Some characteristics of user patterns of the general reference library of the Library of New South Wales

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SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF USER PATTERNS OF THE

GENERAL REFERENCE LIBRARY

OF THE

LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE

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SUMMARY.

With the growth in society's awareness
of the value of information, libraries have had to
reasses their roles and impact. To do this they
need both knowledge of themselves and knowledge of
their environment. The people who use libraries
are an important part of this environment. This
is particularly true of state and national libraries
which do not owe allegiance to a particular institution
but rather to the people as a whole. The General
Reference Library of the Library of New South Wales
provides a number of services for the public. The
Telephone Enquiry Service and the Reading Room are
two of these. This study investigated some
characteristics of the users of these services. Its
objectives were to provide a basis of and directions
for further research. The specific hypotheses
tested were concerned with the effect that distance
from the Library had on the type of service that
was used and with the difference between the user
populations of these two types of service.

A questionnaire was the survey instrument. It was
not found that distance determined the type of
service used and it was found that although some
users used both types of service some used only
one. Many areas of future research were indicated
although the sample was limited.

INTRODUCTION.

"The basic characteristics of social
conditions in our time is that they are
constantly changing, and the rate and
extent of the change varies from country
to country and in different areas in
these countries. All we can do is note
that library planning is influenced
anywhere by a number of social factors...
Their influence is decisive and at the
same time difficult to analyze in relation
to libraries, because they are so often
simply _there_ and taken for granted by
those who live there".1.

National and state libraries are probably
more often taken for granted than other types of
library. Most other libraries have a clearly
delineated society with which they interact. This
society may be defined geographically, in terms of
an academic discipline or by some other criterion.
The state or national library only has the state or
nation as its society. Such a society is so diffuse
and varied that it is difficult to pinpoint inter-
actions between state and library. While it is true,
as Benge claimed above, that the goals and objectives
of all libraries must be sought in terms of "social
factors" 2. these are difficult to assess in this
instance.

Sometimes broad guidelines are provided by the enabling legislation but this is not always so. A library, like any organization, needs clear objectives if it is to assess its own effectiveness and to explain its value to those who do or who might be persuaded to support it. The General Reference Library is part of the Library of New South Wales and as such it is committed to the objectives of that institution. The enabling legislation does not specify the aims and objectives of the Library, built as it was on an existing organization, but merely empowers certain people and groups of people to control the activities of the Library. 3.

In the Annual Report, 1970-1, an attempt was made to detail the objectives of the Library of New South Wales:

> "To serve the community as a major source
> of recorded knowledge, for reference,
> advanced study and research; to supplement
> the resources of other libraries in New
> South Wales; to co-operate with other
> libraries toward best use of library
> resources of Australia". 4

The interaction between the library and its society is also mentioned as the Report proceeds to say that:

"In the broad view, however, the function and object of the Library of New South Wales is to acquire, preserve and provide for its use, the documentary record of the total culture of our time ... The Library is thus no mere appendage of the State but of its very fabric". 5

Two main themes are expressed in these objectives. One is the Library's view of its relationship with other libraries, the other is the more general one, the interaction of the Library and the community it serves. Other libraries and the community are the source of its potential clientele. It is in terms of these relationships that the Library can judge its effectiveness. Being part of a state library the General Reference Library (hereinafter referred to as G.R.L.) has difficulty in singling out its potential clients. As Ramsay wrote in 1969:

"Including as it does, all the citizens of the state, the potential clientele of the state library is too large and amorphous to provide a direct basis for choice and the library must deduce its functions partly through consideration of its nature as an institution and partly through exploration of the extent to which reader needs are being met by other institutions". 6

A state library does to some extent provide "insurance" against possible need for information, and such provision cannot be judged by the use of materials

thus provided but by its ability to fulfil needs when they arise. This must be coupled with a concern for current provision of service and for the provision of facilities for the immediate future. Reference librarians and others involved in the planning of library services need to be able to base their decisions on information. G.R.L. needs to know who its future users might be if it is to provide for their needs. Broad pictures of the future are being projected by sociological surveyors and educational forecasters, but, general information gained from this work will only be of value to the Library if it has some idea how current trends are affecting the use of its services.

An example of one social trend which might be relevant to library planning is the increase in leisure time which seems to be continuing. This phenomonon has been the subject of study. Klausner's work on the effects of a three month vacation on the activities of manual workers is one such study. He confirmed earlier discoveries that "the upper middle class used libraries and participated in home activities and leisure study groups more frequently

than the lower classes".. 7 From this type of study it
seems, that both patterns of social mobility and variations
in the extent and distribution of leisure time, will
affect a community's use of its library resources but the
specific results of social change in these areas are still
to be determined.

