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The Research Needs and Practices of Asian Studies Scholars at Trinity University

A Report for Ithaka S+R

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Abstract

This report describes the research needs and practices of nine Asian Studies scholars at Trinity University, a private liberal arts college in San Antonio, Texas. Part of a nationwide study coordinated by Ithaka S+R,[1] the report describes scholars' methods, information needs, and publication practices in order to better align and deliver research support from academic departments, librarians, university administrators, and other stakeholders. The report culminates in predictions on the future of the field, and offers several recommendations to help scholars achieve the future they envision for Asian Studies.

Asian Studies at Trinity University

East Asian Studies at Trinity (EAST) is "a multifaceted program that prepares students for life in the Pacific century."[2] In addition to a bachelor of science in Chinese studies, EAST offers opportunities for experiential learning via internships and study-abroad programs, such as Ecological Civilization in China, a three-credit class in which students conduct environmental fieldwork in Zhuhai. EAST touts two endowed professorships and "one of the largest undergraduate Chinese language programs in the nation."[3] Notwithstanding the focus on East

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[1] Ithaka S+R is a not-for-profit higher education research and policy institute. This study, part of Ithaka's Research Support Services Program, includes participants from Arizona State University; the Claremont Colleges; Harvard University; Indiana University; Lafayette College; the University of California, Los Angeles; the University of Colorado, Boulder; the University of Maryland, College Park; the University of Michigan; the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Washington.

[2] For more information, see new.trinity.edu/academics/departments/east-east-asian-studies-trinity

[3] Ibid.

Asia, Trinity also employs scholars whose teaching and research interests concern South and Southeast Asia.

Method

EAST is a large program, drawing together seventeen faculty from across the university. This study includes nine of its members, those scholars whose research interests primarily concern some aspect of the Asian or Asian-American experience. Participant disciplines include anthropology, communication, history, political science, literary criticism, and religious studies. Each subject was interviewed according to a semi-structured protocol containing questions on research focus and methods, information access and discovery, publication practices, and the state of Asian Studies (see appendix). Interviews ranging from 30 to 70 minutes were conducted and transcribed between April and June 2017. Transcripts were lightly edited to remove verbal filler and personally identifiable information. Each transcript was then openly coded following the principles of grounded theory. Categories were constructed by comparing and grouping meaningful concepts from each transcript. Those categories were then split, revised, deleted, or merged in a recursive process to better describe emerging phenomena, which include the following themes: data management; collaboration; finding and accessing sources; publication and dissemination, and open-access publishing.

Findings

Data Management

All participants collect data, but only some describe it as such. Nomenclature notwithstanding, participants described data as various as the methods used to find them. For historians, data consist of primary documents, such as government records, religious manuscripts, and registers of historical persons. For literature critics, data are text snippets and the notes that document cognition. For social scientists, data emerge from interview transcripts, field notes, and surveys soliciting demographic and psychographic variables.

To manage data, most participants use ad hoc processes in which the elements of research, such as notes and journal articles, are stored in electronic folders and arranged folksonomically. For one participant, this method is less than ideal, but the exigencies of research projects, not to mention his other scholastic duties, prevent him from devising a method other than the one he knows. In answering the question, 'How do you manage your research information?," he was unequivocal:

> "Just badly. Just super badly. I have piles, like Borges or somebody. Just stuff. Digitally, that's easier, because that's all searchable. Mostly I store things around a particular publication that I'm trying to get out. So I'm reading a whole bunch of stuff on artificial intelligence right now, so that all goes into a [electronic] file that's vaguely somehow related to the publication that I'm working on."

Compared to his field notebooks, which are "in a pile" and "a kind of jumble," the electronic folders are relatively well organized. Other participants, too, described working methods in which research materials span multiple locations, physical or otherwise.[4] Such practices are not without costs, however. One participant admitted that it can be hard to keep track of notes kept in multiple locations, which sometimes results in the loss of ideas or observations.

> "I take a lot of notes and sometimes I have a problem organizing my notes, because I may have notes at home, I may have notes in a computer file here that I won't remember after a while, and I may have notes in the margins of the books. So that has always been a problem for me, and some of the thoughts are very fleeting and they'll just be gone."

Only one participant uses software other than Word or Excel to keep track of notes, references, and other research materials. She uses Evernote, a relatively recent addition to her research playbook.

