CARLI Counts Cohort 2 Final Report
January 14, 2021

Institution Name

Catholic Theological Union

Institution Characteristics

A Private Graduate School of Theology and Ministry, CTU has an FTE of about 658 students with 272 students in Degree programs forming the core of the library's user base. An additional 386 students enroll in other sabbatical, certificate and summer programs with some degree of library usage. CTU also has 28 full time faculty and 6 adjunct faculty. The CTU Library has 4 full time staff and no part time or student workers.

CARLI Counts Participant Name and Job Title

Kris Veldheer, Director of the Paul Bechtold Library at CTU.

Project Name

Resource Usage at the CTU Library

Single Sentence Abstract

CTU library conducted an investigation into the use of electronic resources including databases and e-books using data collected from Open Athens and statistics from Ebsco, Proquest, JSTOR and Project Muse, finding spikes of usage related to three main vendors- Ebsco, Proquest (Ebook Central Collection) and JSTOR.

Motivation(s) for Project

The project was and still is important for the CTU library for three reasons. First, there was no discoverable data on electronic resource usage before 2017. The absence of this data leaves no way to track usage for evidence-based decision making. Second, CTU has been going through a reaccreditation self-study in 2019-2020 and needed to develop collection usage metrics both for the self-study and for ongoing library management. Third, like many schools in CARLI, CTU has ongoing budget issues which require data to justify the library budget.

Partners and Stakeholders

Faculty- The CTU library regularly solicits acquisition recommendations from faculty for electronic resources. With the Covid-19 pandemic, faculty have also stepped up requests for e-books. Faculty are a key partner in promoting the use of library resources to their students and embedding electronic resources within the D2L learning management system for class use.

Academic Dean- As part of the CTU Leadership Team and with direct oversight of the library, the Academic Dean is a partner in library operations. Although also a part of the faculty, the Dean is primarily concerned with budget implications and serves as an advocate for the library budget, particularly in support of budget increases for electronic holdings.

Students= In their role as stakeholders, CTU students rely on the CTU library to provide e-resources for their classes and research. Increasingly, students are attending CTU from around the world (13 countries in Fall 2020) and the entire 2020-2021 academic year was taught fully online. This, as well as student budget constraints, make students stakeholders in what the library can offer through databases and e-books.

Committee on Assessment (COA)- Albeit a lesser stakeholder, CTU's COA is charged with monitoring and assessing the overall curriculum and programs of CTU. To that end, they are concerned about how the library meets the academic needs of students and the research needs of faculty as well as student retention. The library director is a member of COA.

Inquiry Question

What is the impact of CTU library's electronic resources including databases and e-books on student success in completing classes in pursuit of their degree programs?

Study Participants/Population

At this point, participation is limited to current CTU students, faculty and staff because we ended up gathering our usage statistics via Open Athens, which is our authentication system. In the future, the alumni population will be factored in but they authenticate via a different method.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

Data for the project was collected from logs in Open Athens. For the purposes of CARLI Counts, the data was collected over a four-month period from September 2020 to December 2020. The raw data was distilled into two spreadsheets (see appendices A and B for September and October data).   The two spreadsheets give

one snapshot of overall usage via Open Athens and more detailed findings of four vendors (Ebsco, Proquest Ebook Central, JSTOR and Project Muse).

Findings

At this point in the project, I have three findings. First, my suspicions were confirmed that the most heavily used resources are those I purchase via Ebsco, mostly via CARLI. Second, I learned the top 4 resources the study participants were using overall aside from Ebsco, are Proquest Ebook Central, JSTOR, Oxford University Press, and Project Muse. Third, I used the more detailed spreadsheet (Appendix B) to learn more about how the electronic resources were being used including alumni usage where applicable.

Use of Findings

Even with only four months of data, the findings are impacting purchase decisions about databases and e-books. Most notably, as I head into the 2022 budget cycle I have identified the need to redefine the library budget to have a dedicated line specific to e-books in order to further track expenditures of print vs. electronic. Similarly, there needs to be some refinement in another budget line around databases to better track database spending. The information in Appendix B is being tracked to help with developing e-book collections. Another use of the findings from both appendices will be to improve instructional materials on how best to use the databases and find e-books.

How are the findings being applied locally?

As outlined in the "Use of Findings" above, purchase decisions are being impacted as a result of this project. Prior to 2017, the previous library director bought book packages from publishers but in Appendix A, the data shows little usage of the Wiley Online e-books and the e-book packages from Taylor & Francis. However, the usage of Proquest E-book Central is exponentially more which is where I purchase single titles either via DDA or purchase suggestions. Beyond the 2020-2021 academic year, CTU is expanding online programming and this data will continue to drive purchase decisions in support of the curriculum.

Another area that goes beyond purchases is rightsizing the databases to maximize usage. Already in summer 2020, one database was cut which received no usage. Although the budget savings was not significant, moving toward a more data-driven model to make retention decisions will be a valuable process change.

Next Steps and Other Results

Based on my participation in CARLI Counts, I want to gather three more data points.

<u>DDA turnaways</u>- One of the current collection development strategies is the use of demand-driven acquisitions particularly from students who are working on Masters and Doctoral level thesis work. Due to the small size of CTU, it is easy to track which students are working on thesis projects. Correlating the DDA data with who is in the writing stage of their thesis program will give me a better sense of research interests and new areas to do acquisitions in.

Searching behavior- I want to extend the data gathered in Appendix B to include more data particularly from Ebsco on searching behavior. As can be seen in Appendix B, the data from the other vendors addresses unique item investigations, unique item requests and so on. This data can be used to shape instructional resources identifying where students may need help discovering materials. Within Ebsco, I am most interested in seeing how far I can drill into usage data with the Atla Religion database to see how my students are using that for research. I want to partner with faculty to see if there is a correlation between usage data and student success.

