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Revealing the Hidden Humanities: Strategies for Academic Libraries to Improve Access and Awareness

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Revealing the Hidden Humanities: Strategies for Academic Libraries to Improve Access and Awareness

Jody Condit Fagan & Malia Willey

James Madison University

Background

While there has been much research about the visibility of science and social science scholarship, there have been few similar investigations concerning the humanities (Fagan 2017). As a book-driven field with a culture of independent study, there are discipline-specific challenges to the visibility of research in the humanities. The prevalence of

Undergrad History Papers

Our first study (Fagan and Willey 2018) examines 15 award-winning student papers since 2010. These papers were awarded by either the American Historical Association or jointly by the World History Association and the honor society Phi Alpha Theta.

Another sample was 14 undergraduate history journals. This included the journals of

Black Athena Debate

The *Black Athena* debate emerged when scholar Martin Bernal asserted Ancient Greek civilization and language are Egyptian in origin. The ensuing academic conversations crossed multiple disciplines, including anthropology, archaeology, classics, and history, and included scholarly works as well as popular

Future Research

Potential topics for further research include:

- How effective are public search engines for topic searching in the humanities?
- Are there variations by discipline or format?
- How far back does coverage extend?

Partners/ Opportunities

Partners

Potential collaborators for improving the discoverability of humanities scholarship include:

- Librarians with expertise in scholarly communications, metadata, liaison or subject specialization, information

Discussion

Let's discuss:

- What ways do you support the visibility of humanities research at your institution?
- Who are your partners?
- What is your experience with the effectiveness of public search engines?

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Transcript of a Poster Session presented in an electronic format at the Association for College & Research Libraries Conference, April 10-13, 2019, Cleveland, Ohio.

Revealing the Hidden Humanities: Strategies for Academic Libraries to Improve Access and Awareness

Jody Condit Fagan & Malia Willey
James Madison University

Abstract

While research in the sciences and social sciences has become increasingly visible to search engines, research in the humanities has remained relatively hidden. There are discipline-specific challenges to scholarly communication in the humanities. Visualizations from two studies illustrate how humanities scholarship currently has limited discoverability and access. These results suggest that academic libraries are well-positioned to increase the visibility of humanities scholarship if they can leverage relationships. This poster presents opportunities for collaboration across library areas and strategies for revealing research in the humanities. Ideas for further exploration are identified and attendees will be invited to share their insights.

Background

While there has been much research about the visibility of science and social science scholarship, there have been few similar investigations concerning the humanities (Fagan 2017). As a book-driven field with a culture of independent study, there are discipline-specific challenges to the visibility of research in the humanities. The prevalence of sources in diverse formats defies the emphasis large publishers are placing on journal article metadata.

Undergrad History Papers

Our first study (Fagan and Willey 2018) examines 15 award-winning student papers since 2010. These papers were awarded by either the American Historical Association or jointly by the World History Association and the honor society Phi Alpha Theta.

Methodology

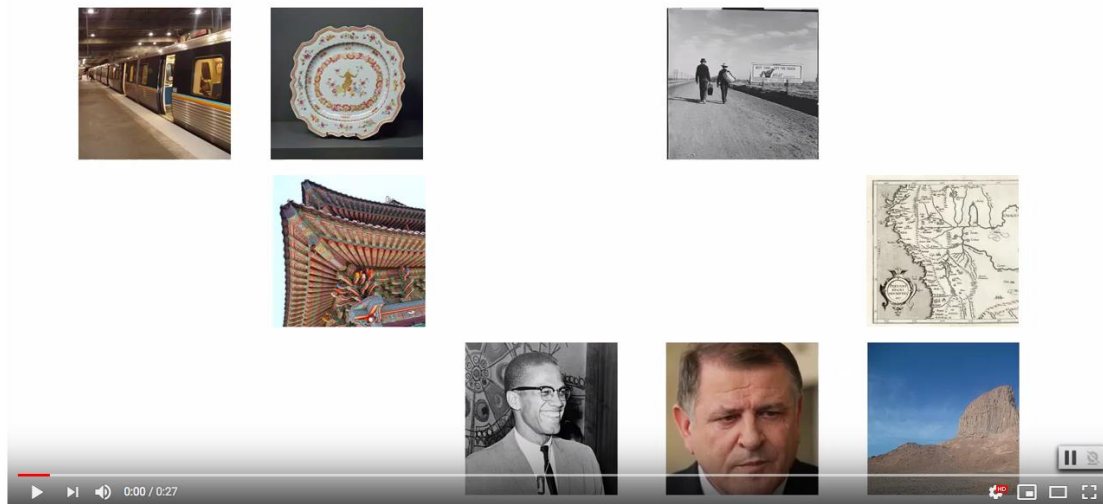
We searched the public search engines Google, Google Scholar, Microsoft Academic, and the authors' institutional repositories. We also searched the library databases *America: History & Life* and *Historical Abstracts*. We used a first and second try approach to search for papers. First, we searched for the papers by their titles. If we did not locate the paper, we made a second attempt to find the paper using keywords. The first 10 results were only reviewed to mimic typical user search behavior. A hit was considered either a record with the structured metadata for the paper or the full text of the paper.

