Research for librarianship: A study of iSchool faculty output in Canada

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BACKGROUND

- Appears to be a disconnect between research and practice (McKechnie, Julien, & Oliphant, 2008; Turner, 2002; Wilson, 2003)

- Transition from "library" to "information" schools (http://ischools.org/members/directory/)

- Doctoral research in librarianship declining (Finlay, Sugimoto, Li, & Russell, 2012), more interdisciplinary (Luo, 2013)

- Are library and information studies programs preparing students for practice?

- Collaboration between practitioners and researchers proposed as one way of bridging the gap (e.g., Cruickshank, Hall, & Taylor-Smith, 2011; Ponti, 2010)

RESEARCH QUESTION

To what extent is LIS faculty research in Canada related to libraries or the practice of librarianship?

METHODS & SAMPLE

- Content analysis

- Journal articles published between 2008 to 2012

- Current ranked faculty at all 8 schools granting ALA-accredited Master's degrees

METHODS: DATA COLLECTION

- Searched 5 bibliographic databases
  - LISA, LISTA, Library Literature, Scopus, Web of Science

- Searched 103 faculty members (in author field)

- Excluded non-journal publications, editorials, conference proceedings when possible
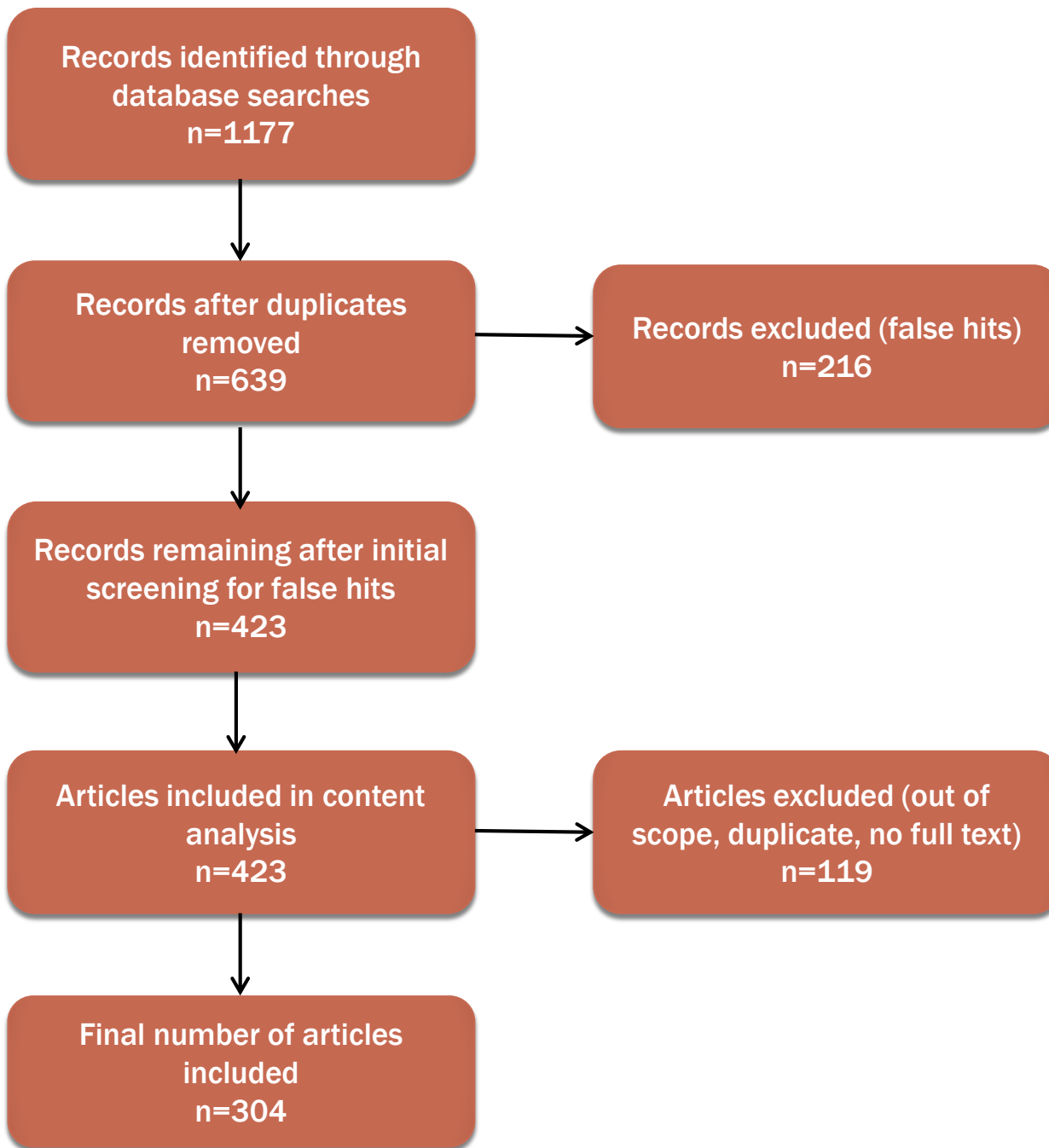
METHODS: DATA ANALYSIS

