Pitts Theology Library
Emory University
Ithaka S+R Local Report

Abstract

The librarians of the Pitts Theology Library participated as one of 18 institutions in the Ithaka

S+R research project "Research Support Services for the Field of Religious Studies." This

project is an in-depth qualitative analysis of the ways scholars of religious studies and theology

conduct research and publish. The goal of the study was to better understand how these scholars

work so that libraries can better serve researchers' needs. This document is the local report

reflecting the Pitts librarians' interviews of 15 Emory scholars from the Candler School of

Theology and the Emory College Department of Religion. The report summarizes the method of

the study, highlights key findings from the interviews, and outlines ways that the Pitts Theology

Library might respond to the shifting research needs of scholars of religious studies and theology

at Emory University.

Introduction to the Study

The Pitts Theology Library has been a leading participant in the Ithaka S+R Religious Studies research project "Research Support Services for the Field of Religious Studies" in 2016. This project focuses on understanding how scholars of religious studies and theology conduct research and publish and how research needs are changing in the digital age. Emory University is one of 18 academic institutions participating in this nationwide student, along with the American Theological Library Association. This report is the local report reflecting interviews conducted with scholars at Emory, and it contributes to the nationwide study conducted by participating institutions under the direction of Ithaka S+R.

The Ithaka S+R study is an in-depth qualitative analysis of the research practices of academics in religious studies in order to understand the resources and services these faculty members need to be successful in their teaching and research. This information will be used to articulate the research activities and needs of religious studies scholars including identifying improvements to pre-existing research support services at Emory University and opportunities for developing new research support services for religious studies more widely. This study also adds to the knowledge in library and information studies on user needs and activities by examining the specific needs of religious studies scholars, a group that has been previously under-represented in this literature.

Method of the Study

The three Pitts Theology Library Reference Librarians were the investigators in this study. These three librarians conducted 15 interviews with members of the Emory University faculty who study religion and theology, including a mix of faculty from the Candler School of

Theology and the Department of Religion in the Emory College of Arts and Sciences. The selection of individual faculty members was at the discretion of the librarians in consultation with the Director of the Pitts Theology Library. The selection of scholars was made based on a number of criteria. First, the investigators sought a balance between the faculty of the School of Theology and the Department of Religion. The final pool of scholars consisted of 5 full-time faculty members whose primary appointment is the Department of Religion and 10 full-time faculty members whose primary appointment is at the Candler School of Theology. All five members of the Department faculty and six of the Candler faculty also hold appointments in the Graduate Division of Religion.

Second, the investigators sought a pool of scholars diverse in age and experience. Interviewees ranged in career experience, with the pool including some faculty within 5 years of receiving their PhD and some who were more than 30 years removed from their PhD. Of the fifteen, seven hold the rank of full professor, five hold the rank of associate professor, and three hold the rank of assistant professor. The study interviewed 6 female scholars and 9 male scholars.

Third, the investigators sought diversity in the fields of study and methodological approaches of the scholars. Those interviewed included historians, theologians, ethnographers, and sociologists. Areas of expertise covered the landscape of religious and theological studies. The study included specialists in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and several other world religions. Some labeled their primary field as "theology" and others as "religious studies." Most scholars draw upon multiple theoretical approaches to religion and theology in their work, placing the study of religion in conversation with the hard sciences, the social sciences, classics, Jewish studies, and literary theory.

All fifteen interviews were conducted between February and April, 2016, by a single Pitts librarian, and each ran between 30 and 90 minutes. The interviews were semi-structured in form, based upon a single interview script, designed by the Ithaka S+R team in coordination with the eighteen participating institutions (see Appendix 1). The script includes questions that inquire about the scholar's theoretical approach to religion and theology, the modes of his or her research, challenges the scholar faces in his or her work, the interaction the scholar has with library resources, the forms of dissemination of research, and the scholar's prediction of trends in his or her particular field. The three interviewers used the script as the core of the interview, but the interviews diverted from this script as the conversation dictated.

The audio from all interviews was recorded, and the audio files were transcribed by a professional transcription service. These transcriptions were then coded by the Pitts Reference Librarians, who wrote this final local report about the changing form of the study of religion and theology at Emory University. The Ithaka S+R team selected five of the interviews, based only on a Pitts-provided anonymous bio of each of the fifteen researchers. Along with five interviews from each of the other participating institutions, Ithaka S+R will publish a nationwide report with links to the local reports of participating institutions.

Emory's participation in this project was reviewed and approved by the Emory University Institutional Review Board. This local report was prepared with no personally-identifiable information included, and no personal information was provided to Ithaka S+R. While it may always be possible to tie research profiles back to individuals at Emory, the investigators in this project have done their best to keep identifying characteristics out of the project.

