Evidence Based Library and Information Practice

A Survey of Music Faculty in the United States Reveals Mixed Perspectives on YouTube and Library Resources

Dougan, K. (2016). Music, Youtube, and academic libraries. Notes, 72(3), 491-508. https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2016.0009

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Evidence Based Library and Information Practice

Evidence Summary

A Survey of Music Faculty in the United States Reveals Mixed Perspectives on YouTube and Library Resources

A Review of:
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Abstract

Objective – To evaluate how music faculty members perceive and use video sharing sites like YouTube in teaching and research.

Design – Survey Questionnaire.

Setting – 197 music departments, colleges, schools, and conservatories in the United States.

Subjects – 9,744 music faculty members.

Methods – Schools were primarily selected based on National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) membership and the employment of a music librarian with a Music Library Association (MLA) membership. Out of faculty members contacted, 2,156 (22.5%) responded to the email survey. Participants were asked their rank and subspecialties. Closed-ended questions, ranked on scales of 1 to 5, evaluated perceptions of video sharing website use in classroom instruction and as assigned listening; permissibility as a cited source; quality, copyright, and metadata; use when items are commercially unavailable; use over library collections; comparative ease of use; and convenience. An open-ended question asked for additional thoughts or concerns on video sharing sites and music scholarship. The author partnered with the University of Illinois' Applied Technology for Learning in

the Arts and Sciences (ATLAS) survey office on the construction, distribution, and analysis of the survey data through SPSS. The open-ended question was coded for themes.

Main Results – Key findings from closed-ended questions indicated faculty: used YouTube in the classroom (2.30 mean) more often than as assigned listening (2.08 mean); sometimes allowed YouTube as a cited source (2.35 mean); were concerned with the quality of YouTube recordings (3.58 mean) and accuracy of metadata (3.29 mean); and were more likely to use YouTube than library resources (2.62 mean), finding it easier to use (2.38 mean) and more convenient (1.83 mean). The author conducted further analysis of results for the nine most reported subdisciplines. Ethnomusicology and jazz faculty indicated a greater likelihood of using YouTube, while musicology and theory/composition faculty were more likely to use library resources than others. There was little significant difference among faculty responses based on performance subspecialities (e.g. voice, strings, etc.). Overall, open-ended faculty comments on streaming video sites were negative (19.3%), positive (19.3%), or a mixture of both (34.1%). Themes included: less use in faculty scholarship; a need to teach students how to effectively use YouTube for both finding and creating content; the value of YouTube as an audio vs. video source; concerns about quality, copyright, data, and reliability; and benefits like easy access and large amounts of content.

Conclusion – Some faculty expressed concern that students did not use more library music resources or know how to locate quality resources. The study suggested librarians and faculty could collaborate on solutions to educate students. Librarians might offer instructional content on effective searching and evaluation of YouTube. Open-ended responses showed further exploration is needed to determine faculty expectations of library "discovery and delivery" (p. 505) and role as the purchaser of recordings. Conversations between librarians and faculty members may help clarify expectations and uncover ways to improve library resources and services to better meet evolving needs. Finally, the author recommended additional exploration is needed to evaluate YouTube's impact on library collection development.

Commentary

Studies related to library music collections and streaming media sites are primarily institutional in scope. Hooper's (2017) literature review highlighted studies focusing on library music collection usage, collection trends, and student user preferences. Clark, Sauceda, and Stormes (2019) used surveys and interviews to evaluate the use of resources by performing arts faculty at three institutions. This study focused on various types of library resources, including audio/visual materials, with some questions related to non-library resources. The author's study contributed significantly to the literature by providing a national look at music faculty perceptions of streaming media. The author also previously used the survey data collected by this study to compare music librarian and faculty perspectives on YouTube (Dougan, 2014).

When evaluated using Glynn's (2006) critical appraisal tool, the study demonstrates several strengths. A sizable number of relevant participants were recruited using effective, bias-free criteria. The design was appropriate for the stated research outcomes. The study methodology was clearly reported, although more detail on data analysis methods would have been valuable for practitioners interested in conducting similar studies. Results were well-presented. Specifically, a thorough job was done connecting closed-ended and open-ended responses to draw overarching themes in the data. The author used findings to provide valuable insights and recommendations for practitioners.

Although it seems likely all survey content was evaluated in the article, inclusion of the instrument would have provided the opportunity to evaluate survey construction and clarity. It is also unclear whether the instrument was validated prior to use. Information on potential study limitations

would have also been valuable for interpreting results.

The results of this study are of interest to academic music librarians and other practitioners involved in library support for music faculty and students. Librarians may find this study useful for its glimpse into the perceptions and practices of faculty stakeholders in relationship to streaming video sites. As recommended by the author, practitioners should also engage in conversations with music faculty to help guide the evolution of services and resources for music disciplines. Areas for further study may include instructional methods for library music resources and streaming media sites, the marketing of library music resources to faculty, and the evolution of music library collections to support changing needs.

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