> "My friend, when I was in China, was like, "You've got to get this. You've got to have a better way of organizing your stuff." I find it really valuable. I like that it's keyword

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[4] This mirrors findings in Ithaka S+R's report on religious studies scholars, who "engage in idiosyncratic practices for organizing and storing their information." For more information, see Danielle Cooper and Roger C. Schonfeld, "Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Religious Studies Scholars," Ithaka S+R, February 8, 2017, https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.294119.

searchable. I have a note for a primary source and the digital file is there, as well as my notes on it."

Once adopted, it can be hard to spot the inefficiencies of a given approach to data management. Integrating software into one's process, for example, consumes time that would otherwise be spent on research itself. In other words, familiarity breeds contentment.

Collaboration

Six of nine participants collaborate with other scholars, or have done so, albeit with varying degrees of involvement and success. Two participants reported frequent, happy collaborations in which each partner supplied domain knowledge and expertise the other lacked. One participant described a "long, productive exchange" with a scholar in Singapore, consisting of co-authored publications and stints as journal editors. Other participants described less-intimate collaborations in which they contributed book chapters to themed volumes or served as guest editors of journal issues. But even informal collaboration is valuable, not least for the "sense of community" it provides, the experience of seeing one's scholarship in an international context.

> "I once guest-edited a special section for a journal, and so the professors that I collaborated– not really collaboration in terms of I was editing their papers, but they were writing for me, for the same themes, and I would give them the direction of the papers. So that was a very enjoyable experience."

Other participants described collaboration in less glowing terms. Indeed, for one respondent collaboration may be too generous a term. She described an article co-written with a former professor in which "he just kind of helped me to polish the paper and see the holes in the argument. Most of the time I do it myself." This go-it-alone approach proved necessary for another participant who suffered a falling out with his co-author.

> "It does so much depend on interpretation, and then when you collaborate, you almost have to agree on an interpretation. Especially if it is on a passage that is crucial to the thrust of your research or whatever. So basically, what I can say is it wasn't my first collaboration but it was my last."

For other contributors, collaboration is unnecessary, or it remains a hoped-for but unfulfilled ambition. Or it falls outside the domain of Asian Studies, as demonstrated by the participant who, with an anatomist colleague, co-wrote three articles on religion, art, and science for the catalogue of *Body Worlds*, Gunther von Hagens's traveling exhibition of plastinated bodies.

Finding and Accessing Primary Sources

Source types vary by discipline. Historians scrutinize administrative and government documents; literature critics interpret texts; social scientists interview or observe research subjects. To place findings within a meaningful context, however, scholars need primary sources other than the kinds they use most often. If a scholar wants to understand how Vietnam's health care system arrived at its present condition, for example, he must comb colonial archives, read newspapers, and skim social media.

> "I've translated French colonial health documents. I've looked at Vietnamese publications: magazines and journal articles and journalism. And most recently, I've been doing sort of media studies-ish work, so looking at social media platforms and their use by local [non-governmental organizations]."

More remarkable than the kinds of sources, however, are improvements in accessing them. Seven of nine participants described the research benefits of mass digitization, including the efficiency of electronic search and the convenience of summoning a library from a laptop. Senior scholars were most appreciative of the difference, not surprising given the difficulty of the purely print-based methods they once used.

> "Digitizing has made research so much easier, and search engines are just fantastic when you have primary sources that are online. All the classics are digitized and searchable. So it's as simple as entering a couple of Chinese characters in the search box and then I have everything that I need."

Digitization improves more than access, however. Three scholars described research projects that would have been difficult, perhaps impossible, before the advent of digitization and keyword search. As one participant put it, tracing word usage is easy when the scope is limited to a novel,

"but when you can do it in a whole corpus of literature, from periodicals to archives to all sorts of things, that's a very different way of looking at the past. It's organizing the past differently." But some sources remain stuck in material form, making site visits necessary. And the barriers multiply when those sources are rare, valuable, or religiously significant.

> "Access depends on if [manuscripts] are in the hands of private families, and universities don't like to give access to anybody and everybody [...] There are a number of manuscripts that one can only view on certain days of the year: they're private showings, they're more ceremonial, not available to scholars for access. So it's a very different type of accessibility, or lack thereof, than with museums and libraries."

For those whose primary sources have been digitized but remain inaccessible for budgetary reasons, access means devising workarounds, or else hitting the road.

> "I did the best I could with our trial databases, but now I can't explore anything else that I've found. […] If I wanted to make this into a full project I'd probably need to go to China – or UT Austin, I suppose. I could hang out there for a little bit."