A Review of Findings

Though the interviews were semi-structured in nature, each was unique in terms of the content covered. The diversity of the scholars' approach to the study of religion and theology resulted in a diverse set of conversations. Depending on the nature of the scholar's work, some interviews focused more heavily on publications, some on teaching, and others on predictions for the future. Despite this diversity, however, a number of consistent elements arose in these conversations. Below is a summary of the major issues discussed by the scholars, with particular focus on the changing shape of research and publication in the fields of religious studies and theology as it relates to the work of the Pitts Theology Library.

Findings Related to the Research Process

A. Working Across Traditional Discipline Lines is Ubiquitous

The investigators asked each scholar to describe how his or her approach to the study of religion and theology fits within the traditional structures of his or her discipline and the academic organization at Emory University. The responses all highlighted that these scholars work in multiple areas, drawing on a number of methodological approaches to religion and theology. Though those interviewed include scholars who self-identify as ethnographers, historians, and sociologists, it was clear that a single identifier was no appropriate for most, and discipline lines do not apply for these scholars. One scholar reflected, "I would say that religious studies itself has become incredibly multidisciplinary in the last - I mean, just watching the hires of my department over 21 years that I've been here."

Consistently the scholars noted that it is difficult to identify their "lane" within scholarship over the course of a career. This was even more the case for those scholars who are

at the earlier part of their career. The younger faculty members interviewed spoke about depending upon resources and colleagues in other departments to help them do their work. One identified himself as "a mutt in that I don't neatly fit into any particular category," and this sentiment was shared by many.

Even those scholars whose methodological approach to religion would seem to fit one method admitted that they draw on a number of academic disciplines. For example, one scholar who engages in ethnographic research noted, "I would also say that a lot of [my work] is informed by sociology, psychology, you know, the social analysis it takes to contextualize what I'm looking at." One scholar, who identified herself as "one of the least methodologically-reflective persons," still spoke of a wide range of research fields that she depends upon in her scholarship. Though her primary work is best understood as historical critical textual analysis, she spoke at length of her engagement with postmodern literary and rhetorical theory.

Faculty reported that this interdisciplinarity is driven not only by their own interests or the work of their academic colleagues, but also by their students' interest, particularly based on their understanding of and experience with religion outside of an academic context. One faculty member who teaches undergraduate students noted that students often drive the faculty and department to be more interdisciplinary in the approach to religion: "Students aren't tradition based as much as they once were, they're coming from home that are involved in multi traditions. I don't mean just come from multiple traditions. I mean they're actively involve in multiple traditions. . . . The enrollments are declining, so we're looking for the kinds of approaches to the study of religion that would also increase enrollment."

Though those interviewed either work in the Department of Religion or the School of Theology, the intersection of religion and theology creates an interesting situation for some.

Some in the School of Theology noted the difference in their teaching and students in their past when working at a standalone seminary. One scholar noted that she trained as a theologian, and therefore is conversant with the language of theology, but she now rarely engaged theological questions, teaching in the Department of Religion. She noted, though, that her theological training helps with some of her students. Many of the scholars interviewed, particularly those in the School of Theology, identified a challenge of working on the boundary of church and academy. One scholar, when asked about where he publishes his work, noted a "double restriction" on his work: it is too denominationally-focused for many academic journals, and yet it is too technical for many church journals. There seems to be a proliferation of locations for scholarly output in each realm (the academy and the church), but some scholars expressed frustration by the lack of publications that overlap. One scholar admitted, though, that journals that have tried this model have had difficulty maintaining subscription bases. For these scholars, they count their scholarly output in non-traditional forms like church presentations, sermons, and denominational work.

Overall, almost all of the scholars highlighted the difficulty of fitting their work within one particular area of the academy or identifying their approach to religion with one particular adjective. In terms of their research, they noted how often they reach beyond their training to incorporate new disciplines into their work, often depending upon colleagues at Emory and other universities to help them read into new fields. It is clear that the study of religion and theology at Emory University is interdisciplinary in its approach.

B. *The Proliferation of Information Sources Makes the Task of Keeping Current with Scholarship a Great Challenge*

All faculty members were asked how they keep up with the trends in their area of scholarship, and this question prompted substantive comments in almost all of the interviews. Most faculty recognize that this mode of accessing secondary literature is a major change of the digital age; they do not access academic literature in the same way they did in the past. Most scholars highlighted the importance of personal relationships and contacts in order to keep abreast of developments, rather than traditional research tools like library catalogs and subscription databases. For some, research in the digital age demands increased emphasis on professional organizations and conferences, with a particular importance placed on smaller conferences and associations. Many noted the larger professional organizations like the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature have grown too large to play the information sharing role they did in the past. Drawing upon personal relationships with colleagues at Emory and other universities was often cited as an early step in the research process, whether those relationships are maintained in person, via email, or through academic conferences. For some in the School of Theology, these important relationships extend beyond the academy and include church contacts.