No one library is alone in its community.
The inter-relation of libraries is not limited to real
or apparent net-works or hierarchies, but is also a
factor of individual use patterns as a user will travel
from one library to another to find information. The
library that lacks knowledge about the use its users or
potential users make of other sources of information in
its area lacks a valuable planning tool.

One example of such a lack of knowledge can
be found in Sydney in the 1960s. In the early sixties
a new building was erected at the University of Sydney
for the Fisher Library and it was opened in the first
term 1963. In G.R.L. the number of seated readers is
counted at certain times each day. The annual count for
each time period is then divided to provide a figure for
the average number of seated readers at each of these

times on each specific type of day, e.g. Sunday,

Public Holiday.

TABLE I :1

AVERAGE NUMBER OF SEATED READERS IN G.R.L.
(compiled from the Annual Reports of the
Library of N.S.W.)

Weekdays (incl. Sat.)	1960-1	1961-2	1962-3	1963-4	1964-5	1965-6
1.30 p.m.	153	165	164	136	129	132
4.00 p.m.	154	170	162	139	133	138
8.00 p.m.	149	159	153	124	114	117
Sundays						
4.00 p.m.	251	254	263	232	218	214
Pub.Hols.						
1.30 p.m.	184	223	216	148	154	147
4.00 p.m.	203	234	200	183	166	149
8.00 p.m.	120	121	110	110	77	94

(the red line indicates the opening of the new
Fisher Library)

The difference between the 1962-3 figures and

those for 1963-4 is about 30. It is not suggested that

this table gives conclusive evidence that these 30 or

so readers were in G.R.L. in 1962-3 and in Fisher in

1963-4, however there must be a strong possibility

that these events were inter-related. What is offered

is evidence of a lack of knowledge.

A state library does not have unlimited funds.

As Hamburg, Ramisi and Bommer have stated "libraries,

as all other institutions and organizations in the
public and private sectors, are faced with the
economic problem of allocating their limited resources
in such a manner as to generate maximum benefits". 8

In their study Hamburg, Ramisi and Bommer
wished to measure a library's performance in terms of
its objectives. They chose the use of materials in the
library as a way to measure its effectiveness. They
rejected social change as a measure of library
performance because, although "the library contributes
to all societal objectives, it is only one of several
institutions which contribute to any single objective
of society", and it would be "an insurmountable task
to isolate library effects from those of other
institutions". 9 This study was concerned with the
total library, not just the reference service.

The reference service of a library is where
the interface between users and material occurs. It
is at this interface that the total library service

is justified. A performance measure of use at this point should give a measure of the whole library's performance. Yet "of all library operations the reference department is the most assailable and exposed... the staff, largely professional is expensive" 10 and the work often remains unquantified.

The resources, of material and manpower, which are taken in by a library are quantifiable and usually quantified. Materials can be expressed in terms of numbers of items or of cost and manpower in terms of numbers of people or of cost but the measurement of output in service areas is notoriously difficult. The value of a question answered or a book made available, is not easy to assess objectively either in relation to the individual with the immediate need or to society at large. "The body of literature concerning reference statistics is not very extensive" 11 said Lopez as recently as 1973. This is not because the need for such statistics has not been recognized but because no really effective measure of reference work has been discovered.

Since 1869 a count has been made of the number of readers seated in G.R.L. The number of telephone

enquiries received daily, has been counted since 1969.
Those enquiries taken down for additional work are
given running numbers. Although this is primarily
for purposes of identification it provides a count.
Tallies are also made of the number of application
slips accepted at the Reference Desk for items to be
retrieved from the closed stack. However as this
gives no indication of the number of volumes retrieved
or the number of items removed from the open access
shelves by the users themselves, it does not provide
a satisfactory measure of the exposure that the material
in the collection is getting or of the amount of work
being done by the staff.

No specific attempts have been made to
discover anything about the people or organizations
who use the Library. It is within this context that
the present study was undertaken.

Every library has its distinctive role and
place in its own community. This is particularly
true of a state library. Even within Australia state
libraries have historically diversified in their

development, in their statutory duties and in their perceived roles. Some provide local lending services in their own capital cities, others are administratively connected to special research libraries as G.R.L. is to the Mitchell Library. This difference in orientation limits the relevance of work done in one place to the problems in another, especially if the work is not done systematically.

G.R.L. as part of a state library, has a basic problem of identifying its users. In many studies of other libraries some information is known or is at least on record even if it has not been subject to scrutiny. Douglas wished to test the assertion that "people do not travel further than one mile to use a public library". 12 He was able to start testing this by looking at the addresses given by borrowers when they reregistered with the Mayfield Branch Library of the Newcastle Public Library. This information would have been collected even if he had never used it. There is no such information about the G.R.L. users, as it is not a lending library and it does not have readers' entry permits or any other

form of registration.

