

DTS LIBRARIES, FY2023-24

Each year the library issues a brief annual report to our constituency. Part one provides basic statistics. Part two briefly describes some challenges and changes. We encourage suggestions and recommendations.

Following the lead of ATS, our accreditor, and IPEDS, a federal government agency, we have adopted new statistical standards that specify what we count and how we count. In reports written before 2024, the circulation count included renewals and ILL lending. Now we exclude renewals and ILL lending. In reports written before 2024, the physical collection count was based on volumes. Now we count titles. The new standards specify we can only include items cataloged in our WorldCat Discover system. So we can't count a ebook or video or ejournal that is available in one of our databases but is not cataloged in WorldCat.

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 DVD) or have legally guaranteed rights to perpetual online access (e.g., an e-book or streaming video). A resource is considered temporary if we subscribe to access for a specified period of time.

Table 1 summarizes the permanent collection. The bulk of our permanent collection consists of print books, and most of these print books are not marketed as ebooks for libraries, so we can't purchase ebooks to replace the older print books. Further, the ebook format of a given work is often more expensive than the print format of the same work. So we will continue to buy new print, and we will continue to be dependent on print for years to come. However, each year we spend more on digital online resources than we spend on physical resources. That will continue.

Table 1: Permanent collection, IPEDS standards					
Resource Type	6/30/2024	6/30/2025	6/30/2026	6/30/2027	6/30/2028
Print book titles	238,348				
Print journal titles	2,140				
Microforms, AV, other	34,225				
<i>SUBTOTAL physical resources</i>	<i>274,713</i>				
Ebooks	82,896				
Ejournals	17,813				
<i>SUBTOTAL online resources</i>	<i>100,709</i>				
TOTAL permanent collection, IPEDS standards	375,422				

We cannot supply title counts for the physical collection before 6/30/2024.

Table 2 (below) summarizes the temporary collection. The following issues merit special explanation. First, there is some duplication or overlap between the permanent collection and the temporary collection. There is also duplication or overlap between various collections we have selected in the OCLC Knowledge Base. So it is possible to count the same resource twice. Second, we subscribe to a large package of over 18 million resources selected by the TexShare consortium of academic, school and public libraries. That package includes much that does not support our curriculum.¹ We only count the portion we think might possibly support the curriculum (about 3%). Third, following IPEDS, we only count titles cataloged in our Discovery system. Fourth, IPEDS counts journal titles but not individual journal articles, so millions of journal articles available in databases are not included in the IPEDS count.

Table 2: Temporary collection, IPEDS standards					
Resource Type (titles)	6/30/2020	6/30/2021	6/30/2022	6/30/2023	6/30/2024
TexShare Ebooks	217,251	219,631	161,143	252,328	403,101
TexShare Ejournals	27,751	28,931	32,306	54,837	40,031
TexShare Streaming Videos					83,761
<i>SUBTOTAL TexShare</i>	<i>245,002</i>	<i>248,562</i>	<i>193,449</i>	<i>307,165</i>	<i>526,893</i>
DTS selected Ebooks	212,602	227,966	262,270	274,311	287,251
DTS selected Ejournals	4,335	4,509	7,676	9,537	12,105
DTS selected Streaming Videos					6,168
<i>SUBTOTAL DTS selected</i>	<i>216,937</i>	<i>232,475</i>	<i>269,946</i>	<i>283,848</i>	<i>305,524</i>
TOTAL temporary collection, IPEDS standards	461,939	481,037	463,395	591,013	832,417

Tables one and two tabulate items we pay for. Table 3 also covers a third category of resources: free (no cost) open-access (OA) resources. Our Discovery links to millions of OA resources. IPEDS says libraries may consider an OA resource part of the library collection if the catalog has a record that links to the resource. But IPEDS also instructs libraries to exclude HathiTrust (HT) and Internet Archive (IA). So Table 3 shows IPEDS-compliant OA resources, and Table 4 shows some cataloged resources that IPEDS excludes even though our students have access to them. The large OA total is accurate but perhaps misleading. We have to select from predefined collections created by other libraries and organizations. Most of the OA collections are not about religious topics. But they are useful scholarly collections in the humanities and social sciences that we picked, and students are using them. The enormous growth of OA resources is a boon for theological studies.

¹ The TexShare package (<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/texshare/databasecounty2024.html>) includes over 18 million titles. But we only report about 3% of that, including ebooks (ProQuest Academic Complete; ProQuest Health & Medicine; ProQuest Reference; ProQuest Science & Technology; ProQuest elibro Premium; Gale eBooks; Gale In Context) and ejournals (Gale Academic OneFile; Gale General OneFile; Gale OneFile Psychology; Gale OneFile Religion and Philosophy; ProQuest Health Research; ProQuest SciTech Premium) and videos (ProQuest Academic Video).