"Hanging out" requires that neighboring universities have the databases a scholar needs, and even the UT Libraries cannot provide access to everything. One participant, for example, would need to visit Texas Tech in Lubbock, a seven-hour drive from San Antonio.

But such a drive is downright enviable when your primary sources are the citizens of Seoul and Saigon. Some participants depend on site visits and participant interviews, for which no substitute exists. And apart from the logistical and financial challenges of international travel, there is the "major obstacle of finding the people and getting the interview with them." That obstacle includes more than getting someone to sit for an interview; it includes discovering their whereabouts, winning their trust, finding a time that suits both parties, and then finally conducting the interview itself.

Finding and Accessing Secondary Sources

To find scholarly articles, participants use a variety of databases, including JSTOR, Lexis-Nexis, Chinese Academic Journals (CNKI), the Bibliography of Asian Studies, and OneSearch,

Trinity's web-scale discovery service. Most are pleased by the coverage Coates Library provides. "We are very good in that aspect," said one participant. Another reported, "I've never not been able to get something, in terms of a piece scholarship, that I'm interested in." For others, the challenge of electronic sources lies not in searching them but in knowing when to stop. This includes the persistent sense that one is missing crucial information, that another search, or another one, will turn up precisely the right source. By growing accustomed to electronic databases, one participant reported, "we get lulled into this false sense of security that we're doing a really nice butterfly net, looking for everything, and catching only what we want," when in fact the searcher might miss items entirely. For others, the problem stems from the known unknowns, the certainty that useful resources exist, but that they lie outside one's awareness.

In some cases, however, participants require journals and databases the library cannot afford, such as the China Core Newspapers Database.[5] Others desire custom-built resources, such as a database indexing Weibo, a Chinese microblogging service. As with primary sources, some participants overcome coverage gaps by traveling to regional universities or calling on colleagues at other institutions. "I will either make the trip," one participant said, "or I will try to find [articles] somewhere else. I'll ask my friend to have a PDF from their library or things like that."

As for books, some participants use them less frequently as their contents migrate to digital formats. "I make less and less use of them," a participant told me. "I used to go down there all the time and use dictionaries in the library, but now there's no need for them because they're all digitized, and it's much easier to search on my computer than thumbing through pages." For others, books remain a crucial part of the research process, as does interlibrary loan, which supplies graduate- and professional-level books not found in Coates Library. One scholar described interlibrary loan as "remarkable," adding that the service allows him to "get [my] hands on pretty much everything that I've ever needed to get, and pretty efficiently." But unlike electronic databases, interlibrary loan travels at the speed of the analog world, which is too slow

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[5] At Coates Library, purchasing decisions are strongly influenced by curricular needs. Resources that students are unlikely to use are thus difficult to justify.

to suit another participant. "I used our interlibrary loan several times," she said, "but I wasn't happy with that. It was too slow, and so I end up thinking I should not rely on that." Instead, she bought the books she needed, sometimes turning to Chinese vendors on the internet. Scholars also rely on seminal texts, pathbreaking scholarship that regularly provides inspiration, theoretical grounding, and methodological templates.

> "There are a handful of monographs that are critical to me that I consult often. […] One is Philip Lutgendorf's work. He has a book called *The Life of a Text*, and he basically does the manuscript history and the reception history of another very prominent Hindu text. So that has been formative for me, and I've used that as sort of a model in terms of method and theory."

Libraries figured prominently in participant responses, with many searching collections in other countries. Participants browse libraries as small as those found in temples to ones as vast as the National Diet Library in Tokyo. Most participants navigate these collections without the help of library staff. In fact, only three participants mentioned librarians when discussing secondary sources. But not all libraries are user-friendly. Temple libraries, for example, are sometimes poorly organized, making one scholar dependent on the institutional knowledge of library staff.

> "I rely on the librarians to be honest with you. I ask them to show me things, and I'm not very good at digging in myself because it's not that well catalogued there. So I'll just ask them to provide me with things."

As for Trinity's librarians, one participant mentioned a project with tricky citation requirements, for which he received help. Another regularly consults his liaison for everything from purchase requests to help with keyword and article searches. "Our library liaisons," he said, "have done quite a lot of work, figuring out the proper terms or where to look or where I might have more success in terms of orienting my search for specific stuff." In his view, Trinity's librarians "have done a great job." But he was the only participant to describe interactions of such depth. For most participants, finding information is easy, but accessing it is sometimes a challenge.

