Getting to Know You (and Me!): Assessment and the Archival Metrics Toolkit at Columbia University’s Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES/INFORMATION SERVICES
About Columbia University Libraries/Information Services (CUL/IS)

• Large, comprehensive research university
• Urban setting

Approximately:
• 3,500 faculty members
• 26,000 students (2/3 graduate and professional degree students)

• 21 campus libraries
• 11,000,000 volumes, 170,000 serial titles

• 550 FTE library staff including
  • professional staff
  • support staff
  • student assistants
About the Rare Book & Manuscript Library (RBML)
Purpose

• Understand patron needs, motivation, and expectations; demonstrate our value and impact; inform our planning and decision-making; and support changes that benefit our patrons.

• Support Libraries’ commitment to assessment; build a culture of assessment into RBML in a programmatic and repeatable way.
The Researcher Toolkit consists of 7 files which are designed to facilitate your administration, data analysis, and reporting of the findings from your use of this questionnaire:

1. Researcher Questionnaire
   *(ArchivalMetrics_Researcher_Questionnaire_1.0)*
2. Administering the Researcher Survey
   *(ArchivalMetrics_Researcher_Administration_v1.0)*
3. Preparing your data for analysis
   *(ArchivalMetrics_Researcher_Data_Analysis_1.0)*
4. Excel spreadsheet pre-formatted for data from the Researcher Questionnaire
   *(ArchivalMetrics_Researcher_Excel_Template_1.0)*
5. Pre-coded Researcher questionnaire
   *(ArchivalMetrics_Researcher_Coded_Questionnaire.1.0)*
6. SPSS file pre-formatted for data from the Researcher Questionnaire
   *(ArchivalMetrics_SPSS_Templatev1.0)*
7. Sample Researcher Report
   *(ArchivalMetrics_Researcher_SampleReport_v1.0)*

The Researcher Questionnaire is now also available in Spanish. Select the link below to download the Spanish version of the Researcher Questionnaire translated by Hilda T. Ayala, School of Library and Information Science at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus

Click on the .zip file below to download the toolkit. (Don't see a link? Login or register.)
Methodology

• Data collection - *September 1, 2011 to August 30, 2012*

• Distributed in paper form

• Participants - *visiting researchers who volunteered to participate in the project.*

• Response rate – *62% (566 respondents)*
Are you affiliated with Columbia University?

- Yes: 37%
- No: 63%

Thank you for allowing me to use your outstanding facilities! An honor + a pleasure.

-- Non-CU faculty member

They are always very efficient at retrieving the boxes I request and are very pleasant and happy to answer any questions.

-- CU doctoral student
Which best describes your position?

- Students: 53%
- Faculty member or post-doc: 24%
- Other: 23%
- Undergrad: 15%
- Master's: 16%
- Doctoral: 22%

53% of respondents are students.
How many times have you used the Rare Book and Manuscript Library?

- First time: 16%
- 2-5 times: 6%
- 6-10 times: 4%
- > 10 times: 74%

The staff of the RBML and college archives have been extremely helpful and instrumental in making my visit to this library a success. I am very grateful to them.

-- Non-CU doctoral student visiting from Spain
How long have you been using archival materials?

- 32% First time
- 31% < one year
- 26% 1-5 years
- 11% > 5 years

I really like this place. Thank you for letting me use it.

-- Member of public, using archives for the first time
What question or interest brings you to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library today?
Which best characterizes the project that motivated this visit to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library?" (n=564)

Type of Project

- Publication (e.g. article, book) 198 (35%)
- Dissertation or thesis 134 (24%)
- Class assignment 117 (21%)
- Other 49 (9%)
- Gathering information, but don't have a final project in mind 42 (7%)
- Administrative or work-related product 29 (5%)
- Family history project 10 (2%)
- Curriculum development/teaching preparation 9 (2%)
- Film or video 7 (1%)
Please provide feedback on our staff on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of the staff</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness of the staff</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>559</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency of staff in retrieving materials</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>552</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approachability of the staff</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>554</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject knowledge of the staff</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>550</td>
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</table>
Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following facilities and services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire items</th>
<th>1 (completely dissatisfied)</th>
<th>5 (completely satisfied)</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Response count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study areas</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noise level</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Access to the building</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informational/ navigational signs</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<td>Internet access</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of service</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catalogs/ indexes/ findings aids</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<td>Exhibits</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Reference books</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying / duplication services</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microfilm and fiche viewing facilities</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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Columbia University is one of the world’s most important centers of research and at the same time a distinctive and distinguished learning environment for undergraduates and graduate students in many scholarly and professional fields. The University recognizes the importance of its location in New York City and seeks to link its research and teaching to the vast resources of a great metropolis. It seeks to attract a diverse and international faculty and student body, to support research and teaching on global issues, and to create academic relationships with many countries and regions. It expects all areas of the university to advance knowledge and learning at the highest level and to convey the products of its efforts to the world.
Looking forward

**Aeon**
- Reading room visitors
- Visitor demographics
- Collection use

**Desk Tracker**
- Non-reading room (remote) reference transactions
- Class sessions
QUESTIONS?

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THANK YOU!