Another sample was 14 undergraduate history journals. This included the journals of the award-winning articles and other active history journals on the Council on Undergraduate Research website.

Results

[Undergraduate Papers Found](#)

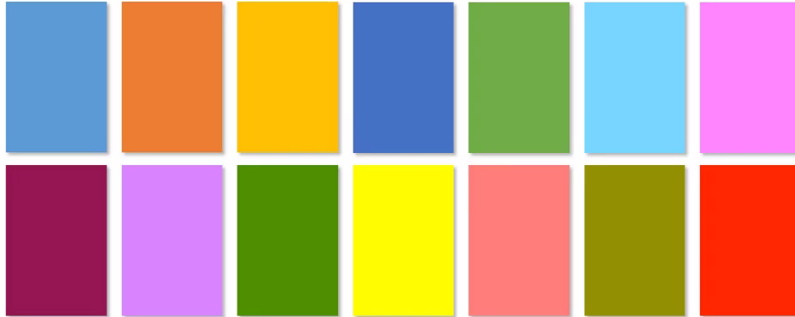
Papers Found in Google



Altogether we found eight of the 15 papers, and Google found all eight. These are the best papers... And we could only find eight of them!

[Undergraduate Journals Found](#)

Undergraduate History Journals



Other than Google, the journals appeared most often on Facebook. Nine of the 14 journals had Facebook pages or posts.

Overall undergraduate history research is most discoverable on the public web. Regular Google was most effective at locating these known citations. Institutional repositories only held two of the 15 papers and three of the 14 journals. Undergraduate history journals had more of a presence on social media.

Black Athena Debate

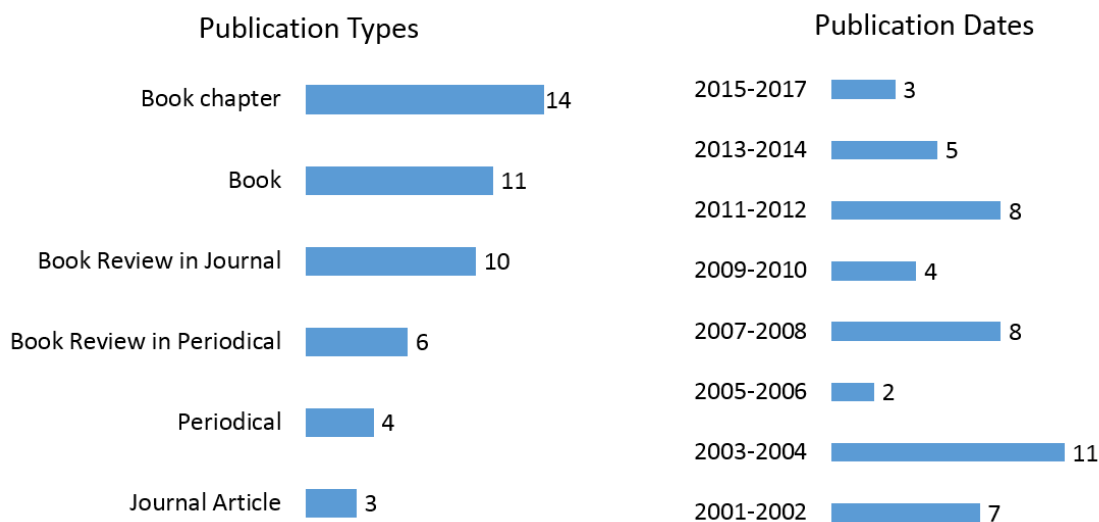


The *Black Athena* debate emerged when scholar Martin Bernal asserted Ancient Greek civilization and language are Egyptian in origin. The ensuing academic conversations crossed multiple disciplines, including anthropology, archaeology, classics, and history, and included scholarly works as well as popular news and magazine articles.

Methodology

The literature from the debate comprised the sample for our second study (2002-2017).

Black Athena Sample Characteristics



The sample was mostly books, book reviews, and book chapters, which is not uncommon in the humanities. The sample wasn't dominated by publications from any part of the decade covered.

There were 14 book chapters, 11 books, 10 book reviews in journals, six book reviews in periodicals, four periodical articles, and journal articles in our sample.

Searching Steps

We searched for these items in Google, Google Scholar, Google Books, Microsoft Academic, and the library databases *Academic Search Complete* and *L'Année Philologique*.

