

UNT Libraries Microforms Usage Report and Recommendations

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Background

On May 1, 2014, the Access Services Department was given oversight and management of the Microforms Collection located on the lower level of Willis Library. This report will highlight usage statistics of the collection from the period May 1, 2014-May 31, 2015. Recommendations regarding the future of the collection will also be suggested.

Layout of the Collection and Equipment

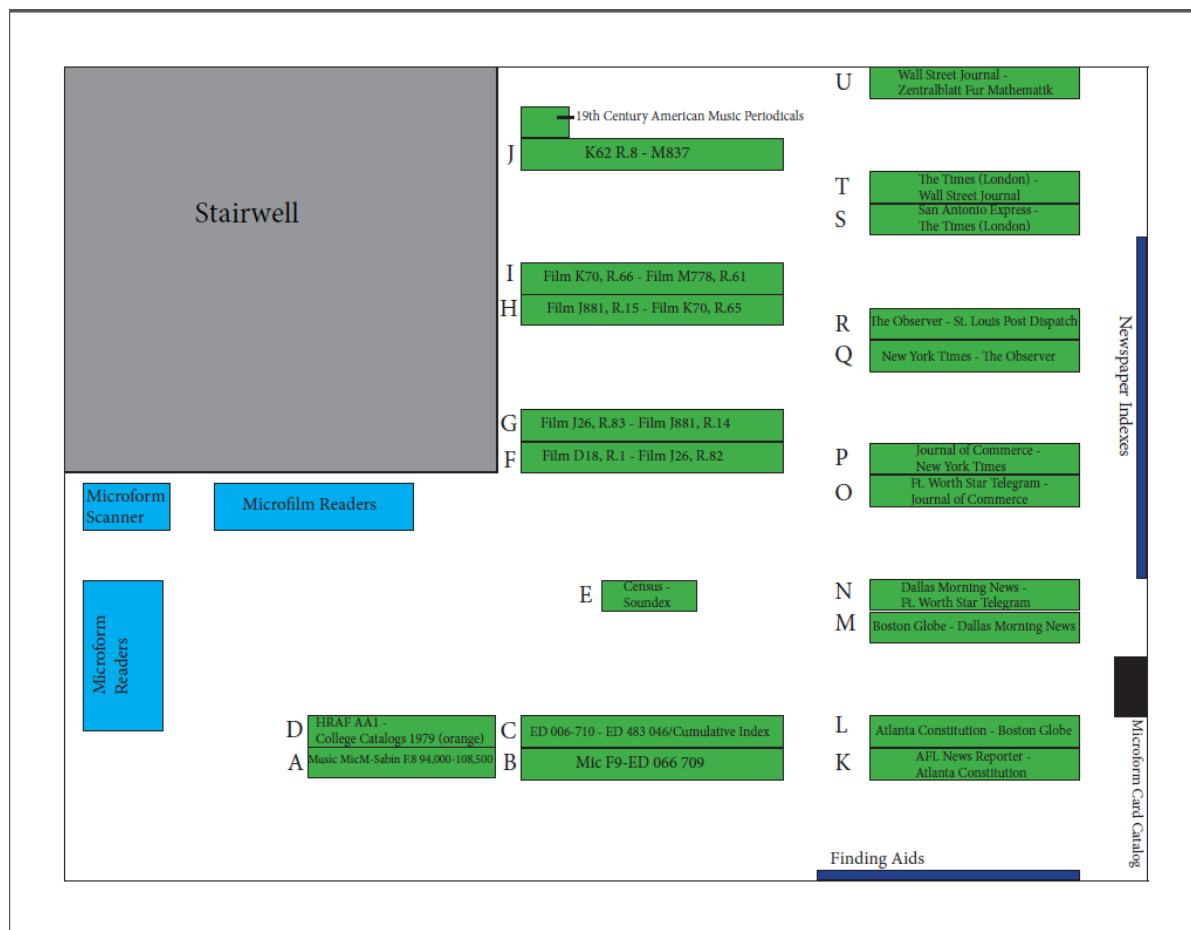


Fig. 1-Floor Map of the Microforms Collection and Equipment

Collection Issues

With the Microforms Collection located on the lower level and the desk servicing the collection located on the first floor, there were several challenges we encountered which needed to be addressed. Patrons needing assistance finding and using the collection would not have easy access to library staff without going upstairs. This could deter patrons from seeking assistance.