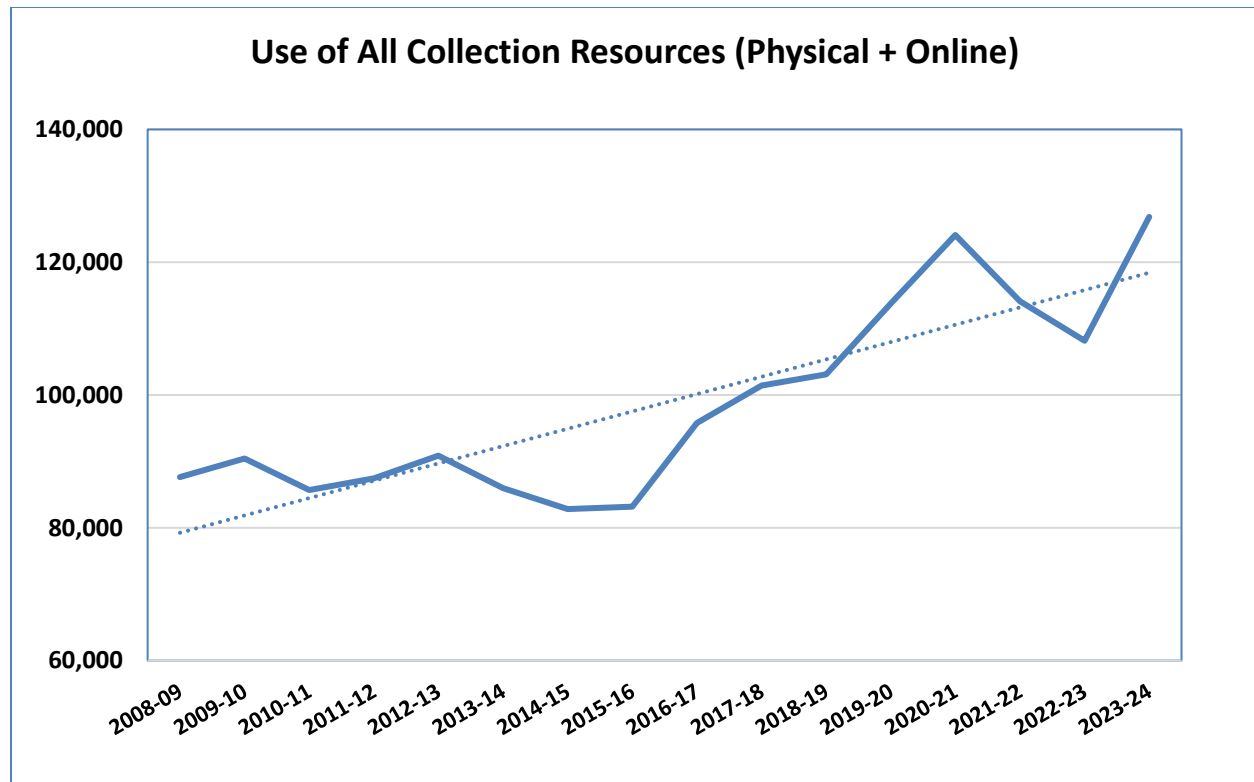
Table 3: Total resources, permanent, temporary, and open access, IPEDS standards					
	6/30/2024	6/30/2025	6/30/2026	6/30/2027	6/30/2028
Permanent collection	375,422				
Temporary collection	832,417				
Open Access collection	1,466,919				
GRAND TOTAL, IPEDS standards	2,674,758				

Table 4: Some resources not counted because of IPEDS rules/standards					
	6/30/2024	6/30/2025	6/30/2026	6/30/2027	6/30/2028
ProQuest Dissertations	1,735,349				
HathiTrust, Internet Archive books and journals	5,891,613				
Articles in databases	millions				

Use of Collection

We define collection use as follows: downloading or viewing an online resource, or borrowing a physical item. We don't count renewals or in-house use. The tabulation of online use is never totally complete, and some years are more complete than others. So true use is greater than the numbers here. In table 5 below, circulation totals have been revised to exclude renewals that were included in reports before 2023-24.

