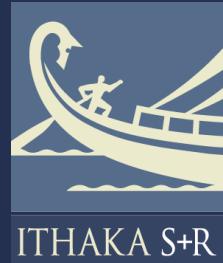


Investigating the Needs of Religious Studies Scholars:  
A MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL  
COLLABORATIVE  
APPROACH



# AGENDA

1. Meta-theoretical underpinnings
2. Introduction to the Research Support Services program
3. Overview of the Religious Studies Project
4. Preliminary insights

# RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

*Danielle Cooper*

- » Analyst, Ithaka S+R
  - » Coordinator, Research Support Services Program
- » MI, University of Toronto
- » PhD Candidate, York University
- » Research focus:
  - » Ethnographic methods in libraries and archives
  - » Information activity beyond institutional contexts



# META-THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

## *Scholar as information-seeker*

- » Researchers have different needs and behaviors associated with searching information for their research and this varies by discipline (Gannon-Leary et al. 2007, Hemminger et al. 2007, Herman 2001, Schonfeld and Guthrie 2007, Sheeja 2010 and Tennant and Cataldo 2002).

## *Role of library research*

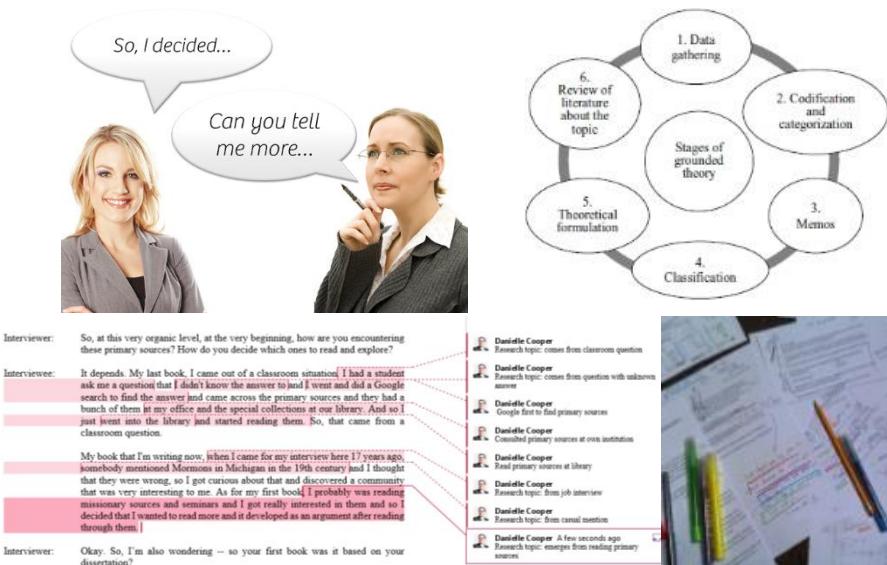
- » In order to attend to researchers, information spaces and services must be designed in ways that take these researchers' information needs and behaviors into account (Hepworth 2004 and Spink et al. 2007)
- » Qualitative library research should not only be applied on a smaller scale to solve institution-specific problems but also be designed towards more sustained and open forms of exploration that incorporates collaboration with and comparison between libraries (e.g. Lanclos and Asher, 2016)

# RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

- » An ongoing program to examine the research support needs of scholars by discipline
- » Previous studies:
  - » History (Schonfeld and Rutner 2012)
  - » Chemistry (Schonfeld and Long 2013)
  - » Art History (Schonfeld and Long 2014)
- » Current studies:
  - » Religious Studies (launched January 2016)
  - » Agriculture (launched April 2016)
  - » Public Health (launched October 2016)

# RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

- » Ithaka S+R partners with 7-20 academic libraries who assemble research teams with 1-4 members
  - » Ithaka S+R designs research instruments and assembles an advisory committee to help guide the project
  - » Research teams attend a methods workshop hosted by Ithaka S+R to launch project



# RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

- » Each research team conducts research on about 15 scholars at their own institution
  - » Semi-structured interviews focused on the full research life-cycle (e.g. research methods, information management, publishing)
  - » Photography
- 
- » Who are scholars for the purpose of this project?
    - » Tenure track faculty or personnel who regularly conduct research as part of their work
    - » Out of scope: graduate students, adjunct faculty or personnel who do not regularly conduct research



# RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

- » The study results in two project outputs:
    - » Each research team writes a report on their local findings, which may be made publically available
    - » Ithaka S+R takes a sample of the information collected across the participating institutions and writes a capstone report made publically available
  - » Findings from the study are also used as the basis for further research and future outputs