A consistent theme to the interviews was the shift in the methods of reading secondary literature. The more senior scholars recognized that their past practice of browsing the tables of contents of a few key journals is no longer sufficient to get a sense of the current research in the field. One tenured faculty member noted, "It's actually become much more informal than it used to be." By this he meant that he no longer has the habit of reading the few journals that he has personal subscriptions to. Instead, he relies on others to understand new developments in the fields. When asked about how they find materials for their research, we heard comments like "Not very well." Many mentioned the serendipity of finding sources from Google searches,

particularly now that resources like Academia.edu are part of the results. In addition, the increase in "publication" platforms has altered the way in which some scholars do their research. For example, one ethnographer noted that the proliferation of blogging amongst her subjects opened up a new venue for investigation. The more senior scholars contrasted this part of research with their past, when they perceived more control over the literature of their field through the major journals. Several specifically mentioned how they formerly would visit the library to browse the current periodicals, but this practice is no longer feasible. Some connected this change to the interdisciplinary nature of their work, noting their unfamiliarity with key journals in a given field. Others noted that even within a given field current work was spread across a number of journals.

Many identified social media sites as important, including following particular scholars on Academia.edu. Some noted the dependence upon personal contacts to understand a new field. One noted, "[It] is more and more the case is that I'll send an e-mail to a few kind of close colleagues who I know, right, who's research I value and know and say, hey, this is an idea." Graduate students are also an important source of learning, as many noted they depend upon their students to show them the recent work in the field, recognizing that tools like social media that efficiently disseminate information are more commonly the domain of graduate students.

Few of those interviewed identified specific databases or resources that the library purchases as key elements of their research process. While they recognized the value of a great research library, they did not speak of specific electronic subscriptions that the library maintains. The exception was scholars who work on ancient languages, for whom tools like the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae and the Library of Latin Texts seem indispensable. For most, though, it seems that "library resources" means either print resources accessed through the library catalog or

archives held at other libraries. The scholars did not speak about particular licensed resources that the library buys. Some noted that they were aware of the tools, but until they had a specific need for the tool, they had no reason to learn it.

When asked if he could have a magic wand to fix one research problem, one scholar noted the need for a system to organize and sort secondary literature in his field, "to identify what has been written on topics of interest." To mitigate against the challenge of more sources, scholars depend upon tools to help them efficiently gauge the value of a source. Many pointed to book reviews or abstracts as a helpful way to speed up the research process. Several noted that the library does subscribe to some summary and digest publications, but more of this would be helpful to him.

The interviews also showed that scholars are aware of the shifts in tools designed to aid discovery of resources. One scholar noted that newer discovery layers that help him find resources actually change the way he conducts his research: "The thing about a card catalog is that you actually have to physically flip through all these different things and so you get a sense of the variety of stuff that was out there or if you go up to the stacks to look for a particular book, you'll get 'Oh my gosh, I never knew so-and-so had written this. But if you go to discoverE, you're looking for a particular thing, and you know you'll drop it." Others identified a tension in the use of search engines. One the one hand, these tools can quickly present results, but the reason behind the organization of those results is not clear. The card catalog had a certain understandable logic to its presentation; the methods behind search engine results are more opaque. One recognized, "The access to information actually whittles down the places we look because everybody goes looking at the same place."

Overall, many admitted that they are not familiar with what librarians might consider basic tools of library research, like the library catalog or major databases for fields. The scholars' methods of discovery are shifting not toward the search engines that the library provides, but toward the scholarship itself. The footnotes of others' work and recommendations from colleagues and students are more commonly the starting point for their research.

C. *Faculty* are Not Thinking through Long Term Storage of the Data their Work Produces

All of the interviews included a question about the data that the scholar produces and his or her plan for storing that data. For most, this question initially struck them as odd, either because they do not think about their work as producing data or, if they do, they have not considered what to do with that data. When asked about the long-term plans for her records from field interviews, one ethnographer noted, "That's a great, great question." Another responded, "You know what? I haven't thought about that." The data produced by research exists primarily on flash drives, cassette tapes, and computer hard drives. About flash drives, one noted, "The little small thumb drives? You have a gazillion of them." There seems to be a general lack of concern about the security and stability of these media of storage.

For the investigators, it was alarming to find that many of the scholars keep important data in non-sustainable, non-redundant, and unprotected formats, including cassette tapes, VHS tapes, and notebooks. Most recognize the benefit of having these materials digitized, but they were not aware of how they would proceed with that. When the issue was raised, there seemed to be strong interest in getting help to protect and preserve this data, but little immediate concern.

The little digitization that the scholars had done themselves had been done by their research assistants.

The present methods of backing up work, particularly notes and written work, varies widely, and most seem at risk of losing significant data with a single hard drive crash. One scholar did note his "worst fear is data loss," and identified the many ways he backs up his work, but his attitude and efforts represented an exception to the practice. Even though he uses a diversity of redundant backup sources, he seems open to even more methods of data duplication. He noted, "I would never be comfortable, for instance, just having an online backup." Many shared specific anecdotes of lost data in the past, and this seems to alert them to the possibility, though few had actually taken significant steps to protect their data. Even those who use the cloud, though, recognized a need to be more systematic in the storage and organization of the data of their research.

