers and those faced with materials challenges.”

Annotation: This study is great because it provides a long range study on opinion trends during a thirty year span. The study goes further to break down the results by demographics including age, education, location, parental status, race, etc. The most useful components of this research are the tables that are provided which give a visual to the demographic breakdown over time. It is the only study available which represents the attitude towards the LGBT population in relation to materials found in public libraries.
Search Strategy: I used Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) because this database contains a number of scholarly sources within the field of Library Science. I limited the search by title/abstract in order to weed through articles that were not relevant.

Database: Library and Information Science Abstracts

Method of Searching: Title Search

Search String: Library services or Libr* in Abstracts AND Gay or Lesbian or Bisexual or Transgender or Transsexual or LGBT in Title


Abstract: What do searchers find when they look for literature on homosexuality? This question has profound implications for older as well as younger gays in their coming out, as well as in their subsequent identity development. Library records provide credible data to answer the question, since they represent relatively free sources of information, unlike data from bookstores, publishers, and some World Wide Web sites. The records of WorldCat, the world’s largest union database of library records, comprise over 30 million records listed in the Online Computer Library Center. For the purposes of the study, 18,757 records listed under “Homosexuality,” “Gay Men,” and “Gays” were downloaded; records for “Lesbian” and “Lesbians” were not examined. Findings of the study suggest that while there has indeed been considerable growth in terms of the quantity of gay literature produced since 1969, such gains may be offset by the deteriorating quality of cataloging copy, which makes the experience of browsing records a discouraging and confusing one.

Annotation: Carmichael provides great insight into subject headings allocated to literary or media works related to the LGBT population. One of the most useful items found in the research is the qualitative distinctions that are made between each of the Library of Congress subject headings relevant to LGBT issues. This is the only study that I was able to find which focused mainly on subject headings over time and provided a detailed analysis of items catalogued in OCLC, not just one particular public library system. This article is able to take out the influence of local libraries to paint the bigger picture of subject headings and the effect on accessibility.

Search Strategy: I found this article mentioned in the McClary’s research and thought it would be useful.

Database: N/A

Method of Searching: Footnote Chasing
Search String: Referenced in:


Abstract: “For gay and lesbian youth, the public library can be a key resource for information about emerging and often-confusing sexual feelings. A good reference librarian can mean the difference between the youth fleeing the library or considering the library a helpful refuge. This article reports the results of an unobtrusive observation study in British Columbia in which a youth asked a gay and lesbian-related question at twenty different public library reference desks. The behaviors and verbal responses of the reference librarians were recorded afterward by the youth on an observation checklist based on the RUSA Guidelines for Reference Behavior. Most of the librarians scored acceptably in areas such as maintaining confidentiality but the study showed that improvement is needed in other areas such as conducting a good reference interview and awareness of relevant gay or lesbian book or Web resources.”

Annotation: This study is unique because it allows a young female to go “undercover” to ask librarians questions pertaining to a gay-straight alliance club. This study brings up excellent points throughout the article regarding the way librarians interact with a patron, respect the patron, and how they go about conducting a reference interview. The study is quite insightful; however, one woman’s question about gay-straight alliances does not reflect how a gay or lesbian individual would be received by the library which is what the study considers one and the same.

Search Strategy: I used Dialog’s One Search option to search various keywords in the Library and Information Services category. Social SciSearch was a database that retrieved many hits that I had not yet searched. I then proceeded to search through Social SciSearch using a more refined search.

Database: Social SciSearch (Dialog)

Method of Searching: title search

Search String: s homosexuality or sexual orientation or sexual identity or lgbt or glbt or gay or bisexual or transgender or transsexual/ti s library services or libraries or library or library policy or user needs/ti s s4 and s5

**Abstract:** “This paper explores how Scottish public library services have responded to providing a service to a virtually invisible minority group, i.e. lesbians who enjoy reading lesbian fiction. The evidence that provides the foundation for the results discussed in this paper was drawn from the following sources: a study of the 32 public library services in Scotland, conducted through an e-mail/postal survey on lesbian fiction; an analysis of online public library websites and catalogues; workshops and focus groups with library workers and newly qualified librarians; women who identify as lesbian or bisexual and read lesbian fiction; and a questionnaire on lesbian fiction distributed through recognized lesbian forums and publications. The research found there to be an inequity of service provision for lesbians in terms of recreational reading and, in the light of this, recommends a reassessment of certain library practices. In particular, there is a need to raise awareness of LGBT people among library workers by encouraging contact with LGBT people and their support networks and providing diversity training linked with raining in how to develop collections of lesbian and gay fiction and how to promote those collections to their main audience.”