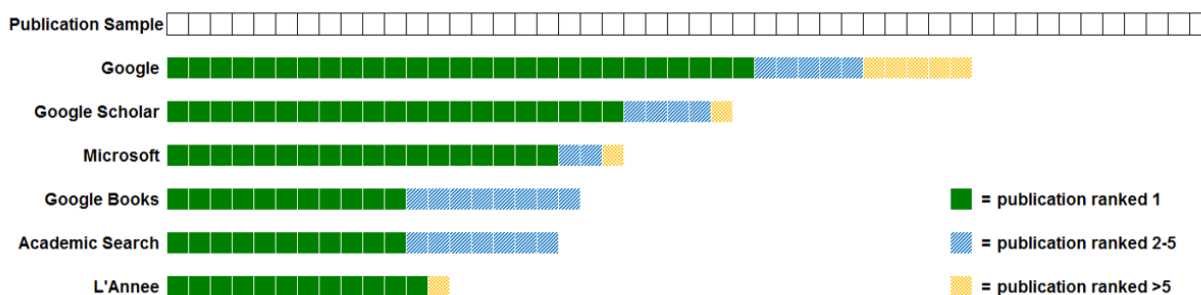
We clicked on results to look for either structured records or full text.

We did a second try if we didn't find the publication.

Results

Google and Google Scholar were the most successful tools at finding these items.

Google and Google Scholar Were Most Successful



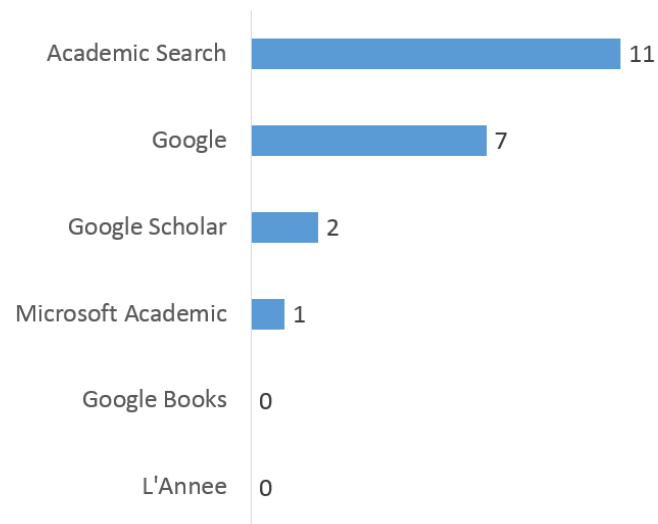
Google Books almost doesn't belong in this chart because it's only designed to search books – and it did find 20 of the 25 books and book chapters.

Seventeen of the 20 books and book chapters had a Google Book Preview

L'Année did offer links to three book reviews from the associated book results – not included on this chart since they didn't have their own records.

We did a second try search if the first failed. We ended up having to do a second try search 15 times.



Finding Full Text (No Link Resolvers)



We also recorded whether full-text was available, without using link resolvers and without being set up as affiliated with a library.

Although we found no full text in Google Books, we found several Google Book Previews.

Where Was Full Text Found?

Google	Book	Allworth Press	archive.org
	Review	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>	researchgate.net
	Review	<i>Wall Street Journal</i>	wsj.com
	Review	<i>First Things: A Monthly Journal ...</i>	firstthings.com
	Journal Article	<i>Exemplaria Classica</i>	rabida.uhu.es
	Journal Article	<i>Current Issues & the Study of Ancient ...</i>	associationofancienthistorians.org
	Periodical	<i>Eidolon</i>	eidolon.pub
Google Scholar	Journal Article	<i>Exemplaria Classica</i>	core.ac.uk 
	Journal Article	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>	repository.wellesley.edu 
Microsoft	Journal Article	<i>Exemplaria Classica</i>	dialnet.unirioja.es

Each full text item found appeared on different hosts, two of which were library repositories (blue arrows).

Eighty-three percent of the items were found by multiple search tools; six of these were found by five of six search tools. There were two items not found by any of the search tools – a book chapter and a book review in a scholarly journal.

Google found the most items, but Google Scholar did find five items that Google did not, including three book chapters, one journal article, and one book review.

Next Steps

We plan to expand the search sample to include citations before 2002, which will add more article coverage.

Future Research

Potential topics for further research include:

- How effective are public search engines for topic searching in the humanities?
- Are there variations by discipline or format?
- How far back does coverage extend?
- Are there major gaps related to publisher, topic, or language?
- How well represented are humanities scholars in academic social networking sites (e.g. ResearchGate) and identifier systems (e.g. ORCID)?