Within this small sample of scholars, those who were at the earlier stages of their careers tend to be more likely to use cloud-based storage. The box.com cloud storage solution provided by Emory University is a popular method of backing up resources. Those scholars who also have administrative roles in their School or Department are the ones most likely to use the storage, as their administrative role required it, and was they way there were introduced to the tool.

The consideration of cloud storage, however, was limited to the avoidance of data loss for their ongoing work, rather than a consideration for the maintenance of the records for posterity. None of the scholars we interviewed mentioned that he or she has thought about maintaining their own scholarly output, in terms of the data collected or notes produced, beyond their immediate research needs. That is, there seems to be no recognition that their own records might be of value for others. A common refrain was captured in one scholar's comment: "Yeah, I don't

think anyone's going to care, I mean, like about where my work is. And I don't think it's important enough that it should be stored somewhere." The scholar who most fears data loss still noted that his immediate focus was on the short term: "So, but beyond that, no, I haven't really. I just - I'm more worried about the immediate, like, 20 years from now or five years from now."

One scholar admitted that the organization and storage of her research notes as "one of the greatest challenges," recognizing that tools like Evernote are out there, but admitting that she does not use a unified system. She reflected on a recent multi-year project and identified the organization of her research as one of the key reasons for delay. In sum, much of the data that these scholars are producing is not in sustainable and redundant formats, and most lack a coherent plan for the organization and maintenance of their work.

D. *Digitization Holds Great Promise for Research, But Hurdles Remain*

A common topic in the interviews was the ways in which scholars gain access to the sources, primary and secondary. Almost without fail, this conversation turned into one about the availability of online resources, both digitized and born digital. Several of the scholars interviewed work with archival collections primarily, and they noted that their processes of research are changing due to digitization efforts. These scholars spoke with great hope about the efficiencies that digitization will afford. It became clear, however, that the digitization landscape is uneven at best. For most, searching for materials online has now become a starting point, but materials available online are rarely sufficient, and the amount of archival material available online varies widely by discipline and time period. One heavy user of online archival material noted, "I'm more fortunate in the kinds of stuff I'm trying to get at. I probably have a higher

degree of digitization than some other folks working in other areas might experience." Another noted that the earlier material he works on is not digitized, but "as I start to work in the 20th century, I think more and more will be readily available digitally."

One scholar notes that he rarely has to travel to archives, but when he does, it is an incredible drain on his time and resources. All who work in archives did recognize that the tools of digitization, even if that simply means the camera on their smartphone, will help their archival work going forward. Most noted their use of specific tools to digitize archives on the fly, including smartphones and specific apps. For these scholars, though, a challenge was their lack of a systematic way of organizing or preserving these digital files.

A consistent refrain was frustration with the haphazard nature of digitization. One noted that "[digitization] is not necessarily systematic; and it depends upon . . . who gets money to digitize what and where." Further, research is often slowed by the difficulty of knowing what exactly has been digitized: "Things will just show up that weren't there before. I would love to be able to track and keep more abreast of things that are showing up." One noted an experience of traveling internationally to visit an archive, only to realize later that the documents she needed were already available online.

Consistently, the increase in digital archival materials was at the top of the scholars' wish list. In addition, there was a wish that the institutions that hold archival material could represent and advertise their holdings more effectively. One historian who works with archival materials noted success in using distant archives by "engag[ing] pretty well qualified students to act as distance research associates to go hunting in the archives to see what they could turn up."

While scholars are aware that digitization makes research more efficient, none could envision a world where digitization takes the place of traveling to archives. One points to Google

Books and the Internet Archive as promising ways of cutting down on this need, but he notes he doubts that need for travel will ever be completely removed, noting the "nightmare" that is the current technology of digitally flipping through books. Others appreciate the physical act of research in an archive: "I love going to archives." Digitization has changed the act of being there, though, with digital photography taking the place of extensive copying.

Many of the scholars spoke of major works in their field that were not yet digitized, even some works that were pre-1923. There seems to be a general frustration with digitization, as they have seen enough to know how incredibly helpful it can be, and so a certain expectation has set in.

E. Time and Funding Are Identified to be the Biggest Problems for Research

Each scholar was asked what he or she would do with a magic wand to improve his or her research, and the number one answer was to create more time. Almost all those interviewed cited the lack of time to engage in focused research as the most challenge part of their work. Whether it is administrative duties, the necessity of travel, or teaching commitments, the almost universal response was that the scholars needed not just more time, but more time without distraction. Some noted that research funding is a challenge, and the need to secure funding is another thing that takes up their time. One scholar specifically identified email and communication as a new tool that is in effect slowing down his work.

Lack of funding for research was another consistent refrain. The funding problems were particularly clear for those who work with archival collections and the ethnographers, as travel was essential. However, those doing more collaborative work also cited the need for additional funding. The efficiencies gained by technology, through tools like Skype, do not seem to have

caught up yet to the increased demands brought about by the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of the scholars' work.

