The Information Seeking Behavior of Humanities Scholars:

An Annotated Bibliography

Leigh Milligan
INFO510: Information Resources & Services I
Linda Marion, Instructor
Introduction

This bibliography covers studies on the information seeking behavior of humanities scholars. I have included nine articles which focus on user studies of general humanities scholars at the undergraduate and continuing education level. I have also included three articles which cover user studies in specific humanities scholar user groups: two of these articles are on music scholars, and one article is on history scholars. Eight of the articles focus on studies with electronic resources. The articles range from 1993-2005.

User Group Description

Humanities scholars are a unique group of people who require various information seeking arrangements. Their queries are complex and unique, so a database that supports this is required. The user group, humanities scholars, is multidisciplinary including a number of types of students including English, Arts, Social Sciences, Literature, History, Languages, Philosophy, etc. You will find this group doing their research alone, unassisted, but sometimes you will find these scholars in groups. This group also loves literature, so most of their resources are taken from primary resources.

Summary of Findings

There are many studies on the information seeking behavior of humanities scholars. This is most likely because teachers and librarians want to know how they can better improve the research tools of these students. For example, Project Muse, which is mentioned in my bibliography by James Neal (1997), wanted to improve the collections at libraries for certain students, particularly for humanities students. By knowing what they were searching for, or what they wanted to search for these improvements could be made on certain databases in the library, as well as, expanding or improving the library collections. Another reason that there are many user studies on humanities scholars is because humanities is a general group broken down in smaller sub groups in Arts, Social Sciences and Literature.
The types of studies done on this user group are generally the same. These studies of studies are surveys, interviews, and observation. A lot of times with the survey, either the results weren't clear and the ones given the study wanted clear answers or the results were clear and they wanted to find out more information on why the humanities scholars answered the questions in the same way. This was true with the Getty Project, which lasted 2 years It was also true with Project Muse, which was done over a period of time. Most of the studies included in my bibliography were either the first study of many or not the first study. The conclusion to most of these studies were usually they want to perform further investigation. An example of this would be *Information As Process: The Difference Between Corroborating Evidence and Information in Humanistic Research Domains* by Charles Cole (1997). The purpose of this study was to create variables for future studies.

Some of the studies included science students in the study and compare results. It was found that humanities scholars had more complex search queries over science scholars. Science students searched for generic terms while humanities students wanted more unique and complex terms. An example of comparing science and humanities students would be *Use of Book Reviews by Scholars: Implications for Electronic Publishing* by Amanda Spink (1996). The study was a survey on book reviews. It was found that more humanities students read more book reviews and find them useful, over science students, more than likely because they are about literature, and that is what humanities students like to read.

Most of the articles in my bibliography used tables, charts and graphs to show their results and findings in the particular studies. This seemed helpful because humanities scholars are very visual people and these articles could be geared towards them. One study resulted in creating a information seeking model for humanities students, so that librarians would be able to assist to their reference needs. This was true in a specific humanities scholar study I read by Christine Brown (2002) about music scholars. An information seeking model was created so that librarians would better under music scholars. Their research process was broken down into steps and this made it easy for librarians to...
Another study, which had an article written about it by Charles Cole (1997) broke down the results of the study by where the scholars were in Kulthau's information seeking process model. The purpose of this study was to find variables for future studies, and by breaking down the results like this it made this process easier. The Use of Electronic Scholarly Journals: Models of Analysis and Data Drawn from the Project Muse Experience at Johns Hopkins University. Atlanta, GA: Conference on Scholarly Communicating and Technology by James Neal (1997) discusses 6 models of information use and compares them to the study that Project Muse is about.

Most of the studies provided in the articles in my bibliography referred to humanities scholars using electronic sources, although there were a few articles about them using print resources because I felt a variety was best for this bibliography to be able to compare results. Eight of the articles in the bibliography were on studies with electronic resources. An electronic source is something that is not in print, but it can help find sources in print, for example a database. Other electronic sources include e-mail and discussion groups, which were discussed in Christine Brown's (2002) article about music scholars.