A similar question to Douglas's was investigated by Luckham, in Southampton and again it was registered readers who were studied. 13 Luckham also worked with the Public Libraries and Adult Education Committee for the North West. This was a larger study and did not confine the investigation to those people who were known to be connected with the library service that was being studied. During the interviews many people claimed to be library members who were in fact not registered at all. Luckham was unable to explain this. He thought that perhaps "citizens might even regard their statements as more in the nature of an affirmation of support, as it were, belonging in the spirit". 14. He had not been prepared for this and had expected that most interviewees would answer this question accurately. This demonstrates the difficulty that can be experienced when seeking information from people about their use of a library where no list of registered members is available for checking.

In 1966 an OSTI survey was made to determine
the use made of thirty-three public reference libraries
in England. 15. This is a particularly interesting
study. It did not confine its interest to personal
visitors but also included those who used the
libraries by telephone, Telex and postal services.
The information on the telephone enquiries seems to
have been compiled by the libraries with no direct
questioning of the users.

The results of this study showed that of
the users who were not students, retired etc. most
visited the libraries for their work and "on average
49.5 per cent of (them) travelled two miles or less,
76.7 per cent travelled five miles or less and 90.6
per cent travelled ten miles or less". 16. As no
point of origin of telephone calls received was
recorded no comparison between these two types of
use can be made.

During 1968 Nelson Associates made a study
of the Research Libraries of the New York Public
Libraries. "The primary objective of Nelson Associates
assignment was to ascertain who the Libraries' patrons
are, why these persons visit or write The Research

Libraries, and what use they make of the resources." 17

This was a particularly interesting study because it

attempted to compare two different types of library

user. From this comparison Nelson Associates discovered

that,

> "The available data indicated proximity is
> a variable influencing patronage -- the
> closer a person lives or works to The
> Research Libraries, the more likely he
> is to patronize the Libraries in person
> to fill his needs (general users and
> photo walk-in); the further away a
> person lives or works the more likely
> he is to utilize the services available
> by mail (photo mail and reference
> letters)." 18

This result is interesting but not really

of benefit to this present study. Telephone users

cannot be directly compared with letter writers in

the effect that distance will have on their activities.

The Nelson study was a much more extensive one than

anything which could be attempted in this present

investigation. The questionnaire was able to be

distributed over a full calendar year. However the

Nelson Associates study is of major interest in the

wording of the questionnaire used. It was directed

at a similar group of previously unknown library

users who were being asked for similar information

to that being sought in the present study.

BACKGROUND TO THIS STUDY.

The General Reference Library is situated in the Library of New South Wales building in Shakespeare Place, Sydney. This area is uphill from the main business district of the city and near other public buildings e.g. Parliament House. The public areas of G.R.L. consist of a main Reading Room, a Newspaper Reading Room and when necessary the public has access to a Special Collections Reading Room and a Research Room. All people using any part of G.R.L. must enter through doors in the northern end of the Reading Room.

Of the over 650,000 titles in G.R.L. only about 50,000 are on the open access shelves, the remainder being in closed stack areas and available on specific request. The average number of seated readers during 1971-2[*] were

"Weekdays	1.30 P.M.	122
	4.00 P.M.	99
	8.00 P.M.	65
Sundays	4.00 P.M.	204
Public Holidays	1.30 P.M.	122
	4.00 P.M.	125
	8.00 P.M.	55" 19.

[*] These figures were the latest available at the time of the study.

These totals are lower than those in table I:1 but
no change from one year to the next during the 1960s
and 1970s has been as great as that demonstrated by
that table for 1963. "The total number of volumes
issued by the General Reference Library was... 221,468" 20.
during 1971-2. This does not include material taken
from the open access shelves and no count has been
made of this. The telephone reference service, manned
by the same staff as the Reading Room, is centered in
a staff workroom from 10.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M., Monday-
Friday. At other times i.e. 9.00 A.M. to 10.00 A.M.
Monday-Friday, 5.00 P.M. to 10.00 P.M., Monday-Friday,
9.00 A.M. to 10.00 P.M. on Saturday and 1.00 P.M.
to 6.00 P.M. on Sunday the service is staffed at the
Reference Desk in the Reading Room. 22,339 calls were
received during the 1971-2 period. 21.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY.

This present study was designed to collect
some information about people who use the services
of the General Reference Library so that some progress
towards identifying users will have been made, and
specifically, so that a basis of, and directions for

further study will have been established. To this
end certain hypotheses were formulated.

