

DTS LIBRARIES, FY2020-21

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This is a very brief report on DTS Libraries for fiscal year 2020-21. Part one provides basic statistics about the collection, use of the collection, and use of facilities. Part two describes some challenges and opportunities.

Part One: Statistical/Descriptive Summary**Collection**

We distinguish between permanent and temporary collections. A resource is considered permanent if we own a physical copy (e.g., a book) or have legally guaranteed rights to perpetual online access (e.g., an e-book). A resource is considered temporary if we subscribe to access for a year.

Table 1 (below) summarizes¹ the permanent collection. It is substantial. Although we are spending more money on online resources than on physical resources, the bulk of our permanent collection is still print, and most of these print books cannot be purchased in an online format. So we will be dependent on print for decades to come.

Table 1: Permanent collection (combined campuses)					
Resource Type	7/1/2020	Added in FY	Discarded in FY	TFEC in FY	7/1/2021
Print volumes (books and journals)	294,745	3,834	-3,551	92	295,120
Microforms, AV, other physical pieces	37,775	41	-463	-18	37,335
SUBTOTAL physical resources	332,520	3,875	-4,014	74	332,455
E-books	65,250	9,053	0	-18	74,285
E-journals (titles)	16,953	0	0	4	16,957
SUBTOTAL online resources	82,203	9,053	0	-14	91,242
TOTAL permanent collection	414,723	12,928	-4,014	60	423,697

Table 2 (below) tabulates items added to and discarded from the collection over a five-year period. As of July 2021, bookstacks on all campuses are near maximum capacity, so we need to discard one volume for every new volume added, and we are working toward that goal. The numbers vary year to year because of many special projects. In 2019-20 we added a print collection for the Washington DC campus; in 2018 we added thousands of online periodicals in the AAS archive; and in 2020-21 we added a large SCCLC e-book package.

¹ Items are counted in the year they are cataloged, not the year in which they are purchased. Counts of e-books and e-journals owned are based on WMS Knowledge Base collections that contain an unknown number of duplicates (same title appears in more than one collection). TFEC means transferred(+ or -) or found(+ or error corrected(+ or -)).

Fiscal year	Physical items added	Physical items discarded	E-books added	E-journal titles added	E-journal volumes added
2016-17	4,391	509	2,949	1,605	?
2017-18	6,097	1,060	428	357	?
2018-19	5,697	1,050	5,241	6,346	?
2019-20	22,806	3,336	1,627	154	?
2020-21	3,875	4,014	9,053	0	?
TOTAL	46,276	10,213	20,178	8,492	?

Table 3 (below) summarizes the temporary collection (i.e., online resources for which we have temporary access rights). Three issues merit special explanation. First, we subscribe to a large package of databases selected by the TexShare consortium. That package includes much that does not support our curriculum. We only count the portion we think might possibly support the curriculum. Second, we subscribe to a database of over one million dissertations. It covers the entire range of humanities and social sciences, including religion. It skews the count. Third, there is some duplication or overlap between the permanent collection and the temporary collection.

Resource Type	7/1/2018	7/1/2019	7/1/2020	7/1/2021
E-books (TexShare)	151,297	171,304	217,251	219,631
E-journals (TexShare)	25,595	27,571	27,751	28,931
SUBTOTAL TexShare²	176,892	198,875	245,002	248,562
E-books ³ DTS licensed	182,436	199,007	212,602	227,966
E-dissertations ⁴ DTS licensed	1,074,951	1,121,874	1,178,382	1,198,382
E-journals ⁵ DTS licensed	4,112	4,210	4,335	4,509
SUBTOTAL non-TexShare	1,261,499	1,325,091	1,395,319	1,430,857
TOTAL temporary collection	1,438,391	1,523,966	1,640,321	1,679,419

There is yet another category we have not attempted to count: open access resources. WorldCat Discovery links to millions of open access resources. These are mostly non-theological. They include perhaps two million old (pre 1927) books hosted by HathiTrust. They also include a great many modern e-books and e-journals.

² For TexShare see <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/texshare/databasecountfy2021.html>. The TexShare numbers conform to IPEDS reporting standards. WMS KB count is lower than TexShare website count. We no longer report the TexShare “e-media” items.

³ EBSCO e-book Academic Collection and Religion Collection according to WMS KB count.