It was found that most humanities scholars were not proficient in electronic sources, and chose to use print sources because they found them easier to navigate, even if they were not faster to use. Humanities students required unique queries such as geographical names, individual names and discipline names. They also required resources such as CD-ROMs, pictures etc, because they are visual thinkers. Humanities scholars also ran into the problem that the databases they have used, were not able to support their queries, because of their complexity. It was also found that humanities scholars would rather use primary sources over electronic sources because of this flaw.

It was also found that these scholars would rather work alone than in a group, and would rarely ask for help or want to learn about the databases, they would rather a librarian do the work for them. This was found during the Getty Project. However, it is different for music scholars, as talked about in
Christine Brown's (2002) article because they sometimes want to work in groups, most likely because music is usually made in groups.

*Use of Book Reviews by Scholars: Implications for Electronic Publishing* by Amanda Spink (1996) proved in the survey that the majority of humanities scholars who took the survey read book reviews and found them useful, but mostly for teaching purposes. Book reviews are a secondary resource, but humanities scholars will still read what they find useful. Humanities scholars also believe that authority is important in making up a good book review. Book reviews being based on works of literature is most likely why humanities students like them, because some humanities scholars specialize in literature.

From all twelve of the articles listed in my annotated bibliography, I have come to the conclusion that improvement in the library is needed for humanities scholars. Although these articles are older, there is always need for improvement today. This is why the majority of the studies needed further investigation, the researchers want to find out all they can about this unique user group, so can better meet their research needs. Some of these investigations are still being continued today to better improving our libraries electronic and print collections for humanities scholars.

**Bibliography**


*Abstract:* Reports a study that analyzed natural language search statements constructed by 22 Getty Visiting Scholars as they researched humanities topics on DIALOG. Results show a greater use of names, geographical areas, chronological periods, and discipline terms than scientists use, with implications for the design of humanities online systems and thesauri. (Published Abstract).

*Database:* ERIC (1)

*Search Strategy:* I had some success by using user need as a keyword, so decided to use it in a controlled vocabulary search, to see if I could find more articles. I decided to do a b INFO SCI search this time to produce more articles geared to my information need. I expanded user need to see I could find anything that would be a lot closer to my information needs. I chose a few descriptors out of the expanded items list and then did a controlled vocabulary search. I obtained the full text article off Illiad.

*Search method:* Controlled Vocabulary and Keyword

*Search String:* 'USER NEED' OR 'USER NEED STUDY' OR 'USER NEED UNDERSTANDING' OR
'USER NEEDS' OR 'USER NEEDS (INFORMATION)' OR 'USER NEEDS (INFORMATION)' OR 'USER NEEDS ANALYSES' OR 'USER NEEDS ANALYSIS/DE and humanities.

Annotation: I chose to use this article because I have already read information and was familiar with the Getty project, as being a 2 year study on humanities scholars in the 1990s, on how this user group does research, and this fits in very well with the topic of my bibliography. I was able to relate to this article because I studied Dialog for 3 weeks, and used Dialog in my bibliography as a search database and this article is about a study performed on humanities scholars using Dialog. I found the article in a peer reviewed library journal and the article about the study was very well written.

22 humanities scholars were able to perform unlimited searches on Dialog to show how humanities scholars operate as end users in databases. The study focused on humanities scholars' information needs and the natural language they used in their searching with Dialog. Humanities scholars' search strategies were compared to science students' search strategies. Humanities students were found to have more unique search statements than the science students, as they used more individual names, geographical terms, and discipline terms than science students making their searches more unique. Therefore, in improving databases for humanities students, it needs to be taken into account that they will require more unique search statements than other scholars. This article includes charts with data showing the results of this study.


Abstract: Based on the results of a two-year study conducted by the Getty Art History Information Program of online searching by humanities scholars, implications are drawn for the design of information products. Topics include characteristics of humanities scholars; design and content of databases; indexing vocabulary; and interfaces and command languages. (Published Abstract).