Full text requests- Noting again the data in Appendix B from JSTOR and Project Muse, I want to take a closer look at how this data aligns with requests we get from students for journal articles. Recently I have discovered a rise in the number of students making ILL requests for items readily available in JSTOR or Project Muse. I want to try and figure out why this may be happening.

Additional Reflections

This project is just the beginning for a more robust use of data collection and usage analysis by the CTU library. Given that the active student body is less than 300 students, there is much contact between the librarians and the students. We get to know our users. But there are some challenges with which we must wrestle.

One challenge that isn't addressed in this project is how to track various student groups. The current configuration of the data feed between CTU's student information system GradPro and Open Athens has everyone simply being a student. There is no differentiation by degree program or student type (full/part time, degree vs. certificate, credit/audit). This lack of granularity doesn't allow me to target instructional materials by type of student nor can it factor into purchasing decisions about the level of books to purchase. While it may seem a reach to purchase materials at different levels for different audiences, the field of religion and theology has marked differences in the orientation of publishers to a more popular audience versus those publishing for very scholarly and academic crowds. But this is a factor I use in making purchasing decisions on print books and e-books, In order to get the level of granularity I think I am looking, I will need discussions with the Dean and the Registrar about the capabilities of GradPro to classify students and separate them into categories.

Another challenge is just collecting the data. Now that data collection has started since September, there is a base for a more long-term study. As part of CARLI Counts, I had conversations with Dennis Krieb about his data scraping at Lewis and Clark Community College. While I admire this level of data gathering, I came to realize that it is more than I can accomplish, and I needed an easier way to gather data. Deploying Open Athens since September 2020 is a start for me to gathering data and I want to see also what data can be extracted from our use of Ebsco Discovery Service as a discovery platform. Further, I am interested in what data can be gleaned from Alma/Primo about circulation and e-book use for those items discoverable through Primo, particularly since we have begun putting our holdings data into EDS to create a one-stop shopping model for library searching.

There was also the challenge of making Open Athens work in the CTU environment with limited IT support. During the Fall 2020 semester, there were at least two documented outages, the first lasting about 10 days and the second 4-5 days. During this time, due to a glitch in Open Athens, no one at CTU could access databases thus cutting everyone off from full text materials particularly e-books and journal articles. Undoubtedly this impacted the October data, but looking purely at the numbers in Appendix B, the rise in usage from September to October despite the 10-day outage needs further investigation.

A final challenge was the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic. Due to Covid, CTU moved all classes online from March 13, 2020 until Fall semester 2021. During this lengthy time period the library has remained closed to students except by appointment. It is still to be seen what impact the sudden closure and ongoing limited access has had on research habits, searching behaviors, and the need for full text articles and books to teach and learn. It is unfortunate that I don't have a body of data from before the pandemic to compare the current data with to draw some ideas of how library use has changed or adapted during a health crisis. Yet, I will be watching the data closely as CTU reopens physical spaces to see how that data changes over time.

Timeline

February 2020- formative work on project completed and identification of Open Athens as a potential data collecting tool.

March 2020- Onset of Covid-19 pandemic and rush to online and full text resources

August 2020- Initial launch of Open Athens as an authentication means for both Alma/Primo and library databases.

September 2020- Data collection begins.

Appendix A

Site	Material Type	September* Uses	October Uses
ACLS Humanities	E-books	15	17
Alexander Street Press	Videos, some reference materials	0	7
Biblical Archaeology Studies Online	Journal	0	2
Brill	Books and journals	0	7
Chicago Manual of Style	Reference material	3	9
E-book Central	Books	59	127
EBSCO	Databases, journals, books	409	601
JSTOR	Books and journals	62	136
Loeb Digital Classics	Books	0	1
Oxford University Press	Books, journals, reference materials	36	17
Philosophy Documentation Center	Journals	0	5
Project Muse	Books, some journals	35	60
Sage Journals	Journal	0	5
Taylor and Francis Online	Journals	0	4
Wiley Online	Books	4	4

Appendix B

EBSCO

	September	October
Databases Sessions	500	638
Total Searches	1107	1573
Full Text Requests		
Academic Search Complete	204	387
ATLAS + RDB*	548	732
Business Source Elite	4	16
Consumer Health Complete	1	2
Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia	1	0
Health Source: Nursing/ Academic Edition	0	1
MAS Ultra - School edition	13	10
MasterFile Premier	1	6
Military & Govt Collection	1	1
Newspaper Source	9	1
Primary Search	0	1
e-books Collection	158	62
Turnaways	0	0

ProQuest eBook Central

	September	October
Total_Item_Investigations	181	996
Unique_Item_Investigations	94	195
Unique_Title_Investigations	53	157
Total_Item_Requests	82	760
Unique_Title_Requests	21	104
Searches_Platform	36	52
Unique_Item_Requests	62	142
Turnaways	1	0

JSTOR*

	September	October
Searches_Platform	54	320
Total_Item_Investigations	60	245

Total_Item_Requests	56	227
Unique_Item_Investigations	45	192
Unique_Item_Requests	42	178
Unique_Title_Investigations	3	12
Unique_Title_Requests	1	7
No_License	0	0

Project Muse*

Searches_Regular	21	45
Total_Item_Investigations	126	126
Total_Item_Requests	86	81
Unique_Item_Investigations	75	56
Unique_Item_Requests	74	55
Unique_Title_Investigations	33	38
Unique_Title_Requests	14	15
No_License	0	1

* Includes alumni users