HYPOTHESES.

It has been indicated in earlier research
that the frequency of visits to libraries tends to
be inversely proportional to the distances from them;
some of these studies have been discussed above.
Although the distances involved in the different
studies varied the patterns of distribution were
similar.

Throughout the metropolitan area of Sydney
telephone calls can be made automatically at a
uniform cost. It could therefore be expected that
this homogeneity of opportunity and expenditure would
be reflected in the pattern of distribution of the
point of origin of telephone calls to G.R.L. Users
who call in person cannot borrow material from the
Library, however they may take photocopies with them.
This means that a person seeking information may in
some cases receive almost identical service whether
he makes a personal visit or a telephone call.

These factors would indicate the likelihood that people who live or work near G.R.L. and who use its services, are likely to call in person, while those further away are more likely, or as likely, to use the telephone to obtain service.

However from the personal experience of librarians who work in G.R.L. and from a preliminary look at those telephone numbers recorded, so that return calls can be made, it would appear that this were not so. Certain factors such as the availability of public libraries and transport were believed by G.R.L. to be affecting the use pattern. Before any possible explanations of a use pattern are determined it is necessary to see what these use patterns are. This present study attempted to deal with the preliminary question of whether the type of use, i.e. personal visits or telephone calls, made of G.R.L. by people, is uniformly distributed throughout the metropolitan area in so far as the point of origin of the visit or telephone call is concerned.

HYPOTHESIS 1

That within the metropolitan area of Sydney the type of use made of the General Reference Library is not determined by distance from it.

Two types of services were to be considered, telephone service and reading room service. As many telephone callers ask where the library is situated and many personal visitors express surprise when told of the telephone enquiry service, it seems that many of the users of either type of service were unaware of the other type of service or at least did not use it. A further hypothesis is presented.

HYPOTHESIS 11

That the users of the telephone service and the users who call in person to the General Reference Library are not members of co-extensive groups.

DATA NEEDED TO TEST THESE HYPOTHESES

SOURCE OF DATA Both these hypotheses postulated something about the users of G.R.L. The information was known to these users and they had to be questioned to discover whence they were making their telephone calls or had started their journey to the library.

It was also necessary to ask them about their use of
the other type of service than that which they were
using when questioned.

ASSUMPTIONS It was believed that seasonal fluctuations
in the numbers of personal visitors to G.R.L. were
primarily caused by student users of it. As it was
not administratively possible to test library users
over a whole year, school students and college and
university undergraduates were not to be subjects of
this enquiry.

The study was further restricted to weekdays,
Monday-Friday. The decision to do this was partly
administrative. It would be difficult to question
telephone callers without appearing to inconvenience
the users who were making personal visits as on the
weekends, both types of reference service are run from
the same desk as is the "stack getting" service. This
decision was also based on the assumption that most
of the weekend personal visitors were students, who
were not to be part of this study. To test this
assumption would entail the potential inconvenience
to the public that has been mentioned above.

COLLECTION OF DATA The collection of data was under-
taken by questionnaire. The Principal Librarian of
the Library of New South Wales gave permission for the
survey to be made "on behalf of the Library". A pre-
test version of certain questions was prepared. The
questions were designed to discover the data needed
to test the hypotheses and to allow the researcher to
exclude data from sources outside the scope of this
study, e.g. information from school student users.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

" LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

GENERAL REFERENCE LIBRARY - USER SURVEY

In order to assess changing demands for the
provision of information to the community, the Library
of New South Wales needs to know more about the way
in which this Library is being used. Any information
gained from this survey will help us in our future
planning. It would help us if you completed this
questionnaire.

PLEASE ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS AND RETURN THIS

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE REFERENCE DESK AS YOU LEAVE

THE LIBRARY
(place a √ in the correct square☐)"

After this initial statement and instruction
four questions followed:

Question I. A. Pre-test format.

"I. a. Have you just come from?

home............☐

work............☐

school..........☐

college or uni..☐

recreation......☐

other (please give details)..☐

....

　　b. Where was this?

street..............suburb.........postcode....."

　B. Survey format

"I. Have you just come from?

i) home...........☐

ii) work...........☐

iii) school.........☐

iv) college or uni..☐

v) recreation......☐

vi) other (specify).☐

....

Where was this?

street............suburb.........postcode....."

As can be seen above this question remained substantially

unaltered.

Question II. A. Pre-test format.