Partners/ Opportunities

Partners

Potential collaborators for improving the discoverability of humanities scholarship include:

- Librarians with expertise in scholarly communications, metadata, liaison or subject specialization, information literacy, and/or outreach
- Institutional repositories
- Groups that support faculty or student research
- Publishers
- Researchers

Opportunities

Strategies for improving the discoverability of humanities scholarship include:

- Creating awareness of author rights
- Advocating for scholarly identifiers
- Developing and implementing emerging metadata standards
- Promoting institutional repositories
- Partnering with publishers
- Working with aggregators

Examples from JMU Libraries [slide show]



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046 _ f 1946-02-02 :2 edrf
100 1 _ ja Gabbin, Joanne V.
370 _ ja Harrisonburg (Va.) :2 naf
372 _ ja American poetry--African American authors ja English literature--Study and teaching (Higher) :2 lcsb
373 _ ja James Madison University. Department of English ja James Madison University. Furious Flower Poetry Center :2 naf
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... plus 500 more and counting!

Creating Authority Records for Faculty

ORCID: Introduction

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Introduction Why Use ORCID? Creating Your Profile ORCID 4 JMU ORCID 4 Faculty ORCID 4 Students ORCID4LET Staff

What is ORCID?

ORCID
Connecting Research and Researchers

ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) is a persistent digital identifier that distinguishes you from every other researcher.

An ORCID can be particularly useful if you have a common name, changed your name, or do not consistently use the same name format when publishing.

- ORCID.org

Why use ORCID?

Do you have a common name? Have

Video: What is ORCID?



Your Digital Fingerprint



ORCID works like your fingerprint, driver's license number, or your JMU e-ID -- providing a digital identifier that is uniquely you.

ORCID's Are

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Isabella Bauer



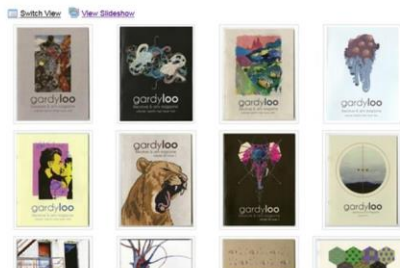
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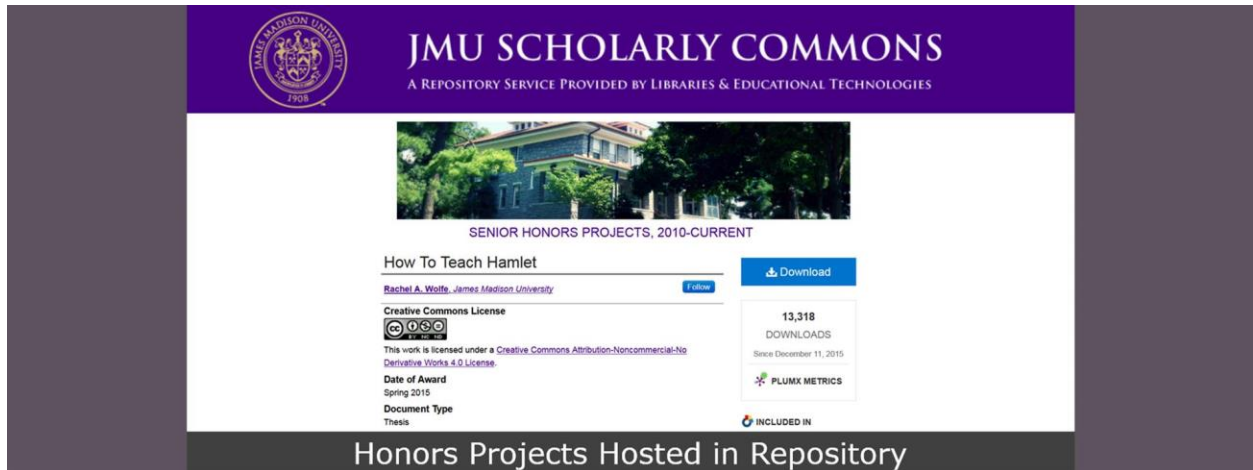
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Literature & Arts Magazine Hosted in Repository



Discussion

- What ways do you support the visibility of humanities research at your institution?
- Who are your partners?
- What is your experience with the effectiveness of public search engines?
- How could academic libraries further support these efforts?
- What research questions do you have?

Author Info

Jody Condit Fagan is co-director of James Madison University Libraries' Technology Department. She has an MLS, an MA in history, and a PhD in strategic leadership. Her background includes public services, technical services, library technologies, and project management. Her research interests include the visibility of scholarship in public search engines, leadership, perceptions of librarians, and academic identities.

Malia Willey is a Humanities Librarian at James Madison University. She has an MLS and an MA in history. She offers research expertise as the liaison to History, Philosophy & Religion, and the School of Art, Design, & Art History. Her scholarly interests have included humanities research, instructor development for librarians, and universal design for learning.

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