F. Scholars Recognize New Technological Tools as Shifting Research Practices, but Technology has not Changed Practice in Uniform Ways

Most scholars recognize the importance of new tools to help with searching, organization, and writing. For many, though, the promise of technology seems to be more present on their mind than present changes. That is, most of them recognized that there are new tools that can change, even improve, their research and teaching, but few are actually implementing these tools in their research. A concern over time invested in learning new tools was the constant refrain. In several of the interviews the scholars asked rhetorically, "Is it worth it?" when confronted with the opportunity of learning new tools. Most seem to be running a cost/benefit analysis of learning digital tools, and most seem to have deemed the potential efficiencies gained as not worth the time to learn. However, there seems to be little specificity to their understanding of "new tools" that are available. There is a concern that tools continue to change, and therefore the time invested in learned a new tool may not be worth it.

Even for those who seem to be early adopters, those who keep track of their research in digital forms, there is a continued recognition of the change that a full immersion in technology would represent. One scholar noted his heavy use of digital tools for research, but emphasized his practice of writing by hand: "And there's just something about writing, actual handwriting, that helps me to think and construct an argument better." For those who do use new tools, there is a general concern that they may not be using the best tools out there, and there seems to be

little conversation between scholars on the process of research with technology. One scholar, the most proficient with digital tools among those interviewed, noted, "So I used [a particular digital app], but I don't know if it's the best possible software, but that's what worked for me. . . . I guess I'd like to know what options are available."

Some fields of research depend upon new digital tools more than others. For example, one scholar who works with ancient Greek and Latin noted how essential the digital tools are. He recognizes that great work was done before the existence of these tools, but he notes that the shifts in the field, in particular the growth of the corpus one must master, makes digital text mining tools essential.

The scholars interviewed discussed tools for research, but they seemed unaware of tools to help their writing process. Many noted that the documents of their scholarly production exist in a number of places: various computers, on flash drives, and in the Cloud. There was, though, no discussion of a way of versioning or keeping track of the writing process: "I think I've done a lot of research that won't go into this book but that could be useful for the next project or smaller publications. [It would be helpful] if I had a magic wand that could help me keep track of those things or find them." Scholars seem much more likely to have a clear, though idiosyncratic, way of organizing their research libraries, including the books on their shelves. However, their digital lives seem to be wanting for similar organizing principles.

Technology does seem to have had an impact on teaching. Many of the scholars noted changes to courses because of the availability of new tools. For example, one mentioned the ability to bring in, via Skype, the author of a popular textbook he uses in class, allowing the students to "meet" the author and engage his argument. Many recognize the need to push their teaching beyond the traditional classroom, and technology has aided in this effort. One scholar

spoke of inter-institutional teaching as well as reaching students not formally enrolled in schools. Electronic course reserves have had a significant impact on courses, allowing faculty to more efficiently disseminate readings that represent a range of perspectives on a topic.

Overall, scholars are aware of new tools coming online that can help with their research and writing, but there is a general reluctance to invest the time to learn a tool the impact of which on their workflow is unclear.

G. *Scholars are Considering Disseminating Their Work in Non-Traditional ways*.

The investigators asked each scholar about his or her publication practices and whether there are new forums for disseminating work that have developed in the digital age. The responses were varied. Most recognized that avenues like blogs and online news sources are gaining in popularity in the academy in general, but the scholars interviewed are not heavily involved in these forms of scholarship. The scholars are generally aware of the shift toward open-access journals, but this shift seems not to have had a major impact on their work habits.

In terms of open-access journals, most are aware of the growing success of the open-access movement, though a few needed the term "open-access" defined for them. For most, though, this was still something they would consider in the future, but not currently. The common fee-for-publication reputation of many open-access journals scares them away. One noted, "You can pay an extra amount to have your stuff available overnight, but it's like some sort of - it's like $1500 or something per article, you know, so nobody does it." For all, the open-access model depends upon rigorous peer review. In theory they were all interested in the increased accessibility open-access affords, but they were concerned that the quality control function of blind peer review remain in place.

Not surprisingly, most scholars noted that the test for the open access model of publication will be the respect these journals gain in tenure and promotion considerations. The general opinion seems to be that in some fields there are open-access journals that have gained this respect, but in most fields of theology and religious studies they have not. When asked if tenure and promotion committees are starting to reconsider what counts for scholarship, one senior scholar noted, "No. No, but there's a lot of talk about is that going to change." One scholar who serves as an editor of an open-access journal identified a few ways in which a journal can gain that respect. One is the documentation of the peer review process. Another is the inclusion of the journal in major indices. This scholar noted that the addition of his journal into the ATLA Religion Database and Religious and Theological Abstracts has helped tremendously. A third strategy is to publish the journal as a PDF in a format that looks like a print journal: "We really intended—intentionally mimicked or setup the journal design—to have the familiar look and feel of a page of a print journal."

A major theme in the conversations about open-access was the expansion of the scholarly conversation beyond Europe and North America. Many noted the essential role that free and affordable journals are playing in diversifying the audience and participation in the academic conversation. One journal editor noted the benefit that those far from the journal's geographic home "don't have to wait 6 weeks, 8 weeks, 12 weeks for a thick parcel of paper to make its way by some means across the Atlantic to where they are."

