In Other News: The Significance of Canadian Media Sources in an Analysis of Local Music Collection Literature

by Veronica Kmiech

Abstract

Music libraries have an important role in preserving and providing access to local music materials for scholarly and general audiences. This paper is based on research carried out as part of the "Regional Music Collections" project (led by Carolyn Doi, University of Saskatchewan, and now entitled "Sounds of Home: Exploring Local Music Collections and Collecting in Canada"). During this portion of the project, we conducted a qualitative systematic review and thematic analysis of the literature on local music collections. The paper will provide a brief description of the literature review process and content analysis, followed by a more detailed exploration of eight Canadian newspaper articles. In exploring the articles, NVivo software was used to identify three potential themes: new, copyright, and free. The goal of this paper is to see if these themes can aid in identifying what Canadian media sources say about local music collections, what the relationships are between a community and such a collection, and how Canadian media sources might inform practices for managing collections of local music.

Introduction

When I first began working as a research assistant on the "Regional Music Collections" project (now entitled "Sounds of Home: Exploring Local Music Collections and Collecting in Canada"), I had never heard the phrases "qualitative systematic review" or "thematic analysis of the literature," but as a member of the project team I had the opportunity to participate in just these activities. The project in question is led by Music & Education Librarian Carolyn Doi and tri-agency funded from the University of Saskatchewan President's SSHRC (PSSHRC) research fund. With an overall goal of

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learning more about collections of local music, the project involved a literature review that encompassed sources from Canada and all around the globe. At this point in my university career, I had written several research papers, most of which were for musicology courses I took as part of my music degree. The research process for these papers gave me familiarity with the library catalogue, online databases for musicological articles, interlibrary loan, and contacting European institutions to request material from their collections (this last one involved an interesting 4:00 a.m. phone call, which was thankfully not required for this paper). As a research assistant for the local music collections project, my background was helpful, but I found the depth of searching needed for the literature review much greater than anything I had done before. My role in this project involved searching for sources, screening those sources based on their relevance to the project, and using NVivo software to identify themes in the literature.

Once the literature review and the content analysis were complete, I had the opportunity to explore the data in a number of ways, leading me to the focus for this paper. Since 2017 was the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation, I decided to isolate the Canadian sources chosen for content analysis using some of the different features in NVivo. In doing so, I discovered that all of the newspaper articles found for this project were from Canadian sources, which lead me to focus on that material. I asked two main questions about media sources and how they relate to libraries, collections, and communities:

1. What do Canadian media sources tell us about local music collections, and what can they tell researchers about the relationship between a community and a collection of local music?
2. How can Canadian media sources inform practices for managing local music collections?

With these questions in mind, I used NVivo word clouds to identify significant themes within the media sources and to compare these themes with those found in the larger project. These themes will be examined throughout this paper.

Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review was to find sources that discuss collections of local music in cultural heritage institutions.[1] Before starting the literature review, we anticipated that relatively few scholarly articles would be found; therefore, it was always part of the plan to also search for print monographs, grey literature, and newspaper articles. We wanted to find all the ways in which

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1. Defined as "establishments primarily engaged in: preserving and exhibiting objects, sites and natural wonders of historical, cultural and educational value." "Heritage Institutions," https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/app/cis/summary-sommaire/712.

local music collections were discussed, so it was important to include all potential sources of information in the search.

Conducted from May 2nd to June 1st, 2016, the literature review retrieved a total of 408 unique sources (667 before deduplication). Searches were carried out in a variety of literature databases and individual journal titles (some of which were hand searched), including USearch (the federated search tool from the University of Saskatchewan Library); Google Scholar; *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*; *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*; *Journal of the Canadian Health Libraries Association*; *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*; *Journal of Information Literacy*; *College & Research Libraries*; *Journal of the Medical Library Association*; *Library and Information Science Abstracts* (LISA); *Library Literature & Information Science, Full Text and Retrospective*; *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts* (LISTA); *Education Resources Information Center* (ERIC); *Canadian Newsstand* (now *Canadian Newsstream*); JSTOR; RILM *Abstracts of Music Literature*; *Music Index*; *Canadian Music Periodical Index*; Factiva; and *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.*