**Annotation:** This article is unique because it focuses on the lesbian population in Scotland and the library’s lack of support for this population. Goldthorp conducts her research through a number of different means allowing for information to be obtained from patrons and library staff. The feedback from individuals in this study is most useful as well as the information describing market book vendors verses libraries who aim to serve lesbians in Scotland.

**Search Strategy:** For this search I used the ERIC database and browsed the thesaurus using various terms. After many attempts I was able to determine which terms to use as controlled vocabulary.

**Database:** ERIC

**Method of Searching:** Controlled Vocabulary

**Search String:** Homosexuality or sexual orientation or sexual identity AND library services or outreach programs or user needs


**Abstract:** “Reviews the development of the gay and lesbian movement. The theoretical foundations for gay and lesbian archives and libraries are discussed together with the way in which their mission statements reflect concerns for their history, heritage and the need to correct the past neglect of the gay and lesbian role in society. The problems faced by the
archives and libraries include funding and that they rely mainly on volunteer help. Much of the pre-1960’s material is in danger of deterioration and of being lost since there is not adequate cataloguing and listing of documents. There is a need for national databases of collections, networking and digitization.”

**Annotation:** Lukenbill’s study takes a look at lesbian and gay libraries and archives in North America evaluating their goals and acknowledging the difficulties that are faced maintaining these libraries. This is one of the only articles I was able to locate that focuses on archives specifically. The most useful item in this article is the history of the LGBT’s population attempt to preserve what they have/had. It focuses on the need to bring together library professional organizations with LGBT organizations to promote community preservation.

**Search Strategy:** I used Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) because this database contains a number of scholarly sources within the field of Library Science. I limited the search by title/abstract in order to weed through articles that were not relevant.

**Database:** Library and Information Science Abstracts

**Method of Searching:** Title Search

**Search String:** Library services or Libr* in Abstracts AND Gay or Lesbian or Bisexual or Transgender or Transsexual or LGBT in Title


**Abstract:** “This study examines whether gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender-specific subject headings are being assigned to young adult and adult fiction in five urban Canadian public libraries, what these subject headings are, and how consistently they are applied. The study also compares findings for YA and adult fiction with main and secondary GLBT characters.”

**Annotation:** McClary raises the point that individuals from the LGBT population are less likely to ask for help when visiting the library and therefore accessibility is incredibly important. She examined subject headings for adult and young adult books in Canadian public libraries to see if they were efficient. Her analyses of the collections are thorough and the tables provided are very useful. She also makes the suggestion of using social tagging. McClary is the only individual to make this suggestion from what I have seen so far.

**Search Strategy:** I used Dialog’s One Search option to search various keywords in the Library and Information Services category. Social SciSearch was a database that retrieved many hits that I had not yet searched. I then proceeded to search through Social SciSearch using a more refined search.
Database: Social SciSearch (Dialog)

Method of Searching: title search

Search String: s homosexuality or sexual orientation or sexual identity or lgbt or glbt or gay or bisexual or transgender or transsexual/ti
s library services or libraries or library or library policy or user needs/ti
s s4 and s5


Abstract: “The need for progressive change in people’s attitudes and behaviors is essential for a communitywide acceptance of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals. This article examines our role as library and information science (LIS) professionals working in an academic environment to promote equality of sexual minorities by taking community action and creating social awareness and acceptance on their behalf. Findings based on qualitative studies and action research conducted in the University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK) help identify typical barriers and challenges faced by local LGBTQ individuals toward self-fulfillment and social and political empowerment. Research participants share their marginalizing experiences that paint a picture of slow acceptance reflected in the lukewarm campus and community climate of support toward LGBTQ individuals. It forms the contextual motivation for the authors as openly gay LIS professionals to promote “top ten” prioritized community actions of “what do we need to do” and “how do we do it” on behalf of people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Current directions of progress made in the UTK academic environment over a period of two years are shared in this paper. Future efforts are also identified that require extending traditional library functions of information provision to reflect contemporary nontraditional expectations of relevance that include proactive social justice efforts for libraries and LIS professionals to come out of the closet in support of people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.”

Annotation: This article provides research on librarians’ responsibilities to the LGBT population in academic settings. While the research seems comprehensive there is bias at times from both authors. These two individuals identify as openly gay and are employed by the university they are studying. This is both a positive and a negative in terms of achieving unbiased results.

Search Strategy: I used Dialog’s One Search option to search various keywords in the Library and Information Services category. Social SciSearch was a database that retrieved many hits that I had not yet searched. I then proceeded to search through Social SciSearch using a more refined search.