Database: ERIC (1)

Search Strategy: I had some success by using user need as a keyword, so decided to use it in a controlled vocabulary search, to see if I could find more articles. I decided to do a b INFO SCI search this time to produce more articles geared to my information need. I expanded user need to see I could find anything that would be a lot closer to my information needs. I chose a few descriptors out of the expanded items list and then did a controlled vocabulary search. I obtained the full text article off Illiad.

Search method: Controlled Vocabulary and Keyword Search String: 'USER NEED' OR 'USER NEED STUDY' OR 'USER NEED UNDERSTANDING' OR 'USER NEEDS' OR 'USER NEEDS (INFORMATION)' OR 'USER NEEDS (INFORMATION)' OR 'USER NEEDS ANALYSES' OR 'USER NEEDS ANALYSIS/DE and humanities.

Annotation: I chose to use this article because I have already read information and was familiar with the Getty project, as being a 2 year study on humanities scholars in the 1990s, on how this user group does research, and this fits in very well with the topic of my bibliography. I already used the first report of the Getty Project in my bibliography and decided to use this report as well. This report is not a study, but I believed it fit in well with the rest of the bibliography because it takes the results from the study in report one and tells how they plan on improving the databases for humanities scholars as their search statements are unique and distinct and they use very complex vocabulary. When they were searching Dialog in the study, it was noticed that humanities scholars will search topic in more than one subject area rather than one subject area. They would have a hard time finding the information requested because the interface did not understand their queries. To make the process better for humanities scholars, it was suggested that an interface and indexing language be created to make the research process easier for humanities students.

Abstract: The Getty Information Institute conducted a two-year study of online searching by 27 humanities scholars using DIALOG. Discusses results and recommends that library services: provide interdisciplinary information for humanities scholars; recognize that online searching in humanities may be harder than in sciences; expect wide preferences for database searching arrangements; and acquire reference materials sensitive to humanities scholars. (Published Abstract).

Database: ERIC (1)

Search Strategy: I had some success by using user need as a keyword, so decided to use it in a controlled vocabulary search, to see if I could find more articles. I decided to do a b INFO SCI search this time to produce more articles geared to my information need. I expanded user need to see I could find anything that would be a lot closer to my information needs. I chose a few descriptors out of the expanded items list and then did a controlled vocabulary search. I did a search on http://www.google.com by title and was able to locate the full text. http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/bates/articles/ Getty_6-ms-c_960716.html

Search method: Controlled Vocabulary and Keyword

Search String: 'USER NEED' OR 'USER NEED STUDY' OR 'USER NEED UNDERSTANDING OR 'USER NEEDS' OR 'USER NEEDS (INFORMATION' OR 'USER NEEDS (INFORMATION)' OR 'USER NEEDS ANALYSES' OR 'USER NEEDS ANALYSIS/DE and humanities.

Annotation: I chose to use this article because I have already read information and was familiar with the Getty project, as being a 2 year study on humanities scholars in the 1990s, on how this user group does research, and this fits in very well with the topic of my bibliography. I already used the first and fourth reports of the Getty Project in my bibliography and decided to use this report as well, rather than using all 6 reports to create variety in my bibliography. This report is not a study, but I believed it fit in well with the rest of the bibliography because it takes out all the important findings from the study found in reports 1-5 and analyzes the information and then with all of this information comes to conclusions of what makes up the humanities user group, how to they do their research and how can libraries better assist them. The conclusions that were made up from the study are that libraries need to supply interdisciplinary databases such as Dialog for them, online searching with humanities scholars requires several facet elements and their queries will actually be harder to process than science students queries, humanities scholars require a variety of searching arrangements including searching alone or having a librarian do the search for them, and humanities scholars like automated resources like CD-ROMs and very user friendly database interfaces which include historical and geographical information. This report is taken from a peer reviewed library journal and is very well written.


Abstract: Few research projects have focused on the information needs of the music scholar. What is known about the information needs of the music scholar has been gathered through large-scale studies of various humanistic disciplines. This article describes a six-stage model of the music scholar’s research process. The model was constructed contextually through interviews with 30 music scholars who were asked to describe a recently completed research project. Research activities pertaining to specific stages in the research process are identified and described. This study compares existing models of the research process of other humanities scholars and explores the implications for library and information science professionals. (Published Abstract).