Other sources of information were print monographs, grey literature such as conference abstracts, and listserv archives from the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML), the Canadian Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (CAML), and the Music Library Association (MLA). Citation tracking was also conducted for 13 journal articles. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of search locations for the initial 408 sources.
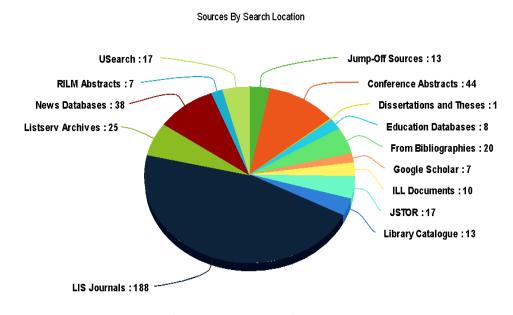

Figure 1: Number of sources retrieved from each search location

We chose to include literature from all geographic locations and a range of collection types, although the majority (49%) came from North America. Reading international perspectives on collections in a range of settings (e.g. libraries, churches, archives, etc.) provided an increased understanding of the contexts that exist for local music collections.

Once the literature search was complete, the 408 sources were screened to select those relevant for content analysis. Sources were included if they spoke to practices in managing local music collections in public institutions or in private collections made available to the public, as was the case with a collector in Edmonton, Alberta.[2] No limitations were placed on date of publication; however, only English-language publications or publications with English abstracts were included. After the initial screening process and subsequent full-text screening, a total of 50 documents were chosen for content analysis.[3]

Of those 50 documents, only eight sources were newspaper articles; however, all eight were from Canadian papers. The eight articles, all found through *Canadian Newsstand* (now *Canadian Newsstream*), describe collections as far east as Toronto and as far west as Victoria, spanning dates from 2006 to 2016.

This literature shows us one of the ways Canadians are being informed about local music in their communities. To examine the sources further, I used NVivo software to conduct a content analysis, using the word cloud features to extract some of the significant themes.

Why Media Sources?

The media has the potential to provide insight on public interests and concerns, influence public opinion, create public awareness, show a snapshot of current events and developments, and offer a different perspective from what is often seen in academic publications.

Schrøder et al., in their book *Researching Audiences*, explain that "people's media use is anchored in the contexts of everyday life in which people live their lives as members of partially overlapping large and small groups, at the global, national, regional, and local levels."[4] The authors speak to people's media use at a local level. The local can often be overlooked—not only in research but also in mass media that often focus on national and international events. In a study of news sources that describe local music collections, acknowledging people's media use at the local level indicates a potential relationship between the community and those collections.

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2. Sandra Sperounes, "Unofficial Visual Record of Local Music Scene a History-Maker; Musician, Illustrator Relied on Anecdotes To Dig Up Dirt On City's Past Bands, Acts," *Edmonton Journal*, June 6, 2008.

3. The systematic review and content analysis of this subset of articles will be described in greater detail in a later paper.

4. Kim Schrøder et al., *Researching Audiences* (London: Arnold, 2003), 5.

In *Making Sense of Library Research,* a student guide from North Carolina University, the section on media sources suggests that "for the most recent information about events in our world, newspapers stand out above all other periodicals. Because newspapers chronicle events from one day to the next, they are excellent historical sources that provide researchers with contemporary accounts of past events."[5] This quote speaks to the importance of newspapers in providing a window into a particular time and place in history. With this in mind, examining the media sources using content analysis will aid in developing the picture of local music collections and how they have been tied to community events.

NVivo for Content Analysis

For the larger local music collections project, the 50 documents selected for content analysis were searched for themes using NVivo software. Among other features, this software allows the researcher to "import and analyze documents," "review [their] work with coding stripes and highlighting," and "ask questions of [their] data."[6] To discover what Canadian newspaper sources might reveal about local music collections and their management, I used the word frequency feature and word cloud tools in NVivo.

English Oxford Living Dictionaries defines a word cloud as "an image composed of words used in a particular text or subject, in which the size of each word indicates its frequency or importance."[7] For visual learners, word clouds can provide unique insights into potential avenues of exploration, which makes them a good jumping-off point in a research setting. As a communication tool, they have the benefit of highlighting significant themes quickly and in an engaging way. Furthermore, word clouds are attractive visuals and can be used effectively in displays, brochures, and other settings.

I created a few different word clouds when beginning this project, but decided to focus on two in particular: the top 20 words in all sources excluding newspapers (see Figure 2) and the top 20 words in newspapers (see Figure 3). Doing so allowed me to compare and contrast the Canadian newspaper sources with the other sources in the project.

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5. Bryan Sinclair, ed., *Making Sense of Library Research: A Guide for Undergraduate Students* (Asheville: North Carolina University, 1998), 76, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED422012.pdf.