Most acknowledged that alternative forms of producing scholarship, particularly blogging and social media, are growing in importance. One noted that blogging "is going to be part of the future. That is expanding." Some recognized that the rise of the blog is coinciding with and perhaps driving the urge to disseminate scholarship to a broader audience. However, despite the

almost universal recognition of this growth, very few of those interviewed actually disseminate their scholarship through blogs. Of the fifteen, only one actively blogs; others noted that they had, but often by invitation. The more senior faculty they seemed uninterested in participating in this new form of scholarship, though they recognized it would be increasingly important in the future: "I just think that's a young person's game." Another noted he writes blog posts "Only when forced to . . . Mainly by enterprising people who work at Candler and want to market stuff." He noted that his reluctance to disseminate his work more widely is due largely to the technical nature of his work; he's not sure anyone would be interested.

One particular promise of these new media identified by the scholars is the expansion of the conversation. One scholar noted the expansion of the conversation internationally as one of the great opportunities and yet great challenges of his field: "The people who are most invested in [Christianity] are the ones who have least access to the intellectual apparatuses that have been created over centuries in the western world for the study of Christianity." Many mentioned that open-access is going to help this challenge, while recognizing that systemic problems (like lack of bandwidth) keeps the internet and open access from being the singular solution many had hoped it would be. A few mentioned their posting of their own work on their Academia.edu profile, which has helped those in non-Western nations access their work, even in an unpublished form.

One scholar who is heavily involved in disseminating academic work in popular forums like blogs and news sites (and who noted that no one else in his field does) identified the great opportunity that the internet presents for scholarship to reach beyond the academy, noting that this reach is imperative if fields like religious studies want to continue. He notes that this might be specific to the study of religion because there is a large audience who are the participants in

the religion who have often been separate from the academy. New publication forums allow scholars to reach that audience in new and exciting ways. He is heavily involved in this form of "public scholarship" through online forums, but he highlighted the challenge of such work, and yet the importance this new form of writing has for him and his students: "So the whole idea of translation of knowledge in more popular public settings is a skill and is a value and is something I try to do well. When I can."

Teaching is one alternative method that scholars see their work being disseminated. It is clear that faculty are aware of a greater emphasis on creative pedagogies. One scholar noted a perception that administration are interested in seeing innovation in teaching. For many of the scholars, their primary energy toward innovation has been in the realm of pedagogy, rather than publication. They have incorporated social media, blogs, and alternative forms of scholarship as readings in their courses, but they have been less interested in disseminating their own scholarly output in these new media.

The proliferation of sources in publishing has been beneficial for scholars in their publication habits. One scholar recounted the story of a denominationally-focused journal that was able to get off the ground relatively easily because of its online nature. In addition, from the editorial side, journals moving online has some benefits. One scholar, an editor of a major journal, noted the benefits of not having to publish the journal on a regular schedule: "Because we exist as an electronic journal only, we don't have the pressure of publishing X amount of material in Y amount of time. We simply publish when something is ready to publish. If we publish two articles in February and nothing again until December, it doesn't matter."

Shifts in publication patterns due to the internet and open-access journals seems to be more perception than reality. The scholars interviewed at Emory are not heavily engaged in these new forms of publication.

Action Items for the Pitts Theology Library

Given these basic findings from these interviews, there are a few ways in which the Pitts Theology Library can adapt to help scholars navigate this changing world of scholarship. More specific action items are to come as the Library continues the conversation with theses (and other scholars) about the services we provide. Below, though, are some summary recommendations for how a library can better support research in religion and theology at Emory.

*A. **Librarians Should Work Collaboratively with Other Libraries and Subject Liaisons and Identify Resources Beyond the Purview of a Theology Library***

A major insight of this study was the highlighting of the diversity of approaches to theology and religious studies amongst scholars at Emory University. The work of these scholars does not fit neatly within traditional boundaries of departments and schools. Instead, the modern scholar of religion and theology must have a working of a number of disciplines. Commonly-mentioned cognate disciplines include history, classics, psychology, and sociology, but these scholars identified many more disciplines that they draw upon to study religion.

This interdisciplinary nature of the scholars' work demands that the libraries facilitate exchange of information across disciplines and organizations. To do so demands that the librarians of the Theology Library be in communication with the subject liaisons at Woodruff Library. In addition, librarians at the Theology Library should work to identify key reference resources and research guides outside of Emory. Because the landscape of scholarship demands that scholars pull from a number of disciplines, librarians can be beneficial by guiding scholars to entry-level resources in new disciplines.

The challenge for the Pitts Librarians is not to become subject matter experts in these many cognate disciplines. Rather, the challenge is for Pitts Librarians to help faculty read into these diverse fields by identifying libraries and guides that curate well materials in disciplines being used to study religion and theology. One scholar identified anthropology as a field that is becoming more important in her work, but noted, "I'm not familiar with their databases, so that's something I would like to become more familiar with." It is the librarians' role not to introduce her to anthropology, but to guide her to the proper resources to help her understand key developments in this field. Those resources may be other librarians, reference works, or research guides.