Database: Web of Science

Search Strategy: I browsed *Looking for information: A survey of research on information seeking, needs, and behavior* by Donald Case. I was able to locate in this book a few authors who wrote articles on user studies for humanities scholars. Christine Brown was one of the authors. She wrote a few
articles about studies on music scholars, a type of humanities scholar. I did an author search in Dialog but was unable to find anything because at the time, I only had her last name. I searched Web of Science with her last name and humanities hoping I would find something. I was able to locate the article that was listed in Donald Case's book. A full text was listed in Web of Science.

Search Method: Browsing, Author and Keyword
Search String: Brown and Humanities
Annotation: I thought this article was a good choice, because authors that I browsed for this bibliography and used in this bibliography were mentioned in this article. These authors include Marcia Bates, Donald Case, and Clara Chu, an author who I browsed in Donald Case's book. I pulled the article from a peer reviewed library journal and the article was very easy to read as it was broken down into sections. I chose to use this article in my bibliography, because I wanted to include a few user studies in a specific humanities user group, this group being music scholars. Music scholars are usually grouped into the humanities discipline because there are not a lot of user studies done on music scholars, but there are a few. The article includes a bunch of tables and charts with the results from the surveys and interviews to find out how music scholars seek information. By putting the results in this form, it made them easy to understand. The results of this study helped to create a six stage model of the research process of music scholars. One purpose of this model would be to help make the reference interview easy on librarians, if they know where music scholars are in the research process, librarians will be able to better assist them. It was also found that the music scholars also fit in with their other humanities scholars by choosing to do their research on their own and also choosing to use primary sources over other sources as well as making unique queries in their searches.


Abstract: Describes music scholars' use and perceptions of the helpfulness of e-mail and electronic discussion groups. Uses diffusion of innovations theory to examine and assess the music scholars' level of agreement with statements concerning the relative advantages and compatibility of e-mail and electronic discussion group use within the context of the research process. In interviews and a survey, participating music scholars in the US and Canada rated e-mail as consistently more helpful than discussion groups for selected activities within the research process. Scholars who found discussion groups not helpful in their research reacted by periodically unsubscribing, a pattern of intermittent discontinuance consistent with diffusion theory. Concludes that these modes of computer-mediated communication play marginal roles in the music scholar's research process. (Published Abstract).

Database: Library and Information Science Technology Abstracts (Ebscohost).

Search Strategy: After I was able to locate Brown, C.D. (2002). Straddling the Humanities and Social Sciences: The research process of music scholars. Library and Information Science Research. 24, 73-94, I wanted to find more articles by Christine Brown about humanities user studies. I wanted to use more than one article that specialized in a specific humanities user group. I decided to browse the articles that she wrote in EbscoHost to see if I could find anything. I was able to find another user study on music scholars. I located the full text in SFX.

Search Method: Browsing and author
Search String: Brown, Christine in author field
Annotation: I located this article in a peer reviewed journal. The article was very easy to read because it was broken down into sections which made reading this article easy. I found this article fit well with my bibliography because the article cited Marcia Bates the author who wrote the reports on the Getty Project, which I have used in my bibliography. I wanted to include a few user studies in a specific humanities user group, this group being music scholars. This study analyzed information need and use within scholarly communication specifically with music scholars by an interview process and a mail
survey. The results of the survey were found in tables located in the article. It was found that most of the participants used e-mail and discussion groups, but more of them used e-mail. However, those who use e-mail, didn't find it always essential for research purposes, while discussion groups were not widely adopted among music scholars.


Abstract: This paper investigates the information seeking of humanities academics and scholars using digital libraries. It furthers existing work by updating our knowledge of the information seeking techniques used by humanities scholars, where the current work predates the wide availability of the Internet. We also report some of the patterns observed in query and term usage by humanities scholars, and relate this to the patterns they report in their own information seeking and the problems that they encounter. This insight is used to reveal the current gap between the skills of information seekers and the technologies that they use. Searches for ‘discipline terms’ prove to be particularly problematic. (Published Abstract).

