



Letters

To the Editor:

We read with interest the account by Bustion and Treadwell of the periodicals use study conducted at Texas A&M (*C&RL*, March 1990). As mentioned in the article, Texas A&M investigated only current periodical usage for sample selections of journals. At the Meriam Library at California State University, Chico, we monitored periodical usage of the entire collection (some 5,000 titles) at all points of access, over-the-counter check-out, behind-the-counter browsing, and in the bound volume area, for over a year. Thus, we have the information to answer one of the questions posed by the authors of the article, at least for our library. "If one-third of the user population goes to the current periodicals area, but the level of use among periodicals is seemingly low, why are the users there?"

We found over 40 percent of the use of our journal collection came from over-the-counter borrowing, with popular titles being checked out many hundreds of times. Microform usage was about 26 percent and bound usage about 30 percent of the overall use picture. Some journals showed high use only as bound volumes. Behind-counter browsing, permitted only to faculty and graduate students, accounted for only three percent of overall journal usage, with many specialized journals showing use only in the browsing area. A sample of titles rated "essential" by the faculty might draw from these relatively "low use" titles.

For review of our journal collection, we felt, overall usage by the student body needed to be considered along with faculty rankings of importance. As the Texas A&M study showed, the two populations do not necessarily agree on the most essential titles.

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