Journal Usage in Context

By Kari Schmidt, Electronic Resources Librarian, Bender Library, American University

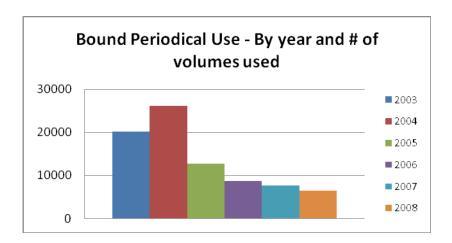
Overview

Starting in 2005, Bender Library began shifting the print journal collection to electronic only format. The shift began with small groups of titles from respected scholarly publishers, such as Oxford University Press, Sage, and Taylor & Francis, which allowed not only for campus acceptance of the format shift but also for the creation of collecting policies that reflect sound stewardship of an electronic journal collection. In 2008, the shift was accelerated based on these strong collecting policies and a desire by Library Administration to enhance campus access to electronic scholarly content. As a consequence, by the end of 2008 almost half of the current journal collection was maintained electronically. In addition, the Library was able to strengthen its partnerships with JSTOR, the LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe) program, and the Washington Research Library Consortia (WRLC) to ensure perpetual access to scholarly journal literature, both in print and electronically. By enhancing campus access to electronic scholarly content in this way, the Library also continued to build on its borrowing relationships with other WRLC schools through the Consortial Loan Service (CLS) service and the Interlibrary Loan Service (ILL). The Library also enhanced E-Reserves through the Blackboard Linkmaker service.

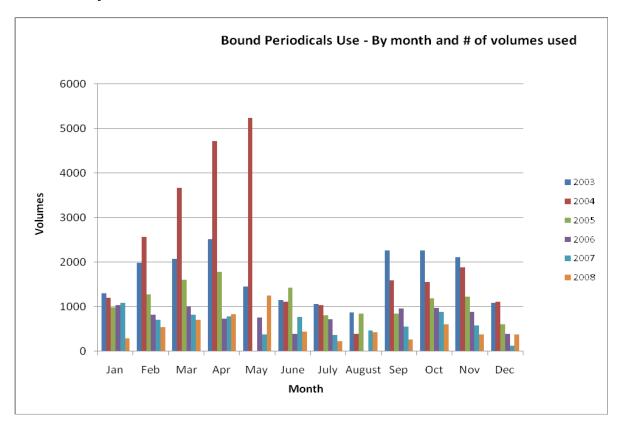
The shift to electronic only journal collecting coupled with strong preservation relationships, borrowing agreements, and improved end-user access services has led to a decrease in in-house print journal usage and paper copying and a substantial increase in electronic journal usage and patron borrowing through electronic delivery. These trends make it possible for the Library to address severe space issues wherein the monographic collection can no longer grow at its current pace without a significant adjustment to where the Library's print journal collection is stored. This adjustment entails moving the entire bound periodicals collection, currently stored in the lower level of the Library, to the WRLC storage facility with the goal of using the lower level to house current monographic overflow from the upper levels and future monographic growth. This wholesale move to storage includes certain exceptions: the Art journal collection will remain in the building and will be integrated with the Art monographs; Harvard Business Review will remain in the building, as receiving it electronically is currently unfeasible; and the current periodicals section will continue to hold journals still received in print format.

The following trends in journal usage statistics and Library services demonstrate why the transfer of the bound periodicals collection out of the building is not only practicable in solving significant space issues related to print monographic growth; but will allow the Library to grow electronic collections and services to meet the needs of a 21st Century user base who more often than not expect access to scholarship in digital formats.

Journal Usage Statistics: Bound Periodical Collection



Since 2003, when the Library started to track bound periodical use by the number of volumes re-shelved each day, use of bound periodicals has declined by 68%. In 2003, 20,156 volumes were used. By 2008, however, only 6,352 volumes were used.

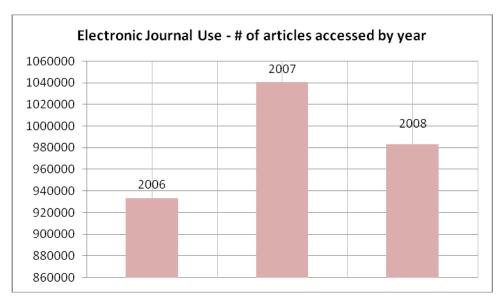


Bound periodical use spikes during high traffic periods in the Library but use in 2008 was significantly below previous tracked years. With the exception of the month of May, bound periodical volumes were used more than 50% less in 2008 than in 2003.

% Difference - Bound Periodical Use by Month - 2003 Compared to 2008			
Month	2003 # of volumes used	2008 # of volumes used	% difference
Jan	1302	293	-77%
Feb	1983	541	-72%
Mar	2071	708	-65%
Apr	2519	834	-66%
May	1459	1250	-14%
June	1152	442	-61%
July	1059	223	-78%
August	871	430	-50%
Sep	2269	272	-88%
Oct	2272	610	-73%
Nov	2112	375	-82%
Dec	1087	374	-65%
Total	20156	6352	-68%

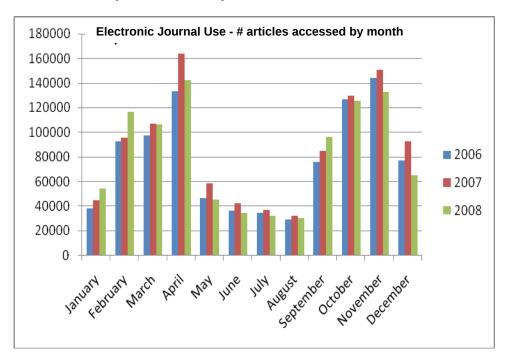
In 2008, the bound periodical collection was comprised of approximately 100,000 volumes. In 2008 6,352 total volumes were used, which accounted for approximately 6.3% of the entire bound periodical collection.