"II. a. Are you using the Library?

for your work.......☐

for recreation......☐

for your studies....☐

b. If studies is it

school...................☐

undergraduate uni. or college.☐

postgraduate uni. or college..☐"

B. Survey format

"II. What are you using the Library for today? (tick as many as apply)

i) To locate material for a job, firm or business........................☐

ii) To do individual research, not connected with work for a firm or institution.....☐

iii) To pursue academic work for a school, undergraduate college or uni............☐

iv) As a personal interest for recreation......☐

v) Other (please specify)...................☐ "

This question was designed to discover what the person was using the Library for on the day the question was asked. The pre-test version was unsatisfactory in that it failed to specify that it was the activity on a particular day that was of interest. It also failed to allow for users who were doing more than one thing

when questioned. The format was confusing as part **b)**
only qualified some of part a) and this was not
initially obvious. There was also no provision for
user to make a reply that was not one of the given
alternatives. The question was redesigned using as
a model one of Nelson Associates' questions in a
New York Public Library survey they carried out. 22.

Question III. A. Pre-test format.

"III. a. How often have you used the Library during
        1973?

        more than once a week.......☐

        once a week.................☐

        once a month................☐

        once a year.................☐

    b. Is this your first visit to the Library?

                        Yes ☐   No ☐   "

b. Survey format.

"III. a. When did you last use the Library?

        i)yesterday....................☐

        ii)a week ago..................☐

        iii)a month ago................☐

        iv)earlier in 1973.............☐

        v)other (specify)..............☐

        ....

b. When do you expect next to use the Library?

        i) tomorrow...................... ☐

        ii) in a week's time.............. ☐

        iii) in a month's time............ ☐

        iv) later in 1974................ ☐

        v) other (specify)............... ☐ ,,

        ....

For the pre-test version both these formats were considered. It was decided to use type A because it was considered that part b) of type B might be difficult to answer and because the researcher considered that individual use patterns might not be too complex for type A to reflect them, although this possibility had been the main reason for considering a type B format.

The results of the pre-test showed clearly that the type A form was difficult to complete. When returning their questionnaires some people commented that they were uneasy about the answers they had given to this question. More than one square had been ticked by one user and several wrote answers in,

e.g. "varies according to time of year". For this reason and because part b) of type A was often not necessary the type B format was used. Considering the objection to type B part b), i.e. that it may be difficult to know the answer to this, it was decided that should this be so the answer to part a), together with the fact that the user was in the Library on the day of the questioning, would allow some assessment of the use pattern.

Question IV. A. Pre-test format.

"IV. Have you ever telephoned the Library?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes   a) Did you want to know the hours of opening?........ ☐

b) to know if the Library held a particular book, journal etc?............. ☐

c) any other information?..... ☐   "

B. Survey format.

"IV. Have you ever telephoned the Library?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, did you want to know

a) the hours of opening....... ☐

b) if the Library held a particular book or journal.................. ☐

c) other information..........☐ "

_____

Only the layout of this question was changed.

The pre-test was printed on quarto paper
and this note was on the bottom of the page -
" IF YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS TO MAKE
PLEASE WRITE THEM ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS
PAGE "
The survey format being on foolscap paper a space of
4 cm. was left after the following -
"IF YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
PLEASE USE THIS SPACE"

A weekend in late September 1973 was chosen
for the pre-test. There was no attempt to ensure
that all users in the Reading Room were given the
form as this was a test of the questionnaire and not
of the users. Friday and Saturday were chosen in the
hope that those users who came to G.R.L. at this time
would not be the same people as those who would be
asked to complete the final survey questionnaire.

The survey questionnaire was administered
on Thursday 11th November. Each personal visitor to
G.R.L. was given a form and asked to complete it.
Only one user refused to accept the questionnaire.
Of the 83 issued 78 were completed and returned.
Every user who telephone G.R.L. that day was also
questioned.

After each telephone enquirer had stated
his problem to a librarian an interviewer would
pick up the telephone and say, "While the librarian
is checking for your problem, could you answer five
questions for us; the Library is conducting a survey?"
The interviewers were other librarians. No user
refused to answer the questions although one appeared
to be too intoxicated and questioning was discontinued.
The telephone questioning was continued a week later
on Thursday 18th November. Often calls are received
which are not for G.R.L. This is particularly true
after hours when the whole Library's switchboard is
night-switched to G.R.L. and most calls for the
Mitchell Library reach G.R.L. No attempt was made to
interview these callers.

Initially it had been intended that the questionnaire would be administered over a number of days in mid-November. This month was chosen as it was after the main period of examinations. This would hopefully reduce the numbers of forms that would have to be discarded because students had completed them and by then more staff would be available to help.