6. QSR International, "NVivo for Mac: Find Insight in Qualitative Data," accessed April 20, 2018, http://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-product/nvivo-mac.

7. English Oxford Living Dictionaries, "Word Cloud," accessed April 20, 2018, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/word_cloud.

Figure 2: Top 20 words, from the selected documents, in all sources excluding newspapers

Figure 3: Top 20 words, from the selected documents, in newspapers

I used these word clouds as a jumping-off point for isolating what it is about local music collections that may interest the public. When creating the word clouds, I did add words to the "stop word" list, removing small, connecting words, as well as names of particular places (since the focus was on local music in general rather than the local music of a particular area). I also chose to search for stemmed words, rather than exact words.

Themes

Based on the word cloud analysis, I chose three themes to explore in greater detail: 1) new, 2) copyright, and 3) free. These themes interested me because they appeared in the second word cloud but not the first. From here, I read through the newspaper articles to explore how these three words were used. With an added perspective from the articles, I saw potential to answer my original questions with the help of these themes.

Theme Analysis: "New"

When first I noticed the word "new" in the word cloud, I assumed it referred to new music, such as music that had been recently released. In some cases, this was shown to be true, as in an article from the *Globe and Mail* that states: "she enlisted the help of record store Soundscapes … to pick the cream of the crop of recent releases."[8] In this case, the Youth Collections Librarian of the Toronto Public Library, Lisa Heggum, is exploring new music in the Toronto scene.

Upon closer examination of the articles, it became clear that the word "new" holds multiple meanings in various contexts. The following quote from the Victoria *Times-Colonist* illustrates this point: "Albums by everyone from alt-artists Hank and Lily to the DieMahler String Quartet are part of a new collection of Vancouver Island music at the Greater Victoria Public Library."[9] In this case, the quote indicates that the collection itself is "new," and the article goes on to inform the public that it is now possible to access local music through this collection.

Another context for the word "new" appears in an *Edmonton Journal* article: "'The web really provides libraries with opportunities to do new things,' said Alex Carruthers, the [Edmonton Public Library's] digital public spaces librarian."[10] This quote speaks to "new" opportunities afforded to libraries by digital technologies. Other articles in this study also discussed the introduction of online platforms for sharing local music, suggesting that these new sites may be an important way for the public to access these materials from libraries.

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8. Tabassum Siddiqui, "Rockin' Out in the Stacks: Don't Expect Any Shushing When the Toronto Public Library Launches Its New Local Music Collection," *The Globe and Mail*, October 28, 2006, M3.

9. Amy Smart, "Library Project Brings Local Music to Your Ears: Five-Hundred CDs Span Rock, Blues, Classical, Jazz, Folk and Many Other Genres," *Times-Colonist* (Victoria, BC), July 23, 2013, C.4.

10. Brent Wittmeier, "Local Library Unveils Music Sharing Site; Capital City Records Puts Focus on Tunes with Edmonton Roots," *Edmonton Journal*, August 5, 2015, C.2.

Theme analysis: "Copyright"

The word "copyright" stood out to me, since it did not appear in the word cloud containing all literature excluding newspapers—despite the fact that copyright is an important topic for libraries—but did appear in the word cloud for newspapers.

Copyright was most often discussed in the media articles in relation to how users might choose to access copyright protected materials. This quote from the Saskatoon *Star Phoenix* is one such example:

> Belford hopes that eventually a lot of the collection, including sound recordings, will be on the university website. "We need agreement from the copyright holders, mostly the publishers or original performers, that they would allow us to put an entire song or an entire album or say a 30 second clip so people can listen to it from afar."[11]

In this case, the solution was to provide a thirty-second sound clip of the recordings, yet this quote also speaks, in general, to copyright being an issue as libraries move towards making their local music collections available to their patrons online—especially when that music is new. Wittmeier describes another solution:

> Participating musicians receive honorariums of $100 to $200, depending on album length, for a licence agreement to make their album available for at least two years. Each featured artist also receives a biography and links to their website.... The library is budgeting for 100 honorariums a year, but will potentially have more music if artists waive fees or simply allow their music to remain.[12]

With "copyright" appearing as a theme in the newspaper articles, it suggests that the media views copyright and, by extension, access to copyright protected materials as important issues.