Database: N/A

Search Strategy: I was looking for full text articles on the Getty Project articles by Marcia Bates. I turned to Google Scholar to locate these articles. I came across this article because Marcia Bates is listed on the works cited page. I obtained the full text in World Cat.

Search Method: Browsing and footnote chasing

Search String:

Annotation: This article was very well written. I really liked how the article was broken into sections as to understand what the study was about and what was found and learned by this study. With this study we learned that humanities scholars have strong searching skills but it was really hard to see how this group of students progressed to this level, most likely because it occurs over a short people of time. They all seemed very skilled when it came to the digital library and weren't objective to using an online reference source over a print copy because its just as precise. However this group of people had trouble browsing the digital library over the public library because of how specific you have to be in searching a digital library, while in a public library, you can just browse call numbers. When doing research humanities scholars were found using citation chaining strategies over classification searches because of precision.


Abstract: The present article is part III in a series of articles describing the development of a front-end software tool to be used by undergraduates accessing information from an electronic database for a
social science/humanities term paper or research essay. Part I describes the theoretical framework for the tool. Part II outlines the prototype of the tool. In part III, the present article reports the results of a study of 60 undergraduates in a real-life situation where they had to write a term paper for a university-level remedial writing course. The purpose of the study was to test two devices, an uncertainty expansion device and an uncertainty reduction device. The uncertainty expansion device is designed to expand the uncertainty in the diagnostic situation by requiring the student to consider all possible angles, directions and arguments he or she might make in the essay/term paper. The uncertainty reduction device is designed to require the student to integrate information gathered for the term paper. The devices were found to improve the mean marks of the students who received interventions compared to classmates who did not participate in the study. The results also suggest that for optimal results each device should be administered at a different stage of the student's essay writing process. (Published Abstract).

Database: ERIC (EbscoHost)

Search Strategy: After I was able to locate a full text of Cole, C. (1997). Information As Process: The Difference Between Corroborating Evidence and Information in Humanistic Research Domains. Information Processing and Management. 55-67, I decided to browse the rest of his articles in EbscoHost to find another humanities user study article. Looking for information: A survey of research on information seeking, needs, and behavior by Donald Case implied that Charles Cole has written a number of humanities user study articles including user studies on history scholars. I browsed the rest of Charles Cole's articles that were listed on Ebscohost. I chose this article and was able to find a full text on SFX.

Search Method: Browsing and Author search.
Search String: Cole, Charles in author field
Annotation: I thought this was a great choice for my bibliography because Kuhlthau's ISP model is referenced on the first page. This one on of the most important information seeking models in reference studies. Cole's article is very well written. The article uses charts and diagrams to explain different concepts in the article, as well as present the results of the study. The purpose of the 2 year study mentioned in the article was to create a diagnostic-prescriptive tool, to be added on to the front end of an information retrieval system for undergraduate humanities students working on a research paper. The tool helped improve the marks of the students participating in the study and proves to be effective.


Abstract: Reports the results of a non-randomized study of 45 history Ph.D. students in England and discusses the results in terms of the theory of knowledge structure and the modification of knowledge structure due to information. Topics include information as process; a model of stages of the information process; and grounded theory. (Published Abstract).

Database: ERIC(1)

Search Strategy: I browsed Looking for information: A survey of research on information seeking, needs, and behavior by Donald Case. I was able to locate in this book a few authors who wrote articles on user studies for humanities scholars. Charles Cole was one of the authors. He wrote articles focusing on humanities scholar user studies and historian user studies I decided to search ERIC because I believed ERIC would have the largest range of articles, while I was locating works by this author. I expanded Cole, Charles to include all of the Charles Cole entries in my search because I did not know his middle initial. I did a search for Charles Cole and humanities but this returned zero results. I knew he wrote articles on user studies about historians. I did an author search for Charles Cole along with the
truncated keyword history. I located this article and found a full text article on EbscoHost by SFX.