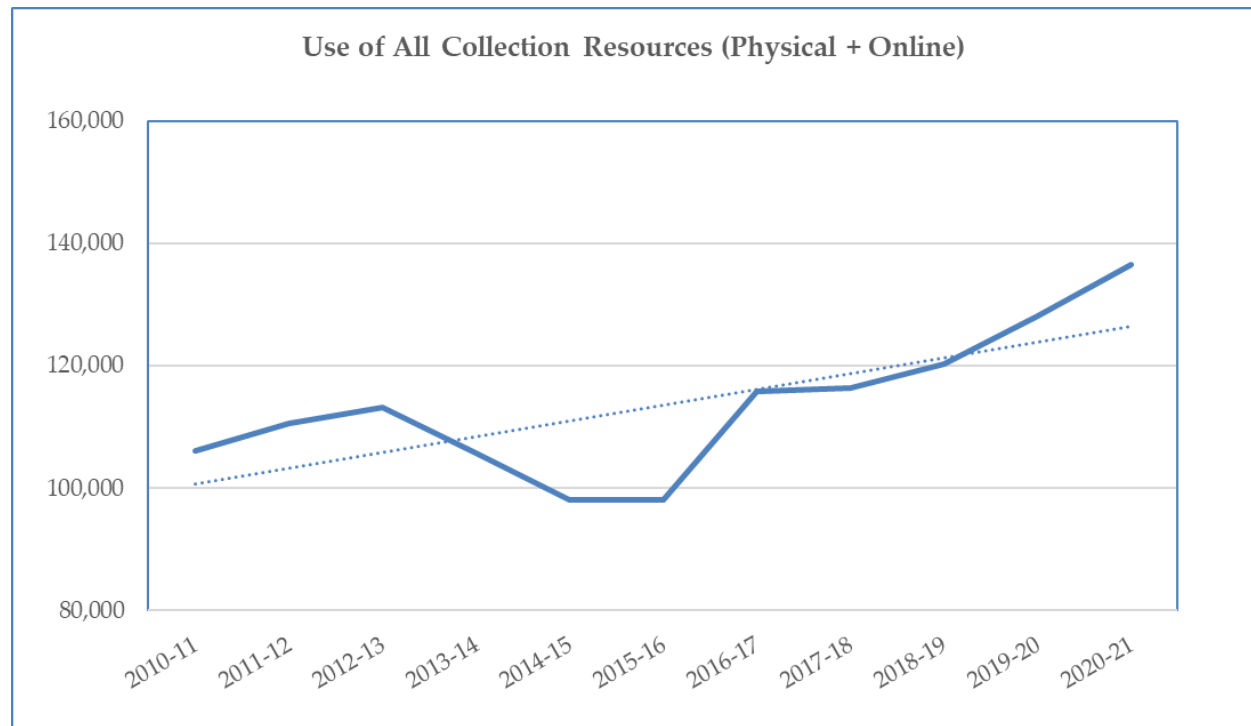
⁴ Based on search for “the” limited to full-text in ProQuest Dissertation database.

⁵ Atla PLUS, ProQuest Religion, BAS/BAR, Airiti according to KB count.

Use of Collection

We count the following kinds of collection use: downloading or viewing an online resource, or borrowing or renewing a physical item. We don't count in-house use.⁶ Collection use totaled 136,653 in FY2020-21. See Table 4 and following chart for historical context.

2010-11	106,114	2014-15	98,112	2018-19	120,340	2022-23	
2011-12	110,652	2015-16	98,177	2019-20	128,129		
2012-13	113,222	2016-17	115,887	2020-21	136,653		
2013-14	105,705	2017-18	116,850	2021-22			



