Personal and Professional Information Behaviours of Comic and Graphic Novel Librarians in Toronto

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Introduction

This poster overviews early results of a master's thesis exploring the information worlds of librarians who work with comics and graphic novels in Toronto. This study considers how personal interests and professional responsibilities interact within the specialty and describes the informational needs, sources, and behaviours of comics librarians.

Guiding Research Questions

- 1. What experiences do librarians have with comics at work and in their personal lives?
- 2. What are the information needs of librarians who work with comic collections?
- 3. What sources of information are used by comics librarians?
- 4. How do comics-related information behaviours and activities in work and leisure contexts compare? **Methodological Question**
- 1. Can participants verbally and graphically articulate distinct information worlds for work and leisure contexts?

Data Collection Methods

- Pre-Interview Questionnaire
- Semi-Structure Interview
- Information World Mapping [1]
- Ethnographic Fieldnotes [2]

Data Analysis Methods

- Thematic Analysis [3]
- Information Horizon Matrix [4]
- Classification of Graphic Representations [5]

Participants & Context

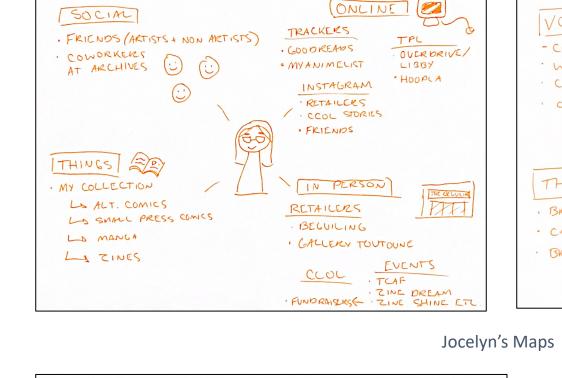
11 participants were recruited for this study across diverse library contexts, representing academic, school, and special libraries. Participants were given the option to waive their anonymity and be named in the study as recognition of their contribution to advocating for comics librarianship and sharing their experiences with different collections.

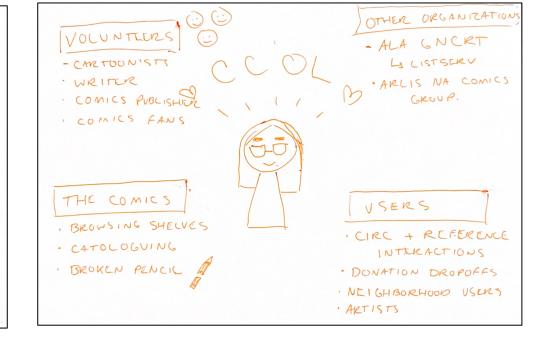
Special Libraries School Libraries Academic Libraries Lindsay Gibb Jordan Reg. Aelick Fatma Faraj Marsha Taichman Kate Jocelyn Oprzedek Gema Larcina Sophie Ben Walsh Max Dionisio Leisure comic collection Three Independent Schools Canada Comics Open Library English literature collection Junior and Senior (K-12) Non-profit, volunteer-run Art school collection collections collection Zine collection

Comic-Information World Maps

Distinct Personal and Professional Worlds

Some participants created representations of separate comic-information worlds for work and personal contexts.

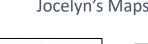


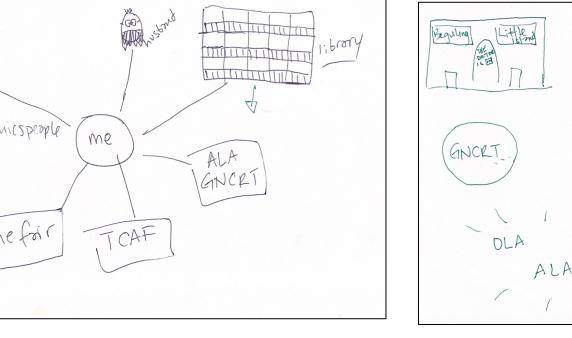


LIBRARY

RESEARCH

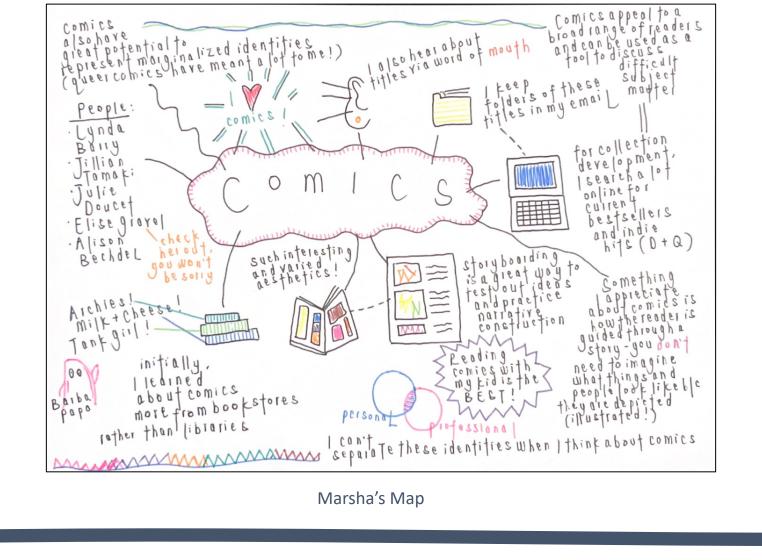
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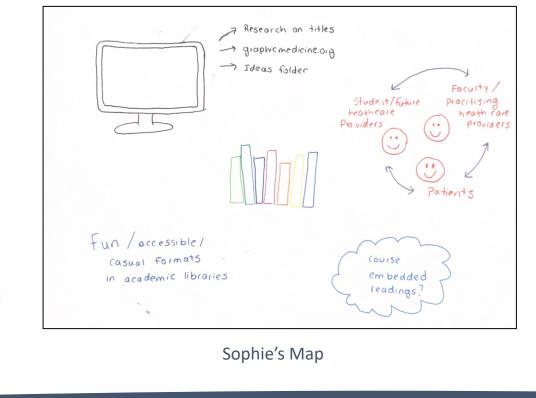
Combined Worlds