When the forms that had been completed on the 18th November were looked at it became evident, from a comparison of addresses given in Question I and of handwriting that many people who had completed this survey questionnaire had also completed the pre-test version. It being likely that some of these were people who had been using the Library for many years and therefore likely that they would be asked to participate in any further studies and considering that it was one of the objectives of this study to be the first of a number it was decided not to continue surveying at this time and thus jeopardize future activities. The high rate of response was a factor that influenced this decision.

RESULTS

Question I The first part of this question asked
users to specify from what type of place they had
begun their journey to the Library or were ringing.
The results are given in the following table with
each category being shown as a percentage of the total
number of users of that type of service.

TABLE R1: PLACES FROM WHICH USERS CONTACTED G.R.L.
BY TYPE OF SERVICE USED

PLACE FROM WHICH CONTACT MADE	TYPE OF SERVICE			
	IN PERSON		BY TELEPHONE	
	No.	%	No.	%
home	39	53.43	12	18.18
work	29	39.72	45	68.18
college or uni.	0		3	4.55
recreation	3	6.85	2	9.09
other	2		4	
TOTAL	73		66*	

* there were 65 users of this service but one user
indicated both university and work.

The second part of this question asked the user for the geographical location of the point of origin of the journey or telephone call. The results are shown on the map on the following page.

MAP of SYDNEY - municipal areas within
c.15 miles of the city - showing Users;
point of origin of personal visits
and telephone calls.

◇ Library of N.S.W.
● Telephone callers.
● Personal visitors.
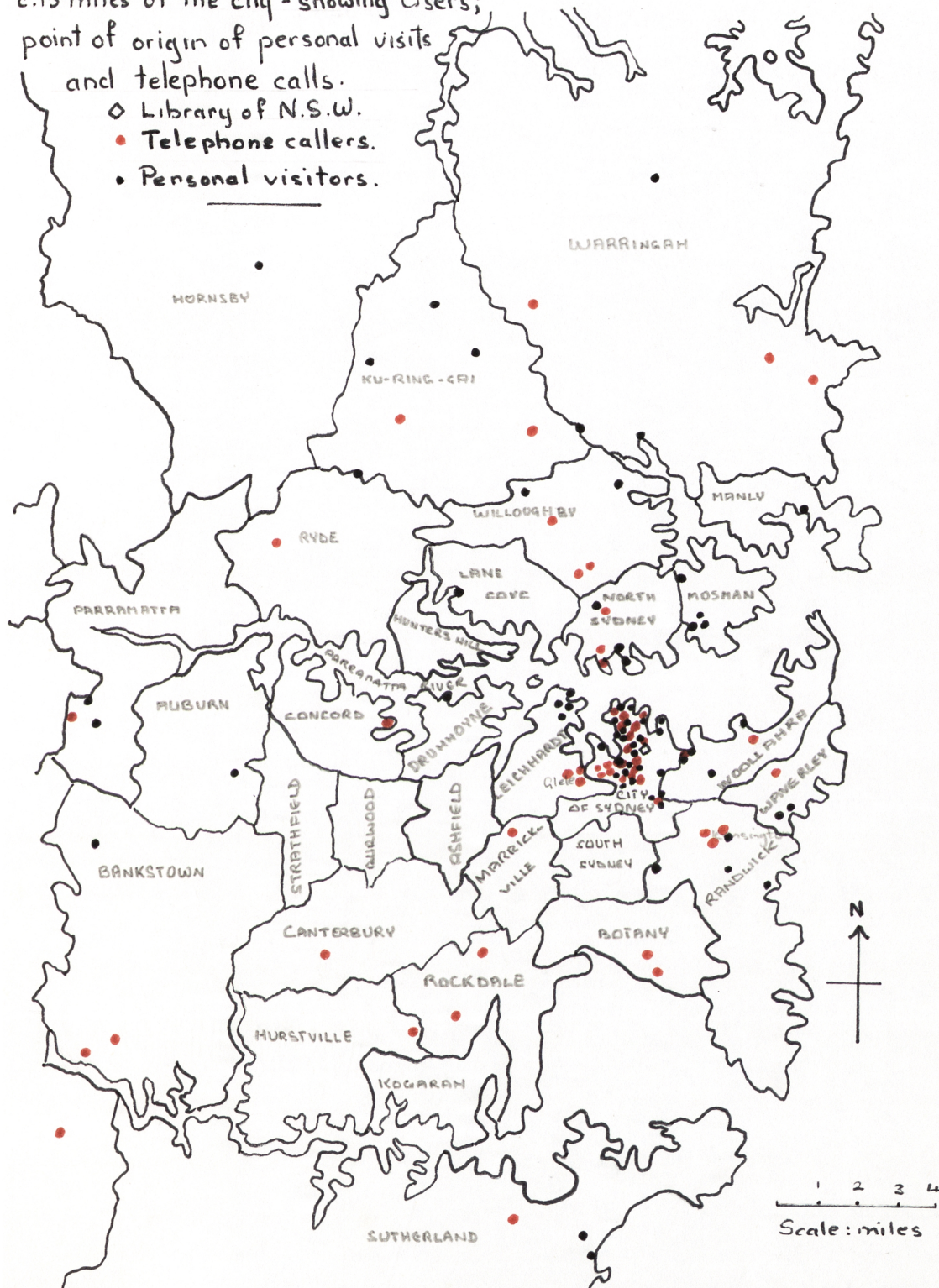
<u>Question II</u>   In this question users were asked their
reason, or reasons for contacting the Library on the
day that they were being questioned. Student replies
were thus eliminated. Of the personal callers 11
indicated the "other" alternative. Where they then
specified a topic that fell within the scope of one
of the given alternatives the answers were reassigned
to that category, e.g. "family history" was included
in the "individual research" category. This question
was wordy and the researcher considered that it was
easier for users to write their own answer down than
to decide into which category their work fell. The
table below gives the results and again the percentage
of the total number of answers for each type of service
is also given. Users were asked to indicate as many
categories as applied to their activity so the overall
totals are higher than the total number of users.