One clear impression from the interviews was the isolation experienced by scholars in the University. The interviewers got the rare opportunity to speak to scholars who, though they work in cognate disciplines, do not know one another. It was interesting to hear many of the same methodological concerns spring up. For example, one ethnographer in the School of Theology noted when discussing software for ethnographic work, "There's several different kinds, and I think that Candler might have some limited licenses for some, but you know, that would be a huge value to have. I don't know how many people in the Candler faculty do ethnographic research." The interviewer was able to remind the scholar that many in the College do in fact use this type of software. So, the library and librarians should become a bridge between departments and areas, when the commonality in research might not be content (where most academic departments draw the line), but with methodology and tools.

B. Librarians Should Renew Efforts to Train on Core Library Resources and New Tools

Most of the Pitts Librarians' time spent training on basic research tools in theology and religion, including the Emory catalog discoverE, the ATLA Religion Database, and JSTOR, is focused on incoming students. The Librarians tend to operate with the perception that the faculty understand the tools of research. These interviews revealed that this perception may be incorrect. It was surprising how few of the scholars mentioned the use of particular databases or the Emory catalog. None of the scholars discussed subject-based searching in the prominent indexes of theology and religion as a beginning step in his or her research process. Rather, the scholars depend upon others' references, in the form of colleagues, associates, or footnotes in published work, for their entry into a topic or field. In fact, the haphazard Google search was more frequently referenced than were any of the electronic resources that the libraries subscribe to. In addition, several times scholars discussed a wish for tools that already exist in the Emory ecosystem. For example, one scholar mentioned he wished for a digital replacement for browsing the shelves, by which one could see all of the books shelved alongside a particular title. This feature exists in discoverE, but it is clear that no one has ever shown him this.

The interviews, therefore, showed that faculty are not using the very tools that librarians use to teach students the process of research at Emory. This presents an opportunity for librarians to teach the faculty the new tools of research. Most scholars seem to have continued to use the tools and methods of research which have worked for them their entire career. This is understandable, but it also means that librarians should seek out opportunities to introduce scholars to new tools, resources, and databases

C. Librarians Should Reconsider the Way We Approach Training Faculty

It is clear, therefore, that there exists a great opportunity for librarians to train faculty. This is true not only for the basic indexes and online tools for research, but also there is also a need to train faculty on the technological tools that aid in organization, writing, and teaching. Some efficiency tools like Evernote and cloud storage were mentioned in the interviews, but the use of these tools seems to be the exception rather than the rule amongst the scholars interviewed.

While most of the scholars recognized that there are tools that they need to learn, several admitted the difficulty of their attending the many faculty sessions offered by the Emory libraries. One noted that her lack of knowledge "probably is my fault," noting that she was aware of training sessions and always had good intentions to attend, but never did. The scholars admitted that the University libraries have resources that can teach them what they need to learn, but they have not had the opportunity to attend workshops or follow online training to develop new skills. The perception is that the learning curve is too high, and therefore the investment of time in learning may not be worth the payoff in efficiency gained. Given this calculus, scholars have not been willing to attend the many training sessions offered by Emory libraries. Overall, though, it seems that the offering of workshops for faculty has not proven effective.

Instead, the interviews surfaced ways that training may be more effective. Several scholars mentioned that they learn well when taught by their students. Specifically, many noted that they learn efficiencies and tools from their research assistants, and they recognize that their student assistants, many digital natives, already possess the skills that the scholar needs. One, for example, needed digests of a particular publication, and he had his research assistant do it for him, knowing the student would be far more efficient at the task. One scholar noted that having a research assistant is nice, but the time one must spend training that assistant can really undo the

benefit. This may present an opportunity for librarians to train the assistants. One noted, without prompting, "I mean I wonder if, I mean, it really would be, if there was a system in place that either really trained graduate students very well to be research assistants, or that provided research assistance from within the staff that's already there, I mean, that would be huge." These comments suggest that librarians may effectively reach the scholar through their research and teaching assistants.

Whether instruction is offered directly to the scholar or to their assistants, it was apparent that an individualized approach to instruction will be far more successful than group workshops. The fear of too much investment time is something librarians must address with direct intervention. When one interviewer suggested that librarians reach out individually to scholars, one scholar responded enthusiastically: "That would be great. We're running from one thing to the next. That would be helpful. I think sometimes it's hard for us to slow down. So if something was organized, even every year or something along that line, that would be fabulous." The fear of the learning curve for most tools seems to be higher than the curve itself; librarians should work to introduce scholars and their assistants to the tools that librarians train students on.

