Use of Manuscripts and Archives by Historians: A Citation Analysis of Four History Journals for the Period 2006-2010

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Abstract: My research study is a citation analysis of 219 feature articles from four history journals published between 2006-2010 (*Journal of American History*, *Environmental History*, *History of Education Quarterly*, and the *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences)*.

Citation analysis can be helpful in studying the use of primary sources in the following ways:
- What types of primary sources are being used?
- What institutions and types of institutions are scholars using and has this changed over time?
- What is the time period and content of the subject matter of the article?
- How intensively used were the manuscript/archival materials?

This form of citation analysis has been conducted previously, most importantly by Frederic Miller in *American Archivist* in 1986 and Marion Hirsch in a Master's thesis in 1991. According to Google Scholar, Miller's article has been cited forty-three times since it was published, clearly demonstrating the usefulness of his work, however there has not been a published study of this nature in over twenty years. Miller developed an elaborate methodology for analyzing citations to archival resources, to which Hirsch made some minor revisions. I have used this methodology as the basis for my own study, which has allowed me to compare my findings with their earlier results.

The goal of my research is to help guide acquisition policies, arrangement and description priorities, and instruction on conducting primary source research. The archives profession needs to focus more attention on gathering evidence on user behavior in order to guide critical decisions on what to collect and how to best make it accessible.

About the author:

Chris Burns is the Curator of Manuscripts at the University of Vermont. He has an MLIS from Simmons College and an MA in History from the University of Vermont. His research interests include digitization, interpreting the content of archives and manuscripts, and the care, management, and use of archival collections.