Keeping Up With Trends

To keep up with trends, participants join professional societies and attend conferences, which mitigate isolation by connecting them with like-minded scholars. As one participant explained, "For us at Trinity, especially a liberal arts college, I think it's really important that we stay active in our professional societies, just so we know what's going on, how the field is evolving." Participants also subscribe to newsletters and listservs, and they read flagship journals, not so much to locate scholarship for their projects but to stay informed on the state of their field.

> "I keep up with trends of the field by reading major journals. I'm mostly working on Asia and working on the security issues, so I read up-to-date journals, for example *International Security*, *International Organization*, *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, mostly."

Participants also rely on word of mouth within their scholarly networks, including peer reviewers and social media communities.

> "I'm Facebook friends with a lot of people in my field. They post about books that they find interesting, they post what they're doing, and I find that valuable in understanding what's new and what's cool."

> "It mostly is word of mouth […] I know a lot of people who work in Vietnam, so when I'm preparing my article I sort of ask around, like, "Hey, is anybody publishing on this?""

For one participant, however, trends are irrelevant. Her research questions stem entirely from "what I think is important."

> "I read other people's work only when it's relevant to what I'm doing because, in a way, I think it's impossible to keep up with the trends. For me, it's really important that it's something I really care about, otherwise it's hard work to do research. So I really don't care what is the hot topic right now or what's the hot trending stuff."

Publication and Dissemination

In choosing where to publish, scholars balance reach against prestige. Placing articles in the

"standard" journals of their field, as one author put it, ensures that interested readers find the work, and that it comes with the imprimatur of a trusted brand. But prestige isn't everything; selecting a venue involves pragmatism too. Several participants named the *Journal of Asian Studies* the best in their field, but declined to submit their work to it. "It's very hard to get published in that journal," said one participant. "There are just 4 articles in each and it's four times a year. People end up having to find all these other journals." Accordingly, participants publish in specialized, sub-field venues, ones that track with their research focus or disciplinary interests.

For many scholars, the choice of venue is determined less by audience considerations than by an invitation to submit their work. Five scholars discussed articles or book chapters that originated as conference presentations, ones attended by journal editors. For two scholars, this is now the primary mode in which they publish.

> "Most of my publication in the last five years has been invited, you know. So I'll give a conference paper and then get invited to publish something or be part of a project."

But journals are just one means by which Trinity's Asianists disseminate their work. For many participants, scholarly monographs, especially ones published by university presses, remain the gold standard, and critical for tenure and promotion. As one participant put it, "If you publish your dissertation or your project into a book by a major university press, that would be calculated as a very important achievement." Participants have worked with several publishers, including the State University of New York Press, University of Hawai'i Press, Routledge, Wiley, and Springer. Two participants are currently turning dissertations into book proposals.

Some participants write for non-academic audiences. Two scholars have written essays for the catalogues of museum exhibitions. Another participant is a frequent opinion columnist for mainstream news organizations, including the *Washington Post*, the *Guardian*, and the *New York Times*. For him, "that [work] ends up being largely in relation to advocacy as opposed to

scholarship. A lot of that is centered around issues of discrimination, xenophobia, hate violence – things like that."

Open Access

Participants were split between those with low or limited knowledge of open access and those who publish in OA venues. Five scholars admitted to confusion or a lack of knowledge on the subject. One scholar described open access as "a black box that people talk a lot about but I really don't know what it means." Another mentioned that he would like every interested reader to find his work, but he's not sure how to increase its reach. "Some of the journals I've published in might be open access. I don't know. [...] I'm just sort of passively like, 'It would be nice if this were available.'" For one participant, lack of knowledge is not the issue, but rather publisher prohibitions. "[Publishers] require me to sign [...] the contract or something, the ownership of [...] the copyright. The copyright is owned by the publisher." For her, this is simply the cost of placing work in journals with reputations for quality, journals her peers esteem and recognize. A fourth participant was surprised – and pleased – to discover her work on the open web when a student included one of her papers on an annotated bibliography. But her pleasure was mixed with concerns about quality.

> "I really hope that there will be a lot more work that can be open access, while at the same time I know that there's the stigma of somebody publishing online. Is it really being scrutinized and scholarly in terms of its value? So perhaps a lot of people are under the pressure of choosing between a more conventional journal and the open access [ones]."