Database: Social SciSearch (Dialog)
Method of Searching: Keyword/abstract search

Search String: s homosexuality or sexual orientation or sexual identity or lgbt or glbt or gay or bisexual or transgender or transsexual/ab s library services or libraries or library or library policy or user needs/ab s s4 and s5


Abstract: “Based on qualitative analysis of data gathered during in-depth narrative interviews and informal discussions about “queer” youth experiences with twenty-one “queer” individuals, this paper presents a “queer” manifesto of library interventions in support of “queer” youth during various phases of the coming out process. Important characteristics of coming out are discussed, especially as a life-long process for “queer” individuals to acknowledge their sexuality and share that awareness with others. Significant concerns and challenges faced by “queer” youth during different phases in their coming out experiences provide a context for the identification of library interventions that reflect (and require) extending traditional library functions of information provision as well as fulfilling non-traditional expectations that include proactive social justice efforts for libraries to come out of the closet in support of “queer” youth.”

Annotation: This article provides insight into the concerns of youth during the coming out process and suggestions of services that libraries can provide to ease the transition. The tables in this study are very useful, they help to break down the findings from the interviews and outline suggested recommendations. The study is limited by the individuals that were interviewed. The interviews were mostly reflective from an individual who has long ago gone through the coming out process as opposed to individuals who are currently faced with these challenges.

Search Strategy: I conducted a search in Library Literature & Information Science Full-Text because it is noted for having valuable information pertaining to the field. For this search I conducted a keyword search to gain a sense of what was available.

Database: Library Literature & Information Science Full-Text

Method of Searching: Keyword Search

Search String: gay or lesbian or transgender or bisexual or transsexual AND libraries

**Abstract:** “The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the overall quality of the Louisville Free Public Library’s gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender collection. The study implements an inductive check-list method. Where other check-lists compare a list to the collection, ignoring the number of items which do not appear on the list, an inductive method takes a sample of the entire collection, and compares it with several evaluative lists, demonstrating what percentage of the collection is not considered ‘desirable’ by common evaluative lists. The results found that 31.9 percent of the LFPL’s GLBT collection can be found in the evaluative lists used. Previous inductive evaluations suggest this number indicates a quality core GLBT collection. A sample collection was chosen using GLBT-related subject headings; however, evidence shows that a portion of the actual GLBT collection (perhaps as much as 37.5 percent) lack appropriate subject access control. This results in a potentially flawed sample. This study provides public librarians with a standard by which they can evaluate their GLBT collections and their library’s attempt to meet the needs of a frequently underrepresented minority. Very few inductive evaluations have been published, and almost none has been published studying GLBT collections. The paper attempts to fill that gap, and provide a deeper standard by which GLBT collections can be evaluated.”

**Annotation:** Moss does an incredible job at describing the inductive research method in her article. This strategy seems like a very efficient way to measure collection efficiency, however, the results are difficult to assess because studies like this for LGBT collections do not exist to perform a comparison. It is important that Moss has introduced this method to this specific topic and hopefully others can expand upon the work that she has started.

**Search Strategy:** For this search I returned to the LISA database because my first search yielded good results. I looked through the thesaurus to come up with a controlled vocabulary to refine my search.

**Database:** Library & Information Science Abstracts

**Method of Searching:** Controlled Vocabulary

**Search String:** Homosexuality AND Libraries


**Abstract:** “Reports results of a questionnaire survey of users of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Collection (LGB) located in, and shared between, Brighton Central Library and nearby Hove Central Library, UK; to determine who uses it, reasons for use, what resources are used and the
benefits of having a separate and centralized collection. Questionnaires were made available at the two libraries with sealed boxes provided in which to deposit responses to ensure anonymity and confidentiality and were available November and December 1997. Forty four completed questionnaires were received and the results were analyzed using SPSS. The importance of the Collection to the LGB community was confirmed, but the view that such collections also serve the wider community could not be supported from the profile of respondents. Concludes that separate collections aid information access that concerns of ‘ghettoization’ seem unfounded. A centralized collection increases access and availability and bibliographies aid access and possibly lead to greater use. Most respondents use the LGB Collection for recreational use, particularly fiction, highlighting a gap in research literature and showing that even advocates of LGB Collections have underestimated this need.”

Annotation: Even though this article is a bit dated it is one that is sited many times in the research found in this field and provides insightful information for its time. Norman explores the impact of accessibility through collection location within the library as well as a focus on fictional and nonfictional information needs of the LGB population. This study is comprehensive and a good jumping off point for further studies.

Search Strategy: I came across this article when I was reading the Taylor 2002 article. A few other authors all cited this article so I thought it would be an important one to include. I checked the reference citation and found the article.