Search Method: Browsing, Author and Keyword

Search String: s ( AU= Cole ,Charles or AU=Cole,Charles A. or AU= Cole,Charles C. Jr. or AU= Cole,Charles E. or AU= Cole, Charles F. or AU= Cole, Charles L. or AU= Cole, Charles Lee or AU= Cole, Charles O. or AU= Cole, Charles S. or AU= Cole, Charles W.) and histor?

Annotation: I wanted to include a few user studies in a specific humanities user group, this group being history scholars. This article was very well written and was very easy to read because it is broken into sections. I thought this article was a good choice because Donald Case, an author of a book I browsed to find this article was cited, as well as Kuththau, who I was also familiar with because of studying her information seeking models in class. The purpose of this study was to create variables for future studies on the information seeking process for historians and other humanities user groups. The results of the study are broken down by stages of the information seeking process, using a quote from the interviews for each stage to show results. Tables are included in the article to easily explain the results. It was concluded by the interviews that some of the information seeking these scholars do is because of unconscious and conscious motivations to seek information.


Abstract: This paper outlines a series of quantitative and qualitative models for understanding and evaluating the use of electronic scholarly journals, and summarizes data based on the experience of Project Muse at Johns Hopkins University and early feedback received from subscribing libraries. Project Muse is a collaborative initiative between the Press and the libraries at Johns Hopkins University to provide network-based access to scholarly journals including titles in the humanities, social sciences and mathematics. Project Muse has been produced from the outset for usability, with a focus on user-centered features. This has evolved as a participative and interactive process, soliciting input and feedback from users, and integrating user guidance components into the system. Six models of use analysis are discussed in this paper which cover both the macro or library-level and the micro or individual user-level activity: (1) subscribing organizations; (2) subscriber behaviors; (3) user demography; (4) user behaviors; (5) user satisfaction; and (6) user impact. Project Muse's success will ultimately be determined by its support for the electronic scholarly publishing objectives outlined in the Association of Research Libraries/Association of American Universities (ARL/AAU) work. (Published Abstract).

Database: ERIC (1)

Search Strategy: I had some success by using user need as a keyword, so decided to use it in a controlled vocabulary search, to see if I could find more articles. I decided to do a b INFO SCI search this time to produce more articles geared to my information need. I expanded user need to see I could find anything that would be a lot closer to my information needs. I chose a few descriptors out of the expanded items list and then did a controlled vocabulary search. The fulltext is located in Dialog at this link: http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED414920

Search method: Controlled Vocabulary and Keyword

Search String: 'USER NEED' OR 'USER NEED STUDY' OR 'USER NEED UNDERSTANDING' OR 'USER NEEDS' OR 'USER NEEDS (INFORMATION)' OR 'USER NEEDS (INFORMATION)' OR 'USER NEEDS ANALYSES' OR 'USER NEEDS ANALYSIS/DE' and humanities.

Annotation: I was already very familiar with Project Muse. I have accessed articles from Project Muse for English papers in college. I had no idea Project Muse was part of a user study at the time, I just thought it was just another full-text database. I found it interesting that there was a user study based on user needs of humanities scholars using Project Muse, so I chose to use this article for my bibliography. This paper was peer reviewed and is well written. The study helps to find out, what types of users use
databases, and how much these users already know about using databases and researching. It also shows what types of searches these users do such as keyword author, descriptor etc. This study is done by surveying all users who access Project Muse for scholarly articles.


Abstract: An important part of reference services is the quality of the print and electronic resources. With the growth of electronic information in the field, it is essential to consider the information needs and behaviors of all humanists as we begin to design tools for the humanities. This article reviews the studies of the research habits of humanists. It discusses their work habits, their use of the library, the design of access and indexing systems, and electronic resources.


Method of Searching: Keyword

Search Strategy: I searched the Library Literature and Information Science Database because I felt this database would produce the best results relevant to my topic. I expanded humanities because I was unsure of the correct spelling of its singular form and also to acquire other synonyms. I tried a few descriptors with humanities for my search I tried user group and information need and I did not find what I was looking for. I used user need and found this article. I pulled the full text of this article off EbscoHost.