TABLE R2:   NATURE OF USE BY TYPE OF SERVICE USED

| NATURE OF USE | TYPE OF SERVICE | | | |
| | IN PERSON | | BY TELEPHONE | |
	No.	%	No.	%
for work	17.2	20.74	38	56.72
individual research	38	46.34	13	19.4
academic	10	12.2	6	8.96
recreation	13	15.85	9	13.43
other	4	4.88	1	1.49
TOTAL	82		67	

Question III and IV   The remaining parts of the
questionnaire had been designed to collect data on
the inter-related areas of frequency of use and
variation in type of service used. The users were
first asked how long ago their last contact with
G.R.L. had been and to estimate when their next might
be. They were then asked to indicate if they had
ever used the service other than that which they were
using when questioned. For 15 users this was their

first contact with G.R.L. Of these 13 were making
contact by telephone (19.7 percent of total telephone
users) and 2 in person (2.74 percent of personal
callers). The majority of users had had some previous
contact with G.R.L. The following table shows those
users who had previously contacted G.R.L. and gives
their expectations of future contact.

TABLE R3:   USERS;   TIME SINCE LAST CONTACT AND
                     EXPECTATION OF FUTURE CONTACT BY
                     TYPE OF SERVICE

PREVIOUS CONTACT	NEXT EXPECTED CONTACT	TYPE OF SERVICE		
		IN PERSON	BY TELEPHONE	TOTAL
UP TO ONE MONTH AGO	WITHIN ONE MONTHS TIME	46	16	62
	OVER ONE MONTHS TIME	4	6	10
	NO IDEA	1	1	2
	NO ANSWER		2	2
OVER ONE MONTH AGO	WITHIN ONE MONTHS TIME	4	8	12
	OVER ONE MONTHS TIME	9	7	16
	NO IDEA	4	11	15
	NEVER	1		1
	NO ANSWER	1	1	2
TOTAL		70	52	112

Of telephone callers 72.58 percent had
visited G.R.L. in person while only 42.47 percent
of personal visitors had ever contacted the Library
by telephone. Those personal visitors who had
previously contacted the Library by telephone indicated
whether they had rung to check the hours of opening
(10 percent), to see if G.R.L. held a particular work
(53.33 percent) or for other information (36.67 percent).

Users' Comments Only personal callers were asked for
comments. Additional remarks were made by 35 of the 65
visitors and 7 signed their names to the questionnaire
although this was not asked for in any way. There
were 12 comments praising G.R.L., e.g. "Service always
excellent!" The opportunity to describe their work
was taken by three users, e.g. "Research is of
genealogical nature". Four users wanted the hours of
opening to be extended (at present the Library is open
76 hours a week) one of these users added "that a waiting
room be provided for those waiting for the Library to
open".

The Library was thought to be deficient in certain areas of the collection, five specific areas were named, i.e. "industrial history", "certain scientific dictionaries", "books on how to get wealthy", "architecture books", "it <u>doesn't</u> have a full range of books or periodicals, some overseas periodicals are very slow reaching the country, should be air freight, i.e. The New Scientist." One user criticized the cafeteria:-

> "-How come the food in the Cafeteria"
> is so disgusting - and the prices so
> outrageous compared to the quality of
> the food - one can get a meal that is
> twice as good at (say) the Carlton Rex
> for little more - the chef ought to be
> shot, or better yet made to eat the
> food he <u>cooks</u>."