Database: N/A

Method of Searching: Footnote Chasing

Search String: Referenced in:


Abstract: “Because of an absence of dialogue, a tense relationship appears to exist between Wisconsin’s gay men’s book discussion groups and other local public libraries. Public library directors express interest in accommodating these groups if approached but face budget restrictions and local communities that may oppose these gatherings; gay men’s book clubs prefer meeting in private homes and other openly gay-friendly environments largely because of the conservatism of cultural institutions in their collective memories. This qualitative study argues that, with consistent dialogues, gay discussion groups can help public libraries achieve their missions of diversifying their patrons, collections, and services, and that public libraries can assist gay communities with establishing themselves in the city or county’s history by hosting visible public discussions of gay texts as markers of an entire community’s cultural heritage.”
Annotation: While other articles have been assessing what services to provide to the LGBT population this article attempts to figure out if the gay population is interested in working with the library. The findings show that there needs to be more dialogue between these two groups. Libraries have long been seen as institutions supporting homophobia and the individuals in this study seem reluctant to give up their private venues for a public community venue. The interview conversations found within this article are genuine and provide insight into the struggles that gay men are facing in these Wisconsin counties.

Search Strategy: I used Dialog’s One Search option to search various keywords in the Library and Information Services category. Social SciSearch was a database that retrieved many hits that I had not yet searched. I then proceeded to search through Social SciSearch using a more refined search.

Database: Social SciSearch (Dialog)

Method of Searching: keyword search

Search String: homosexuals or sexual orientation or sexual identity or lgbt or glbt or gay or bisexual or transgender or transsexual or library services or libraries or library or library policy or user needs


Abstract: “The confusion between gender identity and sexual orientation raises questions for library services. Previous studies on the information needs and information uses of the GLBT community have mostly ignored transgender people. Ridinger (1996) and Norman (1999) barely mention transgender information needs. Fikar and Keith (2004) found that transgender individuals have different information needs than homosexuals and bisexuals. Their study mentioned specialized needs on topics such as hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery. However, the Fikar and Keith study only addressed medical information. There have been few if any studies aimed at the transgender community’s broader information seeking behavior. This study attempts to fill this gap. It will also address how information needs change over time. Additionally, the subcomponents of the transgender community will be studied to see if there are different information needs within the community.”

Annotation: Similar to the Beiriger article this article is unique because it researches people who identify as transgender and their information seeking behavior. Taylor raises a number of useful points through the research presented, however, it is filled with language that is outdated and can be offensive to transgender individuals. The sample population was also small and unrepresentative of the general population. While this article has some faults there is valuable information found within the survey results which is useful when coupled with other works regarding transgendered individuals.
**Search Strategy:** I used Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) because this database contains a number of scholarly sources within the field of Library Science. I limited the search by title/abstract in order to weed through articles that were not relevant.

**Database:** Library and Information Science Abstracts

**Method of Searching:** Title Search

**Search String:** Library services or Libr* in Abstracts AND Gay or Lesbian or Bisexual or Transgender or Transsexual or LGBT in Title

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**Personal Statement**

One of the most important things I will take away from this assignment is the importance of evaluating the needs of the community in which you are working. I found the needs assessment study of Portland’s transgender population to be the most revealing. It interviewed the community and inventoried what they needed right now, in this moment, and then figured out a way to implement a library that catered to those specific needs. We have come so far as a society yet we need to start communicating with each other before we can get any further and move towards empowering everyone to be themselves and feel comfortable in their own bodies.

I think the library and its employees have one of the strongest tools at its disposal - it has the power to inform. This project has taught me the importance of research especially research about those underrepresented in our world. But it is not good enough for the research to be done. These findings need to be marketed and shared with those who will find it most useful. Accessibility is key and figuring out how to make the information accessible is imperative. This can be done by figuring out the physical placement of information, cataloging it appropriately, or going out into the community and speaking to groups.

The library needs to be able to uphold its mission of inclusion and intellectual freedom. In order to do this it needs to be able to distance itself from the government that it is a part of. Governments are faulted with years of history and laws that do not look upon each individual equally. It is the librarian’s job to ask the uncomfortable questions, get to really know their
neighbors and serve the community to the best of their ability. This is the only way to create an environment that truly supports and encourages all of its members to find self fulfillment.

I certify that:

- This assignment is entirely my own work.
- I have not quoted the words of any other person from a printed source or website without indicating what has been quoted and providing an appropriate citation.
- I have not submitted this assignment to satisfy the requirements of any other course.

Signature: Jennifer Troy
Date: 12/2/10