Search String: HUMANITIES' OR 'HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES' OR HUMANITIES LITERATURE' AND USER NEED?

Annotation: I chose this article because it was peer reviewed and scholarly. It was really interesting to find that, when this article was written, humanists did not use databases in the library or were familiar with them. Today in the library, more people are familiar with the library and the databases it offers and are capable of doing their own searches. It was really interesting to see the different studies of humanists using print resources and electronic resources in the library. I also chose to use this article in my bibliography because the article mentions the Getty Project, a topic of few of the articles included in my bibliography. It was also really interesting to see how the library plans on improving the library and making it more humanist friendly in terms of searching, including keyword and subject searching and reorganizing the cataloging system to make it easier for the searcher to use, especially since some of these ideas are already being implemented today. It will make the complex searches the humanities user performs less complicated.


Abstract: Investigates the importance of book reviews to science and technology scholars and humanities and social science scholars. Focuses on the sources, importance, and utility of book reviews for information seeking; research by scholars and scholars' criteria for useful book reviews; and whether scholars use electronic book reviews.

Database: ERIC (1)

Search Strategy: I had some success by using user need as a keyword, so decided to use it in a controlled vocabulary search, to see if I could find more articles. I decided to do a b INFO SCI search this time to produce more articles geared to my information need. I expanded user need to see I could find anything that would be a lot closer to my information needs. I chose a few descriptors out of the expanded items list and then did a controlled vocabulary search. I obtained the full text article off Illiad.

Search method: Controlled Vocabulary and Keyword

Search String: 'USER NEED' OR 'USER NEED STUDY' OR 'USER NEED UNDERSTANDING OR 'USER NEEDS' OR 'USER NEEDS (INFORMATION' OR 'USER NEEDS (INFORMATION) OR
Annotation: I chose to use this article because I am familiar with the ASIS meetings. ASIS stands for American Society for Information Science and Technology. This group holds a conference yearly, publishes a journal, organizes programs for continuing education and helps provide careers in the Information Science and Technology field. This article is from proceedings of the Annual Meeting in 1996. It has been peer reviewed and is well written. The results of this study were made into charts, which made this article very easy to read. The study is based on research questions asked to a group of students in survey form to find out the importance of book reviews for humanities, social sciences, and science & technology scholars. With this study they were able to find out who reads book reviews, how many were read, the sources of book reviews, the usefulness of book reviews, criteria of a useful book reviews, and network services used possibly to find electronic journals. The results were grouped together by humanities and social sciences scholars and then by science and technology scholars to compare results. More research after this study was done with a larger group of scholars and in interview form, to probe this study further.


Abstract: A review of literature from 1983 to 1992 suggests that a more complete understanding is now possible of the information needs, uses, and information-seeking behavior of the humanities scholar. A current portrait of humanities scholars suggests that this client group is more diverse than previously assumed.

Database: ERIC (1)

Search Strategy: I had some success by using user need as a keyword, so decided to use it in a controlled vocabulary search, to see if I could find more articles. I decided to do a b INFO SCI search this time to produce more articles geared to my information need. I expanded user need to see I could find anything that would be a lot closer to my information needs. I chose a few descriptors out of the expanded items list and then did a controlled vocabulary search. I obtained the full text of this article on Ebscohost.

Search method: Controlled Vocabulary and Keyword Search String: 'USER NEED' OR 'USER NEED STUDY' OR 'USER NEED UNDERSTANDING OR 'USER NEEDS' OR 'USER NEEDS (INFORMATION' OR 'USER NEEDS (INFORMATION)' OR 'USER NEEDS ANALYSES' OR 'USER NEEDS ANALYSIS/DE and humanities

Annotation: I chose this article because it is peer reviewed, and I was able to find it in a librarian journal. This article is based on 16 studies done on humanities scholars to find out how this group of people performs research, and why they chose to use the methods they use. The results of these studies show that humanities scholars choose to use primary sources such as books and journals over secondary sources, such as bibliographies, indexes, abstracts and databases. This was because they felt bibliographies were not as comprehensive as what they could find in a primary source. Indexes were only used for already known sources. They also did not choose to use databases because they did not know how to use them and did not have the time to learn how to use them, even though humanities scholars were interested in using them. It was also found that humanities scholars liked to use Interlibrary Loan, because they were able to preview sources before obtaining them. Humanities scholars did research with what they already knew how to use, rather then learning how to use resources that they do not need.