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## KEY ISSUES

### *Changes in religious studies*

- » Mixed methods and interdisciplinary approaches
- » Digital technologies and social media
- » How to define “religious studies”
  - » The relationship between theology studies and religious studies
  - » Traditionally humanistic, ethnography increasingly popular



Pope Francis (@Pontifex) Welcome to the official Twitter page of His Holiness Pope Francis

Tweets 449 FOLLOWING 8 FOLLOWERS 4.68M

[Follow](#)

[Tweets](#) [Tweets & replies](#) [Photos & videos](#)

**Pope Francis @Pontifex · 8h**

Indifference towards those in need is not acceptable for a Christian.

4.9K 6.7K

**Pope Francis @Pontifex · Nov 4**

Being humble helps us share the burdens of others.

5.6K 7K

[Tweet to Pope Francis](#)

A screenshot of the official Twitter profile for Pope Francis (@Pontifex). The profile picture shows him smiling. The bio reads "Welcome to the official Twitter page of His Holiness Pope Francis". Below the bio are the statistics: 449 tweets, 8 following, and 4.68M followers. There is a "Follow" button. Below the stats are three navigation links: "Tweets", "Tweets & replies", and "Photos & videos". Two recent tweets are displayed. The first tweet, from 8 hours ago, states "Indifference towards those in need is not acceptable for a Christian." It has 4.9K likes and 6.7K retweets. The second tweet, from November 4, states "Being humble helps us share the burdens of others." It has 5.6K likes and 7K retweets. At the bottom is a blue button with white text that says "Tweet to Pope Francis".

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## KEY ISSUES

### *Shifts in the academy and public sphere*

- » Decline of the humanities
- » Vulnerability of small private colleges
- » Public perception of religion
- » Emerging social movements

### *Information-specific issues*

- » Open-access
- » Budget cuts to library and archives collections
- » Decrease in monograph publishers
- » Increasing reliance on digital collections



THE CHRONICLE REVIEW



ADVICE

### The Repression of Religious Studies



Andrea Levy for The Chronicle Review

By Wendy Doniger | APRIL 20, 2016 ✓ PREMIUM

In 2015, Harvard University Press began to publish the Murty Classical Library of India, a series of editions and translations of texts in a wide range of Indian languages, under the direction of Sheldon Pollock, professor of South Asian studies at Columbia University. In February, 2016, 132 academics in India petitioned to have Pollock removed as general editor. They were raising their voices not as subject experts — many were scientists or doctors lacking competence to judge humanistic scholarship — but as Hindus. Why did

### Losing Faith in Religious Higher Education

What happens when a seminary professor joins the religiously "unaffiliated"?



Eduardo Ortega / Creative Commons

By Brandon G. Wittenow | JULY 06, 2015

Raised in an evangelical home. Published by evangelical publishers. Employed by an evangelical seminary and divinity school. That was my life until last year when — at the end of a long and difficult intellectual journey — I concluded I was

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## *Sponsors*

- » American Theological Library Association (ATLA)
- » Society of Biblical Literature (SBL)
- » American Academy of Religion (AAR)

## *Participants*

1. Baylor University
2. Concordia Theological Seminary
3. Emory University
4. Luther Seminary
5. Naropa University
6. Rice University
7. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
8. University of Notre Dame
9. Vanderbilt University
10. Asbury Seminary
11. Brigham Young University
12. Columbia University
13. Harvard University
14. Jewish Theological Seminary of America
15. Princeton Theological Seminary
16. Temple University
17. Tufts University
18. Yale University

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## *Project next steps*

- » Participants making reports publically available (November 2016)
- » Ithaka S+R finalizing capstone report (November-December 2016)
- » Final report launched with links to publically available local reports (January 2017)

## *Findings to watch*

- » Scholar as collector
- » Digital research ubiquitous but minimal attention to digital research methodologies
- » Lack of awareness of/participation in open access

# RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

## *Challenges*

- » Coordinating with a large group of participants across multiple institutions
- » Striking balance between local and collaborative research aims

## *Key benefits*

- » This project's qualitative approach is a unique way to:
  - » Develop relationships between librarians, scholars and other disciplinary constituents
  - » Provide new opportunities for information professionals to develop their qualitative research skills
  - » Capture the practices and needs of researchers collaboratively and cross-institutionally

