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Music Library Space Use Study: Assessing When “Times They Are a Changin’”

Margaret Martin Gardiner

The University of Western Ontario, mgardine@uwo.ca

Monica Fazekas

The University of Western Ontario, mfazekas@uwo.ca

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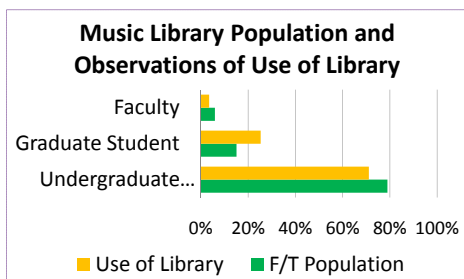
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Observations

Who is using the Library?



What are they doing?

Top Activities by User Group (five for each group)

Using Library Computing Equipment: Faculty, Grads and Undergrads

Reading: Faculty, Grads and Undergrads

Using Laptop: Grads and Undergrads

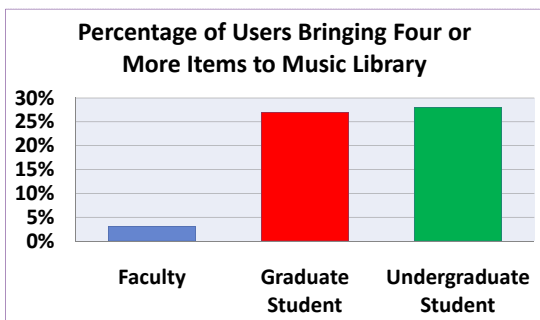
Writing: Grads and Undergrads

Interacting with Library staff: Faculty and Grads

Talking: Faculty and Undergrads

Browsing the shelves: Faculty

What are they bringing into the Library?



Note: items most often brought included carryalls such as backpacks (usually more than one bag), books, outerwear, laptop, and drinks.

Questions Arising from the Study

1. What we saw: bags, musical instruments and coats obstructing aisles and other walking spaces

Question: With lockers available for undergraduates and offices for graduates, why were more than 25% bringing coats, musical instruments, backpacks, etc.?

2. What we saw: laptops on laps with large scores propped on tables and open notebooks and other materials either on the floor and/or window sill. At larger tables expected to seat from 4 – 6 people, we saw 1 – 2 people with all of the above spread out in front.

Question: What size and kind of work surface is needed for individuals?

Interviews

Who Participated in Interviews?

Interviews held with 6 faculty, 6 graduate students, and 6 undergraduate students from all departments of the Don Wright Faculty of Music (DWFoM).

Adequacy of Current Space?

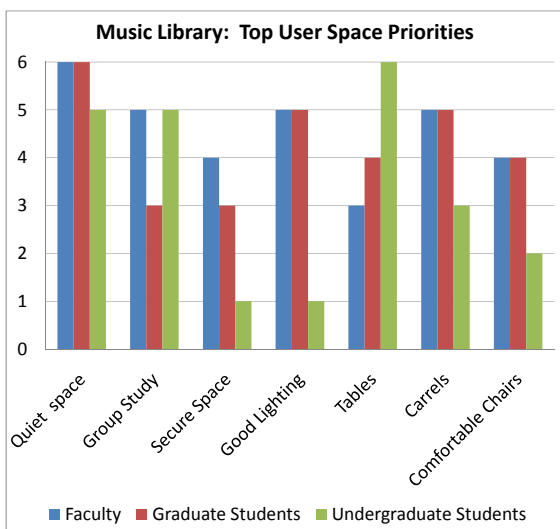
Consensus across the user groups that the space is inadequate with a long list of space problems, starting with noise and overcrowding.

Top Priorities Identified for New Library Space

All participants identified as top priorities:

1. Adequate Library user space to support research, study, and teaching needs of the DWFoM
2. Adequate collection space to house a collection that permits browsing and to provide on-site secure, climate-controlled space for the Music Library's special collections.