Table 5: Total Use of Collection							
2010-11	85,683	2015-16	83,170	2020-21	124,097	2025-26	
2011-12	87,448	2016-17	95,787	2021-22	114,127	2026-27	
2012-13	90,865	2017-18	101,426	2022-23	108,176	2027-28	
2013-14	85,985	2018-19	103,103	2023-24	126,178	2028-29	
2014-15	82,817	2019-20	113,751	2024-25		2029-30	

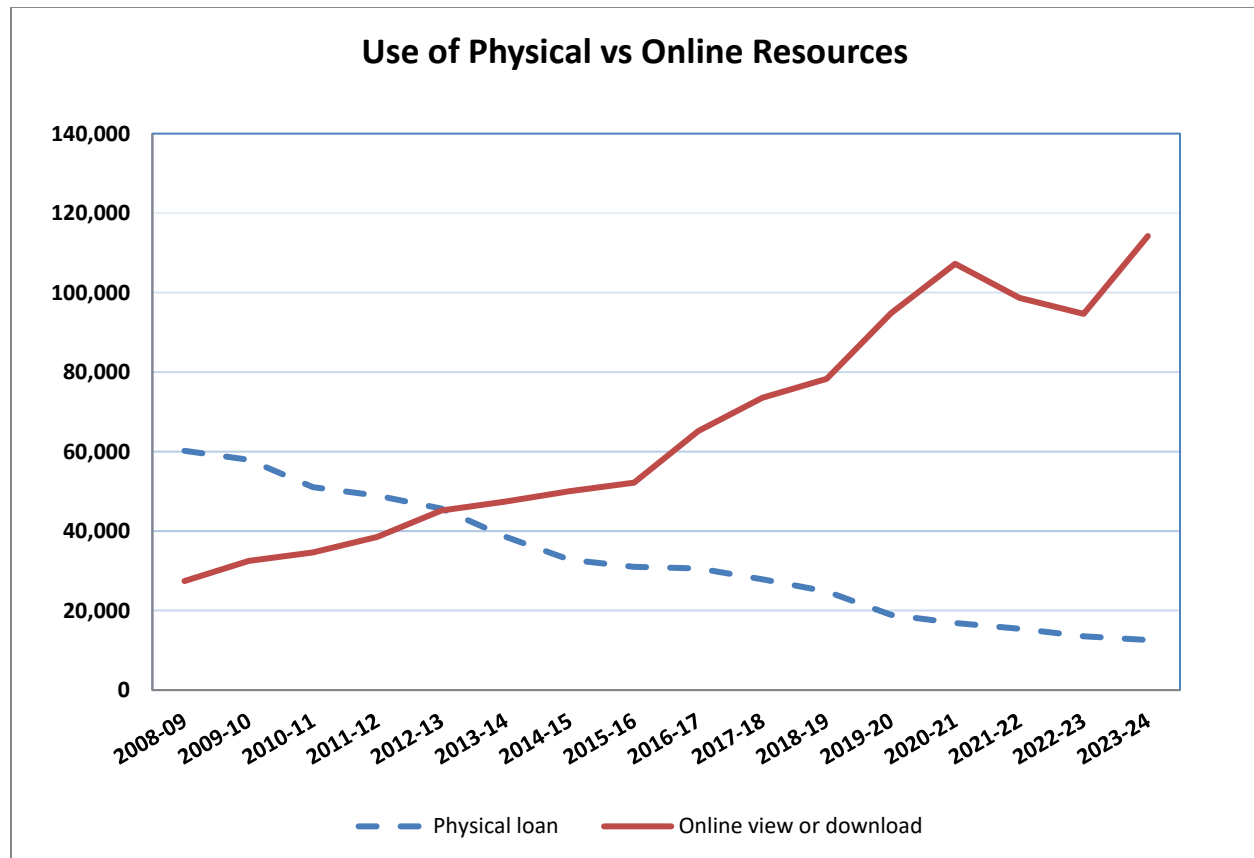


As the chart indicates, students are using the library collection extensively. High collection use indicates the collection is relevant and useful to students. It also indicates students are able to use the discovery systems (search engines) to identify materials. It therefore justifies collection and 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 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. Access is available through the library. These are some reasons students continue to use the library systems.

While total use seems to be trending upward, this masks an important transition. Use of physical resources is declining as use of online resources increases.² See following chart.

² The tabulation of online uses comes with some caveats. Only recently have we been able to count uses for nearly all our online vendors. So older tabulations undercounted actual use.