# WORKS CITED & FURTHER READING

- Case, D.O. (2012). *Looking for information: A survey of research on information seeking, needs and behavior* (3rd ed.). London Emerald Group.
- Chenier, E. (2016). Reclaiming the lesbian archives. *The Oral History Review* 2016, Vol. 43, No. 1, pp. 170–182
- Cocciolo, A. (2010) Can Web 2.0 enhance community participation in an institutional repository? The case of PocketKnowledge at Teachers College, Columbia University." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 36, no. 4, 304-312.
- Craig, B.L. (1990). "What are the Clients? Who are the Products? The future of archival public services in perspective," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91), 135.
- Duff, W., Dryden, J., Limkilde, C., Cherry, J., and Bogomazova, E. (2008). Archivists' views of user-based evaluation: Benefits, barriers, and requirements. *The American Archivist*, 71(1), 144-166
- Ellis, D. (1993). Modeling the information-seeking patterns of academic researchers: A grounded theory approach. *The Library Quarterly* 63 (4): 469–486.
- Fry, J. and Talja, S. (2007). The intellectual and social organization of academic fields and the shaping of digital resources. *Journal of Information Science*, 33 (2): 115–133
- Gannon-Leary, P, Bent, M. and Webb, J. (2007). Researchers and their information needs: A literature review. *New Review of Academic Librarianship* 13 (1/2): 51–69.
- Hemminger, B.M, Lu, D., Vaughan, K., Adams, S.J. (2007). Information seeking behavior of academic scientists *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 58 (14): 2205–2225.
- Hepworth, M. (2004). A framework for understanding user requirements for an information service: Defining the needs of informal careers. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 55 (8): 695–708.
- Herman, E. (2001) End-users in academia: Meeting the information needs of university researchers in an electronic age: Part 2 innovative information-accessing opportunities and the researcher: User acceptance of IT-based information resources in academia. *ASLIB Proceedings* 53 (10): 431–457.
- Lonnqvist, H. (2007). The research processes of humanities scholars. *Advances in Library Administration and Organization* 25: 175–201
- Khoo, M., Rozaklis, L., and Hall, C. (2012). A survey of the use of ethnographic methods in the study of libraries and library users. *Library & Information Science Research*, 34(2), 82-91.
- Lanclos, D. and Asher, A. (2016) "Ethnographish: The state of the ethnography in libraries." *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience* 1(5): <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/weave.12535642.0001.503>
- Meyerson, J., Galloway, P., and Bias, R. (2012). Improving the user experience of professional researchers: Applying a user-centered design framework in archival repositories. *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 49(1), 1-7.
- Nel, M.A. and Fourie, I. (2015). Information behavior and expectations of veterinary researchers and their requirements for academic library service. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2015.10.007

# WORKS CITED & FURTHER READING

(continued)

- Savolainen, R. (2007). *Information behavior and information practice: Reviewing the “umbrella concepts” of information-seeking studies*. *The Library Quarterly* 77 (2): 109–132.
- Schonfeld, R.C. and Guthrie, K.M. (2007) *The changing information services needs of faculty*. *Educause Review* 42 (4): 8.
- Schonfeld, R.C. and Long, M.P. (2013). *Supporting the changing research practices of chemists*. Ithaka S+R. <http://sr.ithaka.org/?p=22561>
- (2014). *Supporting the changing research practices of art historians*.  
Ithaka S+R. <http://sr.ithaka.org/?p=22833>
- Schonfeld, R.C. and Rutner, J. (2012). *Supporting the changing research practices of historians*. Ithaka S+R. <http://sr.ithaka.org/?p=22532>
- Sheeja, N. (2010). *Science vs social science: A study of information-seeking behavior and user perceptions of academic researchers*. *Library Review*, 59 (7): 522–531.
- Spink, A., Foster, A., and Hepworth, M. (2007). *Knowledge of information behaviour and its relevance to the design of people-centred information products and services*. *Journal of Documentation* 63 (1): 33–56.
- Tennant, M.R. and Cataldo, T.T. (2002). *Development and assessment of specialized liaison librarian services: Clinical vs. basic science in a veterinary medicine setting*. *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, 21 (2): 21–37.
- Wilson, T. D. (2000). *Human information behavior*. *Informing science*, 3(2), 49-56.
- Yakel, E., and Tibbo, H. (2010). *Standardized survey tools for assessment in archives and special collections*. *Performance Measurement and Metrics*, 11(2), 211-222.