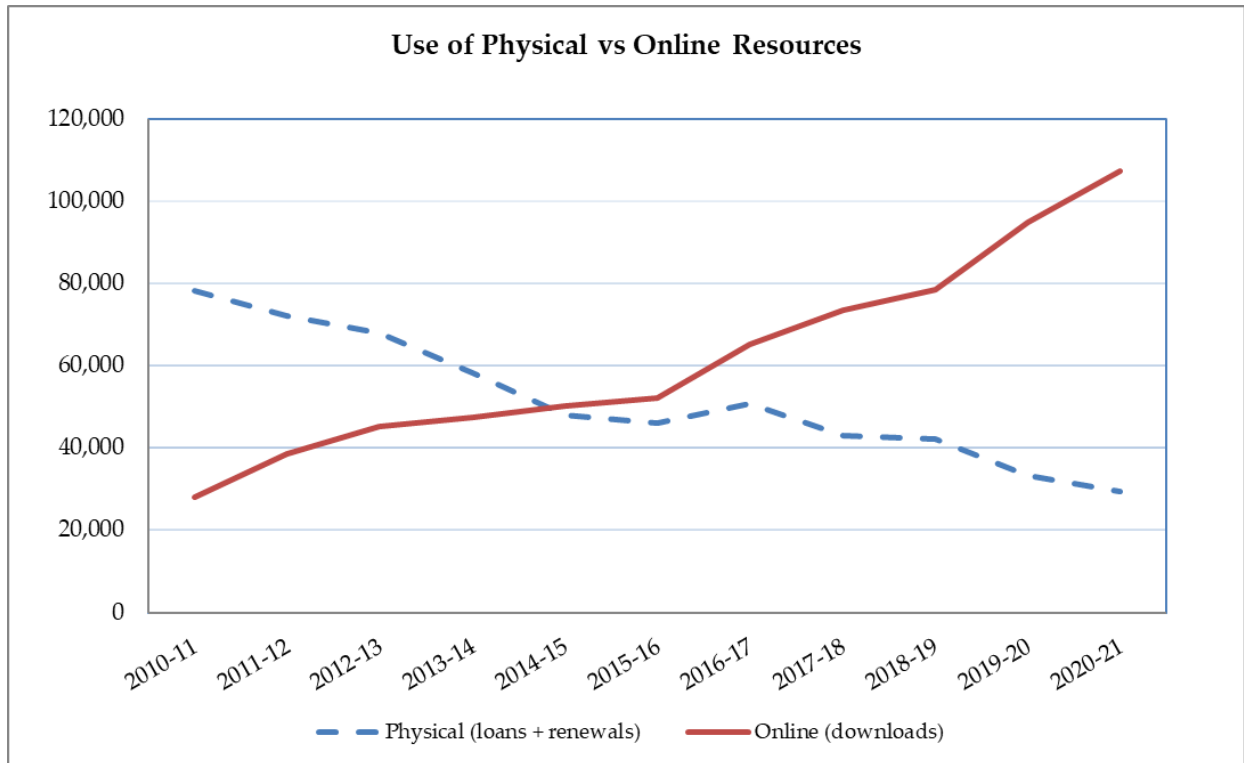
As the chart indicates, use remains high and is trending slightly upward. Students are using resources extensively. High collection use indicates the collection is relevant and useful to students. It also indicates students are able to use the discovery systems (search engines) to identify materials. It also supports collection and discovery expenditures.

For decades we have been expecting a decline in use of library resources because students have convenient access to free non-library resources through Google and other search engines. Why are they still using library resources? Library staff have repeatedly analyzed works cited by students in their theses or other capstone assignments; these studies show students are mostly using academic/scholarly

⁶ For example, we don't count reference books and periodicals that are pulled from the shelves and left on tables or book trucks or in scanner/copier areas. Surveys in the past indicate such in-house use is roughly equivalent to the number of items checked-out.

items available in/through the library. Some of these resources exist only in print and are not available on the internet. Other resources exist in electronic format and are on the internet, but are sequestered behind paywalls. This is why students continue to use the library collection.

While total use seems to be trending slightly upward, this masks an important transition. Use of physical resources is declining as use of online resources increases.⁷ See following chart.



Many factors contribute to this transition from physical to online resources.

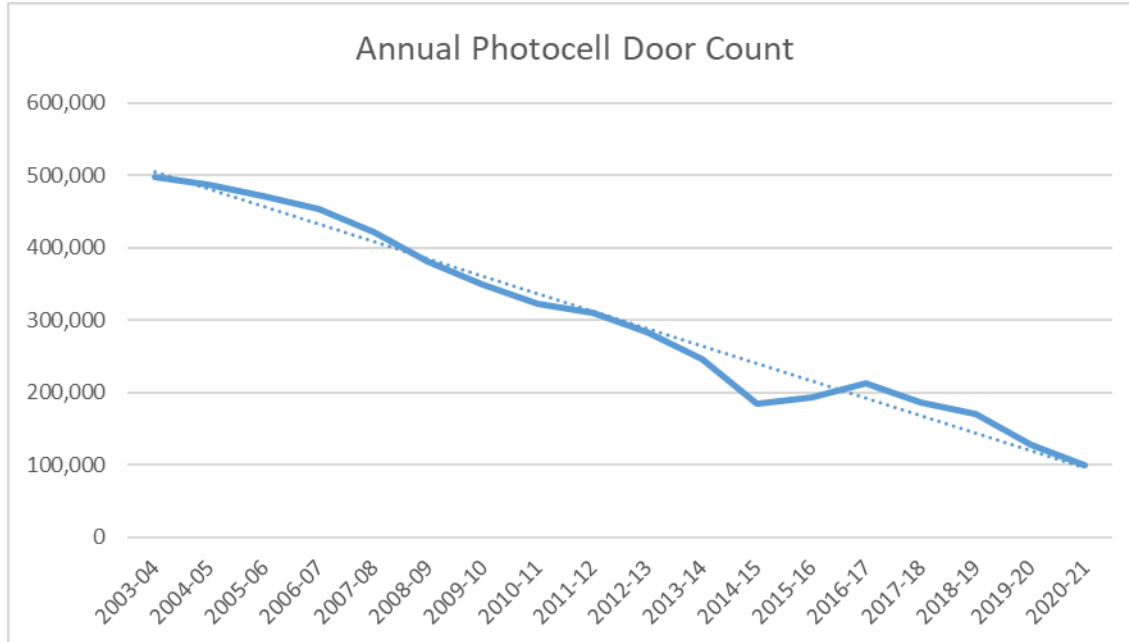
- increase in online enrollment
- increase in the size of online collection
- greater visibility of online resources (e.g., links in WorldCat Discovery beginning late 2015)
- decrease in Dallas campus enrollment, especially the ThM program. (Students in Dallas are much more likely to use print resources than non-Dallas students. Twenty years of data from our old Sirsi Symphony system showed that on average, each year one FTE ThM student uses twice the library resources of one FTE student in other master's degree programs.)
- student culture and preferences