In contrast, three scholars passionately support open access, invoking the moral dimension of making their work available to anyone who wants it. "Everything should be open," one participant told me. "It's just crazy that it's not." He described the anguish of relinquishing the copyrights to his first book. It was "really, really hard to do," he said. "That just killed me, because everything else I do, as soon as it goes public I put it on my webpage. [...] There are so many people who don't have access to those files without paying, and it's just not fair." Another

described a formative experience as an undergraduate, when he was unable to obtain the scholarship he needed.

> "That's been very important to me, to make everything available through open access, especially because, as an undergraduate student, I found myself in the position, more than once, where I couldn't afford a book so I just didn't read it. I feel like that's a shame for the type of work we do, so I try to make everything available whenever I can."

Conclusion: The Future of Asian Studies

When asked to speculate on the future of Asian Studies, participants supplied a variety of predictions from which no dominant theme emerged. The lack of consensus is itself meaningful inasmuch as it reflects participant priorities, not to mention the myriad challenges and opportunities contained within so vast a field.

For one participant, the future of Asian Studies is one of growth. "Asia is only going to become more important," Vietnam in particular, "as we pivot away from China, as we look for other partners in the region." But another scholar is pessimistic about this prospect. "I feel that there was a kind of boom of Chinese language students around 2008 when the Olympics in Beijing was happening. So a lot of times our reason to exist depends on the interest of the students, because the students' interests can be unpredictable." These two responses suggest that interest in Asian Studies is directly linked to social and geopolitical developments, the same kind that sometimes limit a scholar's ability to conduct research, especially in authoritarian countries that restrict access to information. But the field will continue to grow regardless, in part because information about Asian countries and cultures is so much easier to locate.

Others described a future in which the field continues to suffer from an identity crisis driven by the regional and disciplinary divisions inherent to Asian Studies today. One scholar was blunt in her assessment: "There is a lack of interdisciplinary work in Asian Studies." Another noted the problem, not just of discipline, but of incompatible regions too. "It's such a broad field that I could not have a conversation with a scholar of Japanese religion, for example, and actually have

any ground to stand on." For a third participant, Asian Studies is a field of factions, one that does not include her discipline.

> "I myself don't even think what I do is Asian Studies because Asian Studies means something really, like, hardcore Humanities: history, religion, and all that. So for Communication scholars, we're kind of outside that circle. But that doesn't mean we don't do studies about Asian countries or China. And what we do is also very humanistic. We look at people's lives."

Of course, Asian Studies is more than a collection of disciplines, but people too. For one participant, the future depends on a growing push for diversity and inclusion, for the ongoing process of "deconstructing orientalist and colonialist assumptions," and moving away from an Asian Studies "dominated by white men and their perceptions" in favor of people "who belong to the background, the region, the religion that they're studying."[6]

Finally, four participants noted that the future of Asian Studies is one in which scholars do their work in the open, producing work not for one another but for the public at large. As one participant put it, "I have always kind of lived on the cusp between intellectual and popular worlds because I feel that we should not exist in an Ivory Tower." Another encouraged scholars to "get a little bit off their high horse" in order to develop as public intellectuals, ones the press could turn to for analysis rather than "nonqualified popularizers." Part of this effort will, some participants hope, include the continued development of open-access venues in which early-career scholars can publish. But such projects are rife with their own challenges.

> "We [members of the Asia Network board] recognize that a liberal arts college, particularly junior professors, need more channels to publish, and so we were debating with ourselves whether we should work with Lever Press[7] to create an Asia Network series of monographs and journal articles. But it's always stopping at the stage when

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[6] The participant qualified his statement by adding, "I don't think there's anything inherently wrong with having white men study Hinduism or whatever, but we need to have a balance in terms of scholars so we can begin to have a balance in terms of representation."

[7] Lever Press is "a new publishing program for book-length works aligned with the mission and ethos of liberal arts colleges, committed to open access, and focused on digital modes of scholarship." More information is available at www.publishing.umich.edu/projects/lever-press/

somebody brought up the issue of, okay, so how many people actually need this avenue, and there's still this stigma that the Asian Studies Association already sponsors things like this. Do we need additional things mostly focusing on teaching?"

Whatever the focus, bringing more information about Asia to the public's attention remains critical for the health of the field. As one participant noted, "if we want to develop Asian Studies more, we [need to] train the people and expose the people to Asian culture more: the language, the pop culture, dramas, and also the traditional cultures."

Recommendations

In light of this study's findings, and to achieve the kind of Asian Studies that Trinity's scholars envision, EAST faculty, liaison librarians, and relevant administrators should collaborate in order to investigate the feasibility of the following recommendations.