Others made specific comments, e.g. "I find that books are often misplaced on the shelves... such as the one I used today, viz. 942.0820922/1" and "Trying to find all references to Persian cuneiform inscriptions is confusing".

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

As Table R1 shows, the majority of those who telephoned the Library did so from their workplace

(68.18 percent). Most people who telephoned indicated
that their call was connected with their occupation
(56.72 percent). Personal callers who indicated
that they were using the Library for their work were
only 20.74 percent of personal callers. An enquiry
made from, and on behalf of, a place of work may be
more likely to be a second-hand enquiry than that
made by a person for individual research. Such a
telephone user may well have a more specific question
but will know less of the background to that question.

The ability of G.R.L. to supply information
when it is requested is limited by any weaknesses
in the communication of that request. This is
particularly true when enquiries are recorded for
later work by yet another person. This is one
area where further study is needed. If most tele-
phone callers are calling from their work and if
this might indicate that most telephone callers are
making their request on behalf of another person,
then this may affect the reaction of G.R.L. staff
to such requests. Clearly G.R.L. needs to know if
the queries are likely to be second-hand. This

present study does indicate the need for further
research in this area.

The results shown in Table R2 are primarily
a side-product from the need to identify users who
were students, and thus not subjects of this study.
Future investigations would do well to ask such a
question regularly over at least one year to see
if one of the assumptions of this present study was
valid, viz. that the main cause of seasonal variations
in the use of G.R.L. is the education calendar.

Although the metropolitan area of Sydney
stretches in a rough semi-circle, having a radius
of approximately 20 miles, it is only from within
15 miles that people contacted the Library at the
time of this study. The majority of Library users
came from within a five mile radius of the Library;
this can be seen on the map on page 31. Both types
of user were represented outside this area; 18
were telephone callers and 15 were personal visitors.
Both types of user were represented in the central
city area.

Outside this city area, the pattern of
distribution is not quite regular. There are two
small groups of telephone callers, one at Glebe,
the other at Kensington. It is possible that these
two points represent the University of Sydney at
Glebe and the University of New South Wales at
Kensington, However there is no corresponding
cluster for Macquarie University at North Ryde.
Another way of looking at the map is to treat
Sydney Harbour and the Parramatta River as a
natural division and compare the area north of
this line with the area to the south. The City
of Sydney, local government area is not being
considered in this comparison. In the southern
area there are an equal number of telephone callers
and personal visitors represented, while in the
northern area there are only 12 telephone callers
and 20 personal visitors represented. There is
far too little evidence available to speculate on
the cause of this variation. If the two groups
mentioned above do, in fact, indicate the Universities,
the remaining figures are equal for north and south.

Distance from the library is not then a
factor which determines whether a user will tele-
phone or call in person to the Library. There
are a number of factors which may be determining
this, e.g. awareness of the types of service offered,
availability of alternatives. To investigate this
further users could be asked the circumstances of
their first visit to the Library. Every part of
this discussion section has ended with a statement
about the need for future study. This is the case
here now and it must be expected in a study like

this one where one of the objectives of the research
was to provide a basis for and to propose directions
of further research.

The users' comments were drawn to the
attention of the appropriate department e.g. the
Cataloguing Department was told of the user's
problems with cuneiform inscriptions. Many of the
problems mentioned were already under review, e.g.
the hours of opening, the Cafeteria. Some comments
were of great interest to G.R.L. but too vague to
be acted upon, e.g. the lack of "certain scientific

dictionaries". It was thought by the Department
that this might indicate a lack of awareness of the
stack service rather than a real lack of reference
tools. If this is the problem it would need a different
solution, again this study has indicated a need for and
direction of future investigation.

CONCLUSIONS

Neither hypothesis was denied by the data
collected. Although distance from the Library appeared
to have some influence on whether any use was made of the
Library it was not found to have determined the type of use
made of it. The majority of users were found to have come
from within a five mile radius of G.R.L. but this applied
to telephone users and personal callers.

The users of the telephone service and the
users who call in person were not found to be members
of co-extensive groups but neither were they found to be
members of mutually exclusive groups. Nearly three
quarters of the telephone service users had visited
the Library in person although fewer than half the
personal callers had contacted the Library by telephone.

The objectives of this study cannot be said to have been completely attained. While some information about the users has been collected more is needed to provide a sound basis from which to work in future. This present study was subject to certain limitations. The sample was restricted by the **exclusion** of students and by the decision not to repeat the survey at this time. Although certain directions for future work have been indicated more basic study is needed.

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