

# **Collections, Discovery, Users, and Use: A Systematic Assessment of Statistics for the University of Nevada, Reno Special Collections**

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## **Abstract:**

In April 2017 the University of Nevada, Reno Special Collections undertook a systematic analysis of available statistics to provide us a comprehensive view of our collections, their use, our users, and their search strategies. This multi-sourced analysis allowed for greater insight into the shifting patterns of use and discovery for our collections, more than a year after the implementation of a finding aid database which leveraged structured descriptive metadata within Encoded Archival Description (EAD). This poster both shares the conclusions we reached on the intersection of our unique materials and the communities we serve, and demonstrates the process of gathering and evaluating that data. Using data as evidence to back our conclusions, for the first time we have a holistic understanding of the impact of the department's activities of preserving and providing access to our collections. Just as importantly, we identified opportunities to strengthen that impact through collection development, wider access, and outreach. This assessment project also helped illuminate what statistics we were not currently capturing, informing new policy implementations for enhanced data tracking beginning in the 2017- 2018 fiscal year. All of this analysis will be repurposed for a number of internal and external audiences: the library, the university, our researchers, as well as our donors. This study demonstrates the underutilized value of statistics already generated through a special collections department's normal operation, and offers a roadmap towards applying it to demonstrate our impact to ourselves and to our stakeholders.

## **About the Authors:**

*Jeremy Floyd* is the Metadata Librarian, and Interim Head of Metadata and Cataloging at the University of Nevada, Reno. He received his Master of Library Science degree with a specialization in archives and records management from Indiana University in 2010. He has worked as a processing archivist at Texas A&M University - Commerce and Buffalo State College before taking on the role of metadata librarian at UNR in 2015. His research interests include ways of measuring impact of archival description on patron discovery and use, as well as strategic uses of computational and human solutions for improving legacy metadata.

*Jessica Maddox* is the Accessioning and Processing Archivist at the University of Nevada, Reno. She received her MLIS from the iSchool at San Jose State University. She has worked in the Special Collections and University Archives Department since 2007, and as permanent staff since 2012. Better understanding user behavior as well as making research materials available for public use are among her many areas of interest.