Use of Facilities

Only the Dallas campus library collects statistics on facility use. The Turpin front door photocell recorded 99,704 clicks in 2020-21. This is the lowest number we have ever recorded since Turpin was constructed in

⁷ The count of online uses comes with some caveats. Only recently have we been able to count uses for nearly all our online vendors. So older counts undercounted actual use. In 2020 we began to count clicks to open access resources cataloged in WorldCat Discovery.

1988. Facility use was low in 2019-20 and 2020-21 because of the COVID-19 epidemic. But library foot traffic has declined 80% since 2003-04 (i.e., the front door photocell count has declined from 497,154 in 2003-04 to 99,704 in 2020-21). This is a persistent decline established long before the epidemic. See following chart.



The main reason for reduced foot traffic is that Dallas campus enrollment has declined. Availability of library resources online reduces the need for a special trip to the library, and it is another major reason for decline. Commuter students enrolled at the Dallas campus take some courses online, so they are on campus less frequently. Many students are taking a lighter course load. They leave campus as soon as class is over rather than going to the library between courses. New housing on campus in 2002 (Swindoll Tower) and 2008 (Washington Hall) encouraged students to return home between classes rather than going to the library etc. In addition, the library is not as attractive and inviting as it once was. Turpin and Mosher buildings are aging. Furniture needs to be replaced.

Part Two: Challenges and Opportunities

Library Website

The library website needs attention. Content needs to be pruned and updated. Interface needs to be redesigned and made responsive to small devices/phones. We may switch to WordPress so staff with no knowledge of html/css will be able to add and edit content. However, website revision plans have been delayed as we think about how to support multi-lingual portions of the website and as we think about how to find staff time for content creation and website maintenance.

Collection

We continue to prioritize purchase of online resources when available and affordable. We are spending more on online resources than on physical resources. However, many theological works, both old and new, are still not available for purchase in a multi-user online format. So we must continue to purchase print resources.

Chinese and Spanish Programs

We need to improve support for the Chinese and Spanish (C&S) language students. Some portions of the website should be in C&S (but are not). Database searching tutorials for C&S programs should be adapted, not just translation from English (because database searching examples that work well in one language may be poor examples for another language, and because C&S students may use databases not covered in English documentation).

There is a dearth of scholarly theological material in C&S compared to English. Online resources are especially hard to identify. Of course, some good content does exist. But Spanish language seminaries all over the globe rely on English language resources and on the Atla Religion database (which uses English subject headings). Chinese seminaries both inside and outside mainland China do the same. We are monitoring improvements in automatic translation by computer software. Perhaps someday software will provide reliable translations of our English books and journals for C&S students.

Information Literacy

The basic research methods course (RS5101) has been replaced with a very brief non-credit Seminary Readiness Course (SRC) that new students must complete before registering for their second semester. SRC covers research and writing, but also personal finance, time management and other practical issues. The new approach provides dramatically less research-related instruction than RS5101 provided, but the new approach reaches 100% of all master's students. We are looking forward to evaluating early results.

Distance Students

July 2021 we hired a branch campus librarian who will provide professional oversight for branch campus libraries, provide information literacy instruction, research assistance for branch students, etc.

It is notoriously difficult to provide good library services for distance students, especially online students who rarely if ever visit a campus.⁸ We are considering the following steps to improve services.

- Expand use of video conferencing for *ad hoc* reference support and training
- Maintain more web pages for distance students

⁸ We provide reference service by phone, email, and video conferencing. We continue to build the online collection, and databases are proxied for off-campus access. Many e-resources are available in a single database: WorldCat discovery. Books are mailed from Dallas at no cost, and articles are scanned and emailed for fast delivery. We advertise TexShare cards to TX residents. All students have Logos bible study software.

- Assess whether something like LibGuides would be used

Washington DC Campus

Relocation to Burke has been delayed.

Houston Campus

Houston bookstacks are full. There is some possibility we will relocate to another building on the same campus.

Dallas Campus

Dallas bookstacks are full. We need compact storage.

Library buildings and furnishings are aging. It is time to consider renovation options, including the “learning commons” model. In 2021-22, the seminary may merge Mosher Media staff with IT helpdesk staff, and then locate the new expanded Technology Helpdesk in the library building.