D. Librarians Must Facilitate Easier Consumption of the Basic Metadata of Current Scholarship

As mentioned, a consistent them of the interviews was the overwhelming abundance of research, the product of scholars' interdisciplinarity and the general boom in publications. This proliferation presents a real challenge for the researchers, one articulated frequently in the interviews. This challenge, though, is an opportunity for librarians to help in the research process. Given the proliferation of data sources, faculty are interested in "digests" of new work,

or indexes that show them what has been published recently and some basic metadata beyond the title. One noted, "It's almost like I want the aggregator of the aggregators." When asked about a "magic wand" that might help her research, one scholar mentioned receiving journal articles/titles in her email, organized by topic. With developments like journal RSS feeds, this would be an easy fix for librarians to promote. These interviews suggest that librarians should focus on collecting and advertising subject-specific indexes, abstracting services, and collections of book reviews to help scholars stay abreast of developments.

E. Libraries Need to Collaborate and Communicate about Digitization

Scholars are excited about the potential for online collections, but they are also frustrated by the inability to know what is available. There is work that individual libraries can do to advertise better their holdings and new collections that have been made available. In addition, there is need for collaboration so that the selection of material to digitize can be better than the haphazard nature many scholars described. One scholar, when asked about the way to make digitization better, noted how helpful it would be, "If the major players who were doing digitization were brought together in a room with a bunch of scholars in a particular field and said 'Okay, guys, we're going to give you five days together. Let's come up with a grand plan of what should be digitized where, in what order, and in what sequence."

The challenge for Librarians is twofold. First, for those involved in the curation of digital content, there must be a systematic approach to digitization and discoverability. That is, digitization decisions should be made based on what is already available, often in collaboration with other institutions. Sound metadata of digitized collections is essential. In addition, librarians should be aware that the discovery of digitized content will most often come from Google

searches, rather than library websites. Therefore, considerations of search engine optimization should be key in exposing digital collections online.

Second, librarians have a role to play in directing scholars toward digital content. Librarians have the search skills necessary to discover digitized archival collections. Databases like Archive Grid should be advertised to faculty, but the librarians themselves should use such tools to make faculty aware of collections available relevant to their current research. The efficiencies of digitized collections cannot be gained if scholars are unaware of their existence. This is a great challenge and opportunity for librarians.

F. Personal Relationships with Librarians Are Key

Those scholars who were interviewed that had positive experiences working with librarians often spoke of their personal relationship with the librarian that preceded the particular research question. When asked about a sticking point in a recent research project, some faculty spoke of the librarians by name and spoke of the librarians as a research partner. Others did not. The key here is that there was a personal relationship that seemed to help.

Librarians can learn much from the way scholars describe their methods of keeping abreast of developments in their field. Consistently the human element of information sharing was key to successful discovery of content. When the faculty need to read into a new field, they reach out to persons who work in that field, whether than contact is via phone, email, or just by mining footnotes. Librarians must work hard to become these types of contacts for faculty.

Perhaps the best outcome of this study was the fact of the interviews themselves. That is, the Pitts librarians had the opportunity to discuss active research with these 15 accomplished scholars in a substantive way. These interviews have already produced the types of relationships

that are essential for scholars' successful research in the digital age. One scholar noted, at the end of her interview, "Wow, you're really interesting!" Librarians should seek out more opportunities like this one to engage scholars about their work, inquire about how the library can help make their work more efficient, and show the research skills and resources that are available at the library.

Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Research focus

1. Describe your current research focus.

2. Describe how your research is situated within the academy. [Probe for how they position themselves in relation to religious studies and theology studies and if they see their work as connecting to any other disciplines]

Research methods

1. What theoretical approaches does your research utilize or rely on?

2. What research methods do you currently use to conduct your research [e.g. discourse analysis, historical analysis, etc.]?
   a. Does your research produce data? If so, what kinds of data does your research typically produce?
   b. How and where do you currently keep this data?
   c. Where do plan to store this data in the long term? [Prompt: e.g. an archives, an online repository)

3. [Beyond data you produce yourself]What kinds of sources does your research depend on?
   a. How do you locate these materials?

4. Think back to a past or ongoing research project where you faced challenges in the process of conducting the research.
   a. Describe these challenges.
   b. What could have been done to mitigate these challenges?

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

6. If I gave you a magic wand that could help you with your research process – what would you ask it to do? [If they cite broader issues, e.g. lack of time or funding, probe further for coping strategies or workarounds they use to mitigate these challenges when conducting their research]

Publishing Practices

7. Where do you typically publish your research in scholarly settings? [Probe for kinds of publications and the disciplines these publications are aligned with]
   a. Beyond scholarly publishing are there any other venues that you disseminate your research? [Probe: e.g. blogs, popular press, classes]

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

9. Have you ever published your research in open access venues such as open access online journals or repositories?
   a. If so, which journals or repositories and what has been your motivations for doing so? (i.e. required, for sharing, investment in open access principles)
   b. If no, why not?

State of the Field and Follow-Up

12. From your perspective what are the greatest challenges and opportunities currently facing religious studies and/or theology studies?

13. Is there anything else about your research support needs that you think it is important for me to know that was not covered in the previous questions?