Diversity and Inclusion

- Asian Studies departments should prioritize diversity and inclusivity when hiring new faculty, seeking those for whom the Asian experience is both lived and studied.

Open Access

- Whenever possible, Asianists should make their scholarship publicly available, either by publishing in open-access venues or by archiving their final manuscripts in institutional repositories. If an institution does not have a repository, it should seek one.

Collection Development

- Libraries should continue to invest in electronic resources over print ones, especially for reference works and journal literature.
- When possible, libraries should use their collection budgets not only to purchase access but to support freely-available resources such as the Chinese Text Project. Furthermore, such projects should pursue membership models to ensure their long-term stability.[8]

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[8] Examples include PhilPapers and the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

- Asian Studies programs at liberal arts colleges should investigate the feasibility of consortial purchasing in order to license access to costly databases such as ChinaMaxx. A central steering committee, one managed by the Oberlin Group or the Center for Research Libraries, could help far-flung institutions to participate in and benefit from such arrangements.

Faculty Development
- New faculty members should discuss their information needs with librarians. In the event that faculty members require resources the library cannot afford, the faculty member should work with his or her chair and the Office of Academic Affairs to secure funding where available.
- Academic departments must ensure that Asian Studies scholars have access to development funds to support their travel needs. Additionally, scholars – working through the Faculty Senate or other official channels – should collaborate with the Alumni Relations and Development offices to investigate opportunities whereby donors could support faculty research.
- Academic Affairs, in partnership with the Collaborative for Learning and Teaching, should create, fund, or facilitate workshops to train Asian Studies scholars in the use of digital tools and methodologies. Similar workshops could be held for early-career scholars to help them navigate the unfamiliar terrain of pitching their dissertations to publishers, collaborating across disciplinary borders, and developing inchoate ideas into projects worth pursuing. Such workshops should be open to scholars from area institutions to promote interdisciplinary and cross-institutional collaborations.
- Asian Studies departments at liberal arts colleges should investigate the feasibility of teaching exchange programs to help faculty combat disciplinary isolation, but also to provide scholars the opportunity to teach graduate students and expert audiences. A system of visiting professorships could increase morale, deepen teaching ability, and facilitate the exchange of knowledge.

Appendix: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Research focus and methods

1. Describe your current research focus/projects.
2. How is your research situated within the field of Asian Studies? [Probe for how/does their work engage with any other fields or disciplines?]
3. What research methods do you typically use to conduct your research? [Probe for how those methods relate to work done by others in Asian Studies/in the other fields they engage with)
    a. Do you collaborate with others as part of your research? [If yes, probe for what these collaborations entail, who typically works on them and what the division of work is]
    b. Does your research elicit data? [If so, probe for what kinds of data typically elicited, how they incorporate this data into their final research outputs and how they manage and store this data for their ongoing use]

Information Access and Discovery

1. [Beyond the data your research produces] What kinds of primary information do you rely on to do your research?
    a. How do you locate this information?
    b. What are the greatest challenges you experience working with this kind of information?
    c. How do you manage and store this information for your ongoing use?
2. What kinds of secondary information do you rely on to do your research? E.g. monographs, peer reviewed articles.
    a. How do you locate this information?
    b. What are the greatest challenges you experience working with this kind of information?

     c.   How do you manage and store this information for your ongoing use?

3. Think back to a past or ongoing research project where you faced challenges in the process of finding and accessing information.

     a.   Describe these challenges.

     b.   What could have been done to mitigate these challenges?

4. How do you keep up with trends in your field more broadly?

Dissemination Practices

1. Where do you typically publish your scholarly research? [Probe for kinds of publications and what disciplinary audiences they typically seek to engage with].

     a.   Do you disseminate your research beyond scholarly publications? [If so, probe for where they publish and why they publish in these venues]

     b.   How do your publishing practices relate to those typical to your discipline?

2. Have you ever made your research data, materials or publications available through open access? (e.g. through an institutional repository, open access journal or journal option)

     a.   If so, where and what has been your motivations for pursuing open dissemination channels? (i.e. required, for sharing, investment in open access principles)

     b.   If no, why not?

State of the Field and Wrapping Up

1. If I gave you a magic wand that could help you with your research and publication process [except for more money or time] – what would you ask it to do?

2. What future challenges and opportunities do you see for the broader field of Asian Studies?

3. Is there anything else about your experiences as a scholar of Asian Studies and/or the Asian Studies as a field that you think it is important for me to know that was not covered in the previous questions?