User Space Top Priorities



“Keepers” from Current Music Library

Aside from the Music Library collection, there were two suggestions for what to keep from the existing Library:

- “Welcoming” atmosphere created by Library staff (2 faculty)
- “Outlets on the tops of tables/computing facilities” (1 undergraduate and 1 faculty) .

Ideal Library Space Experiences – Libraries mentioned most often

Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music,
“really cool...it had a kind of intensity...stacks and stacks and stacks, but each floor also had an area to study ”
(2 faculty and 1 undergraduate student)

British Library, *“a palace to learning”*
(1 graduate student and 1 undergraduate student)

Central Branch, London Public Library , *“Open, airy, accessible. Move, breathe, talk without driving people crazy.”*
(1 faculty and 3 graduate students)

The time's they are a changin': Music Library Study at The University of Western Ontario

Monica Fazekas and Margaret Martin Gardiner

Introduction

In a LibQUAL study in 2007, faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students in the Don Wright Faculty of Music identified space as a significant problem in the Music Library. The Director of the Library with the Assessment Librarian undertook a study to gather evidence for advocating to renovate and enlarge existing space. During the study leaking, flooding, and a fire in the cafeteria directly below brought changes, e.g. the removal of special collections to secure storage. A visit from the fire marshal also resulted in replacement of carrels by small tables because the carrels intruded into the aisle by 1" beyond updated code.

Methodology

Phase 1: Observation study of actual use during one week periods five times throughout the year 2008. Conducted 2204 observations.

Phase 2: Interviews with questions developed from results of observations Winter 2010. Conducted 18 interviews with faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students. Six each from all departments in the Don Wright Faculty of Music.

Phase 1: Observation Results

■ **Participants included:** 77 faculty, 555 graduate students, 1559 undergraduate students, and 13 other (children and other external visitors)

■ **Top Library activities for all three user groups:** using the Library computer equipment and reading. Other top activities: writing (graduate and undergraduate students); using laptop (graduate and undergraduate students); interacting with staff (graduate students and faculty); browsing shelves (faculty) and talking (undergraduate students and faculty).

■ **Top five items most often brought to the Library:**
Graduate students: Carryall (72%), Books (62%), Outerwear (35%), Drink (21%) and Laptop (17%)
Undergraduate students: Carryall (81%), Books (61%), Outerwear (47%), Drink (22%), Laptop (15%)
Faculty: Carryall (51%), Books (32%), Outerwear (17%), Headphones (5%), Drink (4%)



Photo 15 October 2010 with permission of student



Busiest area of the Library during opening hours. (Photos including users not permitted by Research Ethics Board).



Area where carrels replaced by small tables – one of many changes occurring throughout the study.

Phase 2: Interview Results

■ **Confirmation of Observation Study:** Interviews confirmed for most part the 2008 observations, although all three groups talked about browsing the collection as being something that they do regularly, depending on the stage of academic work.

■ **Reason for bringing coats, carryalls and other personal belongings:** non-tenured faculty and graduate students share offices, mostly 3 to a room but at times 6 in a room, and they tend to carry what they need when the office is otherwise busy; not all undergraduate students have locker space in the Faculty.

■ **Top priorities for Music Library:** adequate, comfortable space for users to work in the Library and adequate space for a collection that permits browsing (music is still a print-based discipline).

■ **Top user space priorities:** Faculty and graduate students would like quiet space demarcated in a way that they would not be disturbed when working. Undergraduates have indicated tables for working as the top priority; however, this is basically a space with a surface large enough to accommodate a large score, books, notes, laptop, etc. Faculty and graduate students are also looking for adequate surface space but have more experience with carrels from other music and research libraries.

■ **Wish List:**

- Gallery/foyer space to highlight the "amazing" collection held by the Music Library
- Lounge space with couch and/or comfortable chairs, coffee tables where you can unwind, chat quietly, or read in a living-room like setting