Journal Usage Statistics: Electronic Journal Collection



Since 2006, when the Library began tracking electronic journal use by the number of articles accessed, total accesses have held steady at more than 900,000 articles accessed per year. In 2006, Library patrons accessed the electronic journal collection 933,366 times. In 2007, total accesses were at 1,040,315 and in 2008 total accesses were 982,889. Annual totals include accesses from publisher websites like, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Sage, Taylor & Francis, and Science Direct as

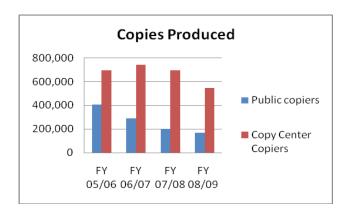
well as through electronic journal aggregator collections like Academic Search Premier and ProQuest Research Library and electronic journal archives such as JSTOR.



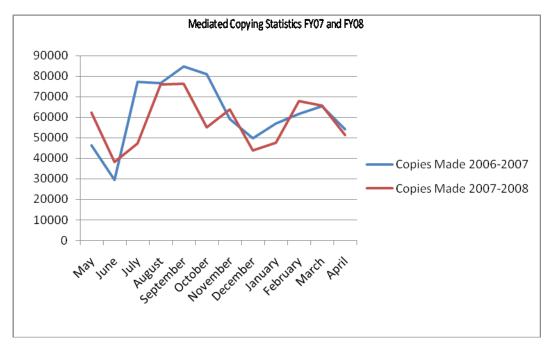
As with use of the bound periodicals collection, the electronic journal collection is used more during the fall and spring semesters. During the three years the Library has tracked usage, 2007 saw the most use of the electronic journal collection. Although metrics used to track bound periodical use differ from how electronic journal usage is tracked, use of the electronic journal collection is significantly higher than use of the bound periodical collection.

Currently the Library has access to 27,301 electronic journal titles from over 138 journal publishers and library vendors. As the Library continues to move the journal collection electronic only opportunities to gain access to more content through package subscriptions will grow the collection. For example, in 2009 the Library will have access to the complete Duke University Press collection through the e-Duke Scholarly Journals package, the complete Project Muse collection, and the complete Project Euclid collection.

Library Services: Copying Library Materials

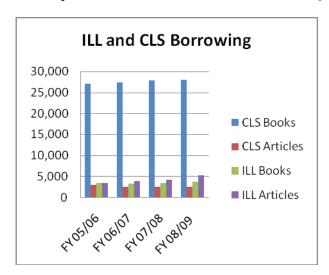


Copies made by patrons on public copiers are generally in decline as are copies made in the Copy Center. In addition, mediated copies are in overall decline. Mediated copies include copies made internally for Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and Reserves services as well as external copy requests from patrons. Anecdotally, reports from Copy Center staff suggest that less than 10% of the mediated patron copying is of journal articles from the print journal collection.

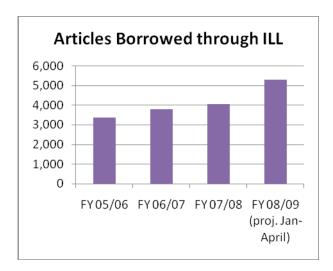


Because of the overall decline in public copying, in 2008 the Library went from offering six public copies machines to three public copy machines.

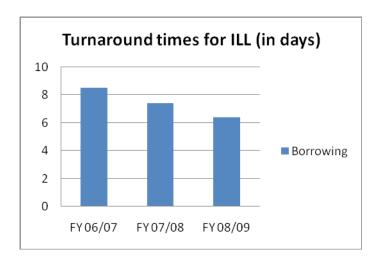
Library Services: Consortial Loan Service (CLS) Requests and Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Requests



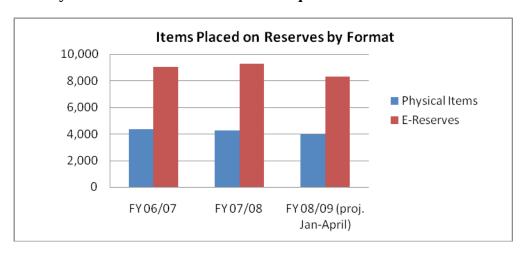
Borrowing from the Library's WRLC partners as well as borrowing from Libraries outside the Consortia has steadily increased over time. Books remain the most borrowed material type but journal article borrowing is a significant proportion of both services. Articles borrowed through the ILL service have increased over time.



With the rise in ILL borrowing, the Library has witnessed an improvement in the amount of time it takes for patrons to receive their ILL requests through electronic delivery. This concurrence suggests that the service continues to be popular with patrons because of the increased speed of delivery.



Library Services: Electronic Reserves Requests



As the Library expands its electronic collections, traditional services such as Reserves have been enhanced through web-based applications on Blackboard. Since 2006, when a signficant proportion of the Library's journal collection was made available in electronic only format use of this journal content was utilized by Faculty on E-Reserve. E-Reserves continue to be an important tool for Faculty by faciliating ease of access to class readings by students right on their computer screens.

The usage of the Library's electronic journal collection compared to usage of the print journal collection coupled with the decrease in public copying of library material and the increase of electronic document delivery through CLS and ILL as well as access to class readings via E-Reserves reveal patrons' preference for accessing scholarly content digitally. Moving the bound periodical collection offsite takes into account these trends while addressing the Library's considerable space issues.