Theme analysis: "Free"

I chose to examine the "free" theme in detail, since free access to information and services is an important characteristic of local libraries—an issue that was described in almost all of the articles. As exemplified by the following quote, newspaper articles tend to use the word "free" primarily in reference to accessing digital media online: "The Edmonton Public Library will unveil its innovative music sharing website Wednesday, with free offerings from 46 local performers.... Downloading is free for members, streaming free for everyone."[13] This is one example of libraries working to remove barriers to accessing information, and news articles highlighting how readers—the general

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11. Lana Haight, "U of S Library Safeguards Province's Musical Past," *Star-Phoenix* (Saskatoon, SK), January 18, 2006, Final Edition.

12. Wittmeier, "Local Library Unveils Music Sharing Site."

13. Wittmeier, "Local Library Unveils Music Sharing Site."

public—can access the materials described in these articles. It is important to note that people may still be interested in using library items in person at the library. However, online availability is convenient for many people and provides access to information to those who, for various reasons, are unable to visit a library building.

Discussion

What do media sources tell us about local music collections?

I used the word clouds to get an idea of what media sources may be able to say about local music collections and their importance to the public. From here, I have drawn some conclusions about what researchers can take from these media sources. In terms of the first of my two questions, what media sources tell us about local music collections, I noticed two things in particular. First, the appearance of "new" as a theme indicates that the public may have an interest in new music and new collections. At the very least, this is indicative that the media believes the public will be interested in this information. Secondly, the word clouds helped to reveal that the media is informing the public about free online access to local music materials through libraries, which suggests that the media believes it is important to report on this issue.

As for the second part of my first question, what these newspaper articles can tell us about the connection between a community and a collection of local music, I did not find any material that provides a direct answer. However, I would like to present the articles themselves as evidence of that relationship. The fact that the public is reading about local music collections in their daily newspapers shows that people have the opportunity to learn of the existence of these materials.

How can media sources inform practices for managing local music collections?

The direction that this analysis of themes took did not provide specific answers to this question. My hope was that the themes found in the newspaper articles would provide clues or even advice on how best to manage a collection of local music. Although the study did not directly answer this question, the themes that I highlighted here were also reflected in scholarly articles and grey literature from the larger project, suggesting that newspapers have some potential to offer indications of collection management considerations for librarians.

Limitations, Next Steps, Conclusions

Limitations

It is important to note that this project has a few limitations. Different or additional search locations, such as different news databases and archives for specific papers with more international content, may have retrieved more varieties of media perspectives on local music collecting in addition to offering more potential for analysis. As well, relevant articles might have been published since the completion of the literature review on June 1, 2016.

Word clouds, by their nature, have certain limitations as a tool for content analysis. It is not possible to isolate the context in which a word is used, or to identify words synonymous to a theme. Further analysis and synthesis of the literature is required to get a fuller picture of the content of each source.

Finally, the literature review was conducted in English, and although numerous scholarly articles in other languages were saved when their English abstracts came up in the search, newspaper articles generally do not have translated abstracts and therefore the findings were limited to English-language publications.

Next Steps

The research described in this paper, as well as in the larger project on local music collections, presents several possibilities for further studies, some of which are already in progress. First of all, an article on the qualitative systematic review and content analysis is in the works, and a survey of local music collections in Canadian libraries, to be distributed in spring 2018, has been designed based on this information. There are also numerous options for additional exploration related to media sources, including searching for articles in languages other than English and comparing media sources about local music collections to media sources about music collections in general. Another potential avenue could be to compare local music collections to local collections of other materials.

With a subject like local music collecting, the collections and some of the practices for managing these collections are as unique as the communities they serve. Despite the individuality of each collection, the newspaper articles, as well as sources from the literature review as a whole, indicate some common themes for the public, librarians, and researchers. The overall purpose of the "Sounds of Home: Exploring Local Music Collections and Collecting in Canada" project is to find some of these common themes, to advance understanding of best practices for managing collections of local music, and to gain a deeper understanding of the value of music and place through a collections lens. Many opportunities for studying the collection of local music remain, especially as more and more collections start to flourish in libraries and institutions throughout Canada and the rest of the world.

Conclusions

The newspapers analyzed as part of this project provided some indications about elements of local music collections that may be of interest or concern to the public—in particular, new content and access issues. These findings are of interest as the number of collections of local materials continues to grow, alongside technological innovations that make new ways to access these materials possible and desirable to the public. Libraries looking into or beginning to create local music collections of their own will likely face some of the challenges suggested by the newspaper articles in this study. For solutions to the issues that arise, librarians and researchers can turn to the scholarly literature, additional research, and their own experience and innovations.

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