The signage on the cabinets in the collection was either not descriptive of what the cabinets contained or was very faded. We also needed to train our staff to be able to instruct patrons on how to locate materials in the collection and use the equipment.

The biggest challenge, however, was finding a strategy to tackle the inconsistency or absence of catalog records for items in the collection so we could assist patrons doing research more effectively. There were materials in the collection that were either cataloged incorrectly or not cataloged at all. Holding statements did not accurately reflect what we had in the collection. This issue in particular has made it difficult to correctly assist patrons looking for materials in the collection without physically checking the cabinets.

Developed Solutions

The Head of Access Services and the Stacks Management Supervisor developed a multi-step strategy to managing the collection.

- Conduct an inventory of the collection, update holding statements in the catalog
- Develop a [LibGuide](#) to illustrate what the collection is, the equipment that is available and how to locate materials
- Create better signage
- Implement a bell system so patrons may ring for assistance from the lower level
- Train staff on how to find materials in the collection and use the equipment

Usage Statistics:

Patron Usage

As illustrated in the Fig. 2 below, the high usage months of the Microforms Collection were September, October, March, April and May (2015).

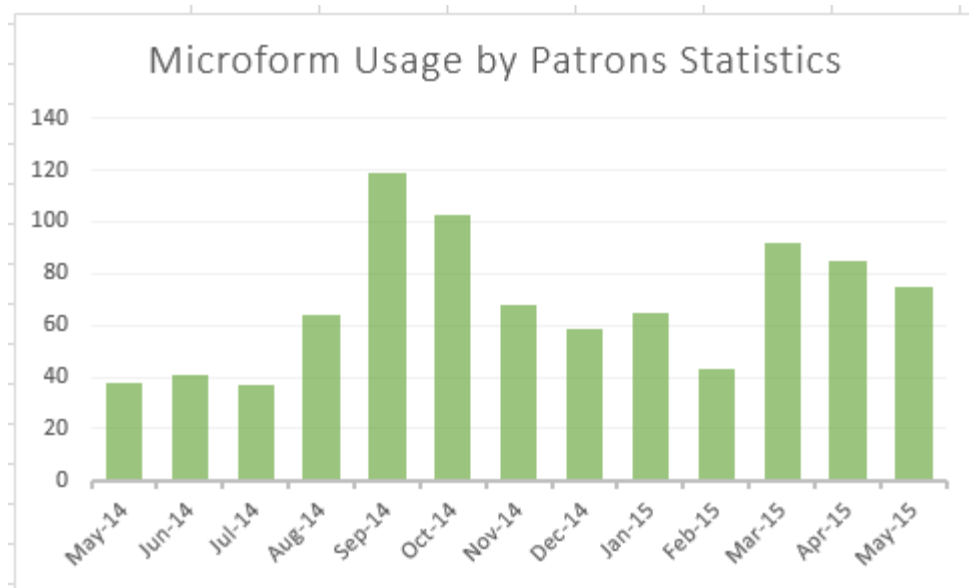


Fig. 2-Microform Usage by Patrons Statistics from May 2014-May 2015

In May of 2015, we shelved almost double the number of items compared to May of 2014 when we took over servicing the collection. The sections of the Microforms collection that appear to have the most usage by patrons are the Newspapers and the Theses/Dissertations. This trend was also observed with Interlibrary Loan (ILL) requests for materials in our collection.

ILL Usage

From the timeframe of September 2014-May 2015, 190 requests were filled from the Microforms Collection. At least 104 of the items were sent to libraries we charge (\$15 each). The majority of loan requests were for theses/dissertations and newspaper reels. (Once the collection came under Access Services management, we began sending microform reels through ILL.)

Equipment Usage

The ScanPro microfilm scanner is the most frequently used piece of equipment by patrons viewing items in our collection as well as items from other libraries requested through ILL. The microfilm readers are not used as frequently. Currently there are 3 large microfilm readers located on lower level.

Recommendations

The footprint of the Microforms Collection on the lower level can be reduced. Based on usage statistics, the cabinets containing the newspapers and the theses/dissertations should remain. We would also like to keep the two cabinets containing the Soundex census records. The newspaper collection is used by patrons the most and should stay because it needs to be browseable. We would also like to keep the newspaper indexes. The other cabinets as well as the Finding Aids can be moved to offsite storage.

The ScanPro scanner machine should stay because it is used frequently to scan materials in our collection and materials received through ILL. We can reduce the number of microfilm readers to two instead of three.