Recommended Resources

The Humanities E-Book is a database run by ACLS consisting of 2,200 full text titles, including a collection of high quality books in the humanities. These books were peer reviewed by scholars. Other contributions are from 14 learned societies, 100 publishers and librarians from the University of Michigan's Scholarly Publishing Office. The database is available 24/7 through standard web browsers. The Humanities E-Book is browseable by author and is searchable by full-text, title, book, chapter, author and subject. There is also the option to use boolean and/or proximity operators and citation search.


I located the American Council of Learned Societies when I located one of their newsletters on scholarly resources for the humanities, while searching for articles for my bibliography. ACLS is a non-profit organization consisting of 70 national scholarly organizations. It has been in existence since 1919. The society is responsible for peer-reviewed fellowships in the humanities as well as sponsoring many conferences and scholarships in the humanities. This website is composed of many scholarly sources in the humanities including publications databases, information about fellowships and societies. The website also includes programs in the humanities and history resources. The archives from this society are located in the Library of Congress and they are open to professional researchers.


The Arts and Humanities Citation Index is part of Web of Science. It includes scholarly articles from 1980 to present time. The database is a multidisciplinary index which searches about 1,160 journals about the arts and humanities as well as 6,000 social science and science journals. All of the journals are peer reviewed and you will be able to find information on a number of topics relevant to the humanities. The database is searchable by topic. Title, author, editor, year published, publication
name, language, document type and grant number searches. There is also the option to use boolean operators and perform cited reference searches. The database is also capable of using field tag language. You will also have the option to access the full text of the articles found in the Arts and Humanities Citation Index.


The Association for Computers and the Humanities is an international professional organization. Since its establishment, it has been the major professional society for people working in computer-aided research in literature and language studies, history, philosophy, and other humanities disciplines, and especially research involving the manipulation and analysis of textual materials. The ACH is devoted to disseminating information among its members about work in the field of humanities computing, as well as encouraging the development and dissemination of significant textual and linguistic resources and software for scholarly research. (paragraph taken from http://www.ach.org)

The Website includes literary and humanist publications, an archive of its past conferences, job resources for the humanities, an abstracts database, events and membership sign-up.


The Great War Archive is part of the First World War Poetry Digital Archive. The archive was started in November of 2008 and is run by Oxford University in England. Submissions to the archive were taken between March 2008 and June 2008 and are no longer accepted. There are about 6,500 contributions in the archive. Each archive is someone's contribution that relates to their experience during World War I either at home or at war. The archive can be searched by keyword, by type of submission, or by the name of the person who submitted the work. It can also be browsed by keyword or by events these submissions were submitted. The Great War Archive was highly
commended at the Times Higher Educational Awards 2008. (The Great War Archive). I have chosen to recommend this archive because history is an important topic in the humanities and I have included history in my bibliography.

**Conclusion**

Although there are many electronic sources available for research including databases and the Internet, most humanities scholars will choose to use primary sources over these sources. This is because humanities scholars require unique search queries, that these electronic sources can not handle. In the future these databases should be geared to solve this problem.

From working on this bibliography, I have learned that there are many different types of databases out there for research needs, but only certain ones will be geared to what you are searching for. For example only certain databases will provide the full-text of articles, otherwise you will have to find them at your local library. Also, you have to be very specific in what you are searching for in your search queries, or your results will not be what is hoped for.

As a library student in my first quarter, I have came to a complete understanding of why the annotated bibliography assignment is important. We need to be able to learn about different user groups because different user groups will enter our libraries and we will have to be able to assist them to their information needs. By knowing where we will be able to find this information about user groups, in the future, we will be helpful in serving our patrons needs.