

Contributor/Presenter:

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Title:

Newspapers in the Digital Age: A Case Study in How Patrons Read the News

Abstract:

This case study seeks to gather data on the use of the *Cambridge Chronicle*, the local newspaper serving the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts and the oldest continually published weekly in the United States, to determine the preferred method for Cambridge Public Library patrons to access the news.

The Cambridge Public Library offers four points of access to the newspaper: First, the Library has digitized and made freely available the public domain editions of the *Cambridge Chronicle* (<http://cambridge.dlconsulting.com>). Second, the Library has made available current and recent issues of the newspaper through a paid database subscription. Access to this database is restricted to “in library use only,” however patrons with Cambridge library cards are able to search the database remotely. Third, for the years in which no digital copy of the newspaper is available, the Library provides microfilm to be used onsite. Lastly, the library purchases two copies of the *Cambridge Chronicle* for “in library only” patron use.

This case study will track the four ways the *Cambridge Chronicle* is read to determine which access points are most popular and how the level of access affects patron use. The study will also collect data on how patrons use the newspaper (i.e., current news, research, genealogy) and which points of access foster which kinds of use.

The Cambridge Public Library, located on the other side of the Charles River from Boston, exists in the center of the largest metropolitan hub north of New York City. Serving a population of 100,000 residents, the Cambridge Public Library System includes seven branches, circulates over 1 million books annually, and offers a variety of services that go well beyond the scope of a traditional library. The main branch receives over 1,000 visitors and circulates over 2,000 books daily.

Biography:

Alyssa Pacy currently serves as the Cambridge Public Library’s first archivist. Since being hired in July 2010, Alyssa has been working to establish the policies and procedures for the Library’s new archival research repository, developing standards for appraisal, preservation, access, and reference to serve the needs of the approximately 1,500 patrons who visit the library each day. Prior to joining the Cambridge Public Library, Alyssa established the first archival repository at

Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Between 2004 and 2006, she worked at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum on the Ernest Hemingway Collection that is housed there. Alyssa received both a M.S. in Archives Management and a M.A. in History from Simmons College in 2006. She earned her B.A. in English at the George Washington University. She serves as the President of New England Archivists, on the Board of Advisors for the Cambridge Historical Society, and is a member of the Society of American Archivists.