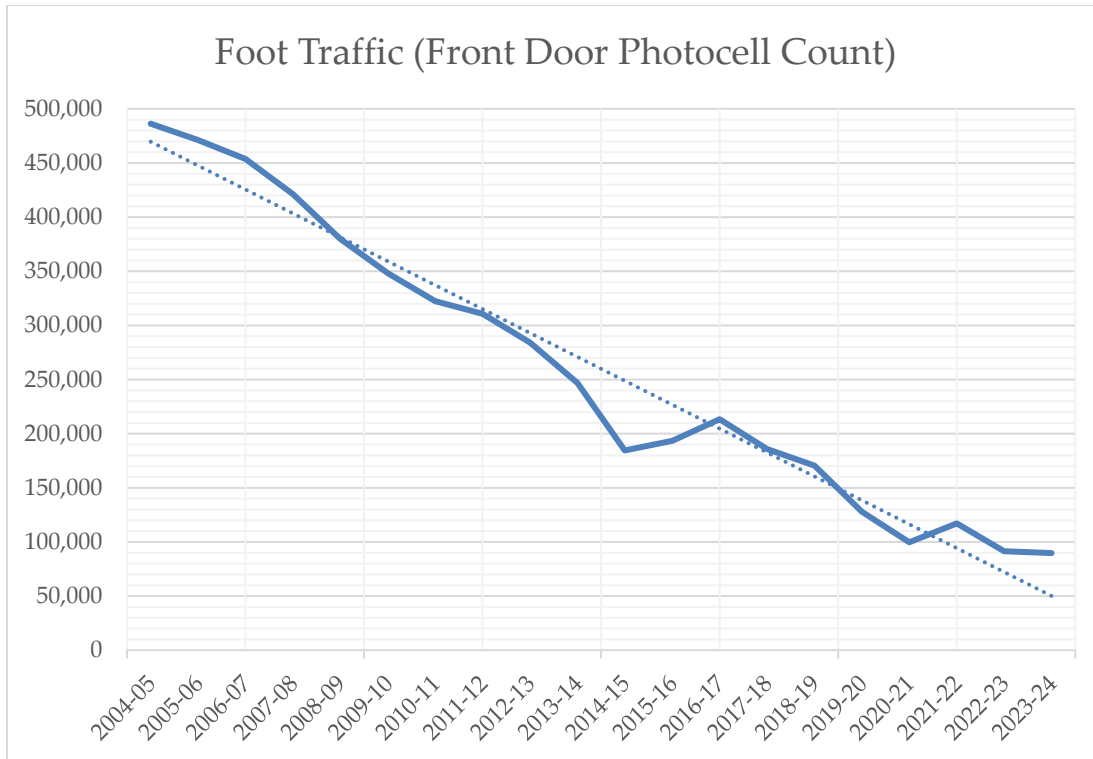


Many factors contribute to this transition from physical to online resources.

- 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.
- student culture and preferences

Use of Facilities

For two decades, foot traffic has declined as measured by the front door photocell. See chart below. Decline in the number of people coming to the library is primarily due to decline in enrollment at the Dallas campus, but there are many other factors. Availability of library resources online reduces the need for a special trip to the library. 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. Many students study in the Bailey Student Center (2021).



Part Two: Challenges and Opportunities

Artificial Intelligence Software

General purpose AI became readily available and easy to use in 2023. While AI presently generates serious errors (“hallucinations”), it will soon revolutionize database searching, book summarizing, translation, literature reviews, and aspects of note-taking and composition. Library staff will have to wait for commercial database vendors to provide AI features to access content behind paywalls. As we wait, we need to study AI to understand its strengths and weaknesses when used for various purposes and tasks.

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.

Collections

We will continue to prioritize purchase of online resources when available and affordable. And we will continue to assess when expensive perpetual access to online resources is better than economical temporary access.

Information Literacy

We need to improve instruction in library research methods and tools. AI will soon play an important role. We need to develop relations with the proposed Writing Center.

Marketing

We need to do a better job of informing distance-and-online-students what the Dallas campus library will do for them. We need to lure students back into Turpin now that Phase one of renovation is complete. Many left the noisy library during construction and are now in the habit of using Bailey Student Center for study.

Campus Libraries

We continue to inventory the collection at the Burke (Washington DC area) campus. Houston bookstacks are full. Dallas bookstacks are full. We continue to discard older works. Phase one of the Dallas renovation is nearly complete. Phase two may resume in 2 years.

Non-English Language Resources

We need to improve support for the Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic language students. Some portions of the website should be available in these languages. Database searching tutorials need to be translated and adapted with language-appropriate examples (because database searching examples that work well in one language may be poor examples for another language). There is a dearth of scholarly theological material in Chinese, Spanish and especially Arabic compared to English. Of course, some good content does exist. But Spanish language seminaries, Chinese language seminaries, and Arabic language seminaries all over the globe rely on English language resources. We are monitoring improvements in automatic translation by computer software.

Staffing

We lost our Archivist (Lolana Thompson) in Dec 2023, and hired a new Public Services Librarian (Jefferson Webster) in Jan 2024. As staff age, we expect more turnover.