INFORMING IN CONCERT
A Study of Music Information Behavior at the University of Iowa School of Music

Katie Gandhi ◆ School of Library & Information Science ◆ 2017

OBJECTIVES
- Provide a snapshot of the current information needs and behaviors of music professionals at the University of Iowa’s School of Music;
- Gather results useful in guiding the enhancement of the Rita Benton Music Library’s resources and services;
- Contribute to existing knowledge of the information needs of music professionals in the field of information behavior;
- Identify emerging trends in the field of music and music information behavior.

EXISTING LITERATURE

- Design more effective systems
- Serve as a valuable source, facilitator, and enabler of musical creativity
- Engage in user-centered collection development
- Help preserve musical heritage
- Understand barriers to music information literacy

Implications of the study of music information behavior

METHODOLOGY

LITERATURE REVIEW
A literature review was conducted to gather background information on past studies on music information needs and behavior.

SURVEY
An electronic survey was distributed to individuals of the University of Iowa School of Music by email. A paper survey was distributed in the Rita Benton Music Library.

INTERVIEW
An interview was conducted with six faculty, staff and students of the University of Iowa School of Music. An interview was also conducted with the Music Librarian at the University of Iowa’s Rita Benton Music Library.

FINDINGS

MUSIC INTERESTS & MATERIAL USE

Increasing frequencies of motivations for seeking music information.

Feedback on Local Music Information Services, Spaces, & Resources

- InfoHawk+ is challenging to browse and can be unreliable during specific searches
- Music Rare Book Room cannot be directly searched
- Most music databases are not indexed by InfoHawk+
- Information seekers have uncertainty and/or lack awareness of advanced search, filtering, and browsing options

GAPS, TRENDS, & OPPORTUNITIES

- Increasing interest in interdisciplinary research
- Music librarian involvement in Web advisory
- Interest in resource sharing agreements with foreign music libraries
- Impact of catalog system changes on users’ trust
- The impact of technology on information needs

- Evolving professional roles lead to evolving information needs
- Research can lead to valuable translations of materials
- Evolving music curriculum standards
- Potential collaborations with music faculty
- Music faculty interaction with course management systems

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- "Often, if you can solve a problem for music, you can solve a problem for everybody."

Libraries, Service, & Resource Enhancements
- Increase catalog & library training for undergraduate students
- Train all users on advanced and browse search options
- Provide a table reserved solely for music research
- Highlight unknown, untapped resources to library visitors

Library Space, Service, & Resource Enhancements
- Increase disability access
- Consider investing in a photocopier
- Include PC computers in the lab
- Provide additional information on the Rare Book Room
- Consider extending library hours

Website & Catalog Improvements
- Exclude articles from the default search linked to the Rita Benton Music Library homepage
- Reevaluate content & placement of filters
- Make the catalog mobile
- Create an ILL format option for scores
- Reevaluate cataloging procedures for music materials

Considerations for the LIS Field
- Be more sensitive to the diversity of music information materials during the initial creation of new catalog systems
- More actively pursue and capture the creative, mixed-media, scholarly work of music faculty
- Consider the impact of interdisciplinary research on music resources

"I think the RBML has great resources. There are a lot of things I feel could be improved at the University of Iowa, but the libraries, in my opinion, provide an excellent and vast array of resources."