Metadata

- Language
- Year
- Authors
- Journal title

Data extraction

- Practitioner author?
- Research?
- Librarianship?
- Domain(s) of librarianship
- Type of librarian or library setting(s)
- Subject being studied (unit of analysis)
- What is this article about?

Records identified through database searches
n=1177

Records after duplicates removed
n=639

Records excluded (false hits)
n=216

Records remaining after initial screening for false hits
n=423

Articles included in content analysis
n=423

Articles excluded (out of scope, duplicate, no full text)
n=119

Final number of articles included
n=304

DATA ANALYSIS

Flow diagram of included journal articles

FINDINGS: LANGUAGE

Language	Number of papers	% of papers
English	279	92%
French	24	8%
Other (Portuguese)	1	>1%
Total	304	100%

FINDINGS: ARTICLES BY SCHOOL

University	Number of articles	Number of faculty	Mean number of articles/faculty
Western	66	21	3.1
McGill	65	11	6.5
Toronto	59	23	2.6
Montréal	57	16	3.6
Alberta	35	9	3.9
British Columbia	24	10	2.4
Dalhousie	21	7	3
Ottawa	11	6	1.8
Total*		103	3

FINDINGS: ARTICLES BY SCHOOL

University	Number of articles	Number of faculty	Mean number of articles/faculty
McGill	65	11	6.5
Montréal	57	16	3.6
Total*		27	3.9

Journal Articles 2008-2012

Quebec
35%

Rest of Canada
65%
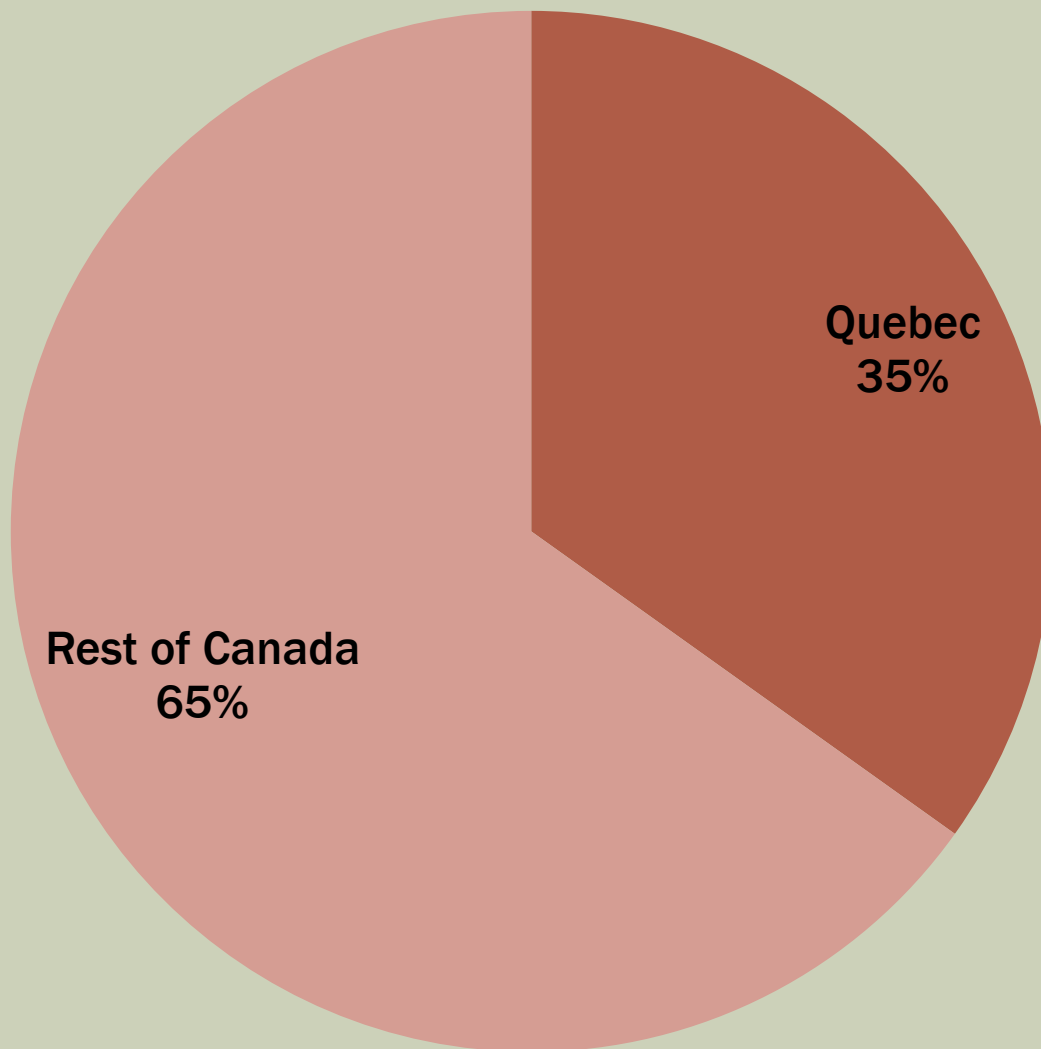
FINDINGS: RESEARCH & LIBRARIANSHIP

