brightspot’s Research Process
research objectives

• understand how the library’s spaces, services, collections, tools and technology are used in research, teaching, and learning

• explore the role that the future Neilson library could play in supporting research, teaching and learning as well as in encouraging collaboration, creating community, and offering inspiration

• incorporate new user-centered insights into library planning and design
**Research Process**

**September**
- **01: Project Set-up + Understanding**
  - Review Background information
  - Facility Tours
  - Research Planning Meetings with:
    - User Needs Working Group
    - Student Engagement Committee
    - Library Leadership team

**October**
- **02: Discovery + Research**
  - Campus-wide survey
  - dScout missions
  - User interviews
  - Observations
  - User Experience Workshops

**November**
- **03: Insight + Recommendation Translation**
  - Document research findings:
    - User experience principles
    - Personas / motivations
    - Unmet needs + opportunities
  - Share back findings with stakeholders
research approach

• gather broad and deep input directly from as many students and faculty as possible

• use a mix of research tools and approaches (quantitative and qualitative, in-person and asynchronous) to give students and faculty a variety of ways to provide input on the future direction of Neilson Library
Selection of research tools engage a range of participants and gather complementary types of content, data while engaging the campus community in a variety of ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Research tool</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/13-10/21</td>
<td>Observations (and synthesis)</td>
<td>30 students, 4 brightspotters, ~40 intercept interviews</td>
<td>broad</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>indirect</td>
<td>synchronous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/20</td>
<td>User Experience workshop</td>
<td>8 students</td>
<td>deep</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>direct</td>
<td>synchronous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/12-current</td>
<td>dscout mission (students &amp; faculty)</td>
<td>62 &quot;scouts&quot;</td>
<td>deep</td>
<td>quantitative &amp; qualitative</td>
<td>direct</td>
<td>asynchronous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/20-11/12</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>5 students, 15 faculty</td>
<td>deep</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>indirect</td>
<td>synchronous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/30-10/15</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>950 respondents</td>
<td>broad</td>
<td>quantitative</td>
<td>direct</td>
<td>asynchronous</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
58 observation sessions at 12 locations in collaboration with anthropology majors and students in Professor Suzanne Gottschang’s Introduction to Cultural Anthropology class.
observations

Sample documentation from a student observation session

Science Library

Activities and patterns observed:
- People work individually, even at group tables, with books, notebooks, and laptops. Even people at computers sometimes have laptops (e.g., Macs).
- Quiet talking is minimal — people at front desks, infrequent between students. They come in together, separate to study, then leave together.
- Everyone has their back packs, a water bottle, and paper. At computers too. People stay for long periods of time, in and out.

Activities well-supported and why:
- Enough space at work tables for everyone to spread out their things, without overcrowding.
- Computers have comfortable chairs and leg room.
- Individual seating is comfortable with space underneath chairs to put things.

Activities poorly-supported and why:
- Cuts into computer work because there isn’t a sufficient amount of nearby outlets.
- Not really a space for interactive group work, too quiet and open, no privacy.
- Coffee tables shared in individual seating sections make it hard to spread out work.

Questions raised:
- Are people changing their computer beforehand? Why aren’t they using outlets?
- Who uses the library? Where do they live? What is their major?
- Is the number of people capped because the space isn’t built for a lot of students at a time?

Other take-aways:
- Students bring water bottles everywhere.
- Students study alone even when they arrive with friends.
- Quiet spaces are created by everyone together.

SMITH COLLEGE CAMPUS

- ACADEMIC
- ADMINISTRATIVE
- RESIDENCE

Young Science Library (7)
Observations synthesis in collaboration with anthropology majors and students in Professor Suzanne Gottschang’s class, clustering observed motivations of students / individuals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some key motivations included:</th>
<th>comfort</th>
<th>relaxation</th>
<th>choice / flexibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>quiet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accessing resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“serious” study / work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>convenience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“light” work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>meeting and working with others</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Motivations board with post-it notes discussing various motivations and their clustering.
user experience (UX) workshop

Workshop with students to map ideal research and learning experiences in the renovated Neilson Library

some key moments included:

- Writing help in the library
- Dedicated workspaces for quick turnaround
- Help searching and navigating the collection
dscout “mission”

62 student and faculty “scouts” are currently taking part in dscout missions to document key moments in their learning and research activities.

How I learn
10/26/2015

How I focus
10/24/2015

How I learn
10/23/2015

How I focus
10/22/2015

How I connect with ot...
10/21/2015

How I connect with ot...
10/21/2015

How I’m sharing my w...
10/21/2015

How I learn
10/21/2015

How I connect with ot...
10/21/2015

How I learn
10/20/2015

My last big discovery
10/20/2015

My last big discovery
10/20/2015

brightspot | Shepley Bullfinch

Neilsen Library User Research Update 10
We are conducting one-on-one interviews with students and faculty to do a deep dive on how they work and learn today, and how the library has supported them – in the past and currently – as well as the role it might play in the future.

**Interview topics:**

**Background:** Tell us a bit about yourself. What roles do you play at Smith College (e.g.: student, researcher, teacher, director, mentor)? Why did you choose Smith College? How did you arrive at your current [major, position, etc.]?

**Work:** What are your top goals and motivations? What are you most excited about? What work are you involved in on a day-to-day basis? And in doing your work, where do you envision yourself at the end of your time at Smith College?

**Success Story:** Share with us one of your success stories from Smith College. What determined ‘success’ in this story? What role did the College play in that (e.g. its spaces, resources, people, etc.)?

**Needs:** Reflecting on your current work environments and processes, what helps you be productive and accomplish your work? What’s missing?

**Roles of the Library:** Reflecting on your activities and needs at Smith, what role do you see the library playing in supporting these? Consider library spaces, services, people, technology, collections, and programs. If you don’t use the library, what other places or resources do you use? Why?
**interview participants**
20 interviews conducted with faculty and students across different disciplines and positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Social Sciences and History</th>
<th>Natural Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Senior Student</td>
<td>1 Junior, 1 Senior Student</td>
<td>1 Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Ada Comstock Scholars</td>
<td>2 Associate Professors</td>
<td>1 Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>1 Professor</td>
<td>1 Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Assistant Professors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Associate Professor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Professors</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A campus-wide survey was sent to faculty and students and was administered over a three-week period. We received just over 950 respondents, the majority of whom were students.

**Survey Respondents:**
- 241 Faculty
  - Professor: 113
  - Associate Professor: 30
  - Assistant Professor: 41
  - Emerita: 16
  - Other*: 41

*other includes lecturers, staff and course support

- 715 Students
  - First Year: 153
  - Junior: 184
  - Senior: 172
  - Senior: 21
  - Other*: 4

*other includes transfers

**Survey Topics:**
- Frequency of visits to Smith Libraries
- Preferred Library
- Frequent activities
- Barriers to visiting/using Neilson
- Collections Usage
- Satisfaction with current resources
- Importance of resources
- Improvements for the future Neilson Library

**Neilson Library**
is the most frequently visited library and the most preferred by survey respondents (58%), followed by Hillyer Art Library and Young Science Library (~15% each)
**analysis approach**

- results of all research methods will be analyzed together to create a comprehensive reflection of the data gathered

- output will be synthesized into an understanding of research, teaching and learning at Smith college, highlighting the:
  - learning and research “ecosystem”
  - user experiences and key moments
  - opportunities and potential responses