304 articles

218 research articles 72%

86 non-research articles

142 research articles in librarianship 65% (47% of total)

76 research articles not in librarianship

FINDINGS: TOP JOURNALS

Journal	All included articles	Research articles in librarianship
JASIST	33	20
Documentation et bibliothèques	13	1
CJILS	12	11
First Monday (Open Access)	10	1
Knowledge Organization	10	8
Scientometrics	9	2
Journal of Documentation	9	7
Cataloguing & Classification Quarterly	9	6
Information Research (Open Access)	7	3

FINDINGS: LIBRARIANSHIP DOMAINS

Domain	All included articles (N=304)	Research articles in librarianship (n=142)
Information access & retrieval	92	72
Collections	25	21
Professional issues	25	11
Reference	24	18
Management	20	14
LIS education	18	8
Other	10	6
Education	5	1

FINDINGS: TYPE OF LIBRARIANSHIP

Type of librarianship	All included articles (n=304)	Research articles in librarianship (n=142)
Public (only)	26	14
Academic (only)	18	13
School (only)	6	2
Academic + Public	3	3
Special (only)	2	2
Academic + Public + School + Special	1	1
Public + School	1	0

FINDINGS: SUBJECT OF THE STUDY

Subject (unit of analysis)	Research articles in librarianship (n=142)
Systems	61
People	46
Information sources	34
Library/information centres	14

FINDINGS: TITLE WORD ANALYSIS

http://bit.ly/LIStitles

Sinclair, S., & Rockwell, G. (2015). Cirrus. *Voyant*. Retrieved March 5, 2015 from http://voyeurtools.org/tool/Cirrus/

ARTICLES CO-AUTHORED BY LIBRARIANS

Canada	**20 / 304**	**6.5%**
Quebec	**3 / 106**	**2.8%**

LIMITATIONS

- Snapshot of a 5-year period

- Limited to journal article publications, favours social sciences research, health sciences, computer sciences

- LIS programs not solely taught by ranked faculty members

- Co-authorship and collaboration, including doctorial students

CONCLUSIONS

- Faculty at Canadian iSchools (teaching in LIS programs), including Quebec, do publish research in librarianship, as demonstrated by their journal publications, 2008-2012
- >90% of research is in English
- >40% published in 9 journals in LIS
- Research in all domains, especially information access and retrieval, collections, and reference
- Most research in librarianship is not specific to specific setting (e.g., public, academic)
- Few journal articles are co-authored with library practitioners

DISCUSSION

- Diversity of journals with Canadian LIS research
  - Who is the intended audience?
  - Are these journals accessible to librarians?

- Faculty vs. librarian publication venues?

- Non-"librarianship" research still relevant to the field

- Are librarians reading and using this research?

- Something in the water?

- Further research: network analysis, other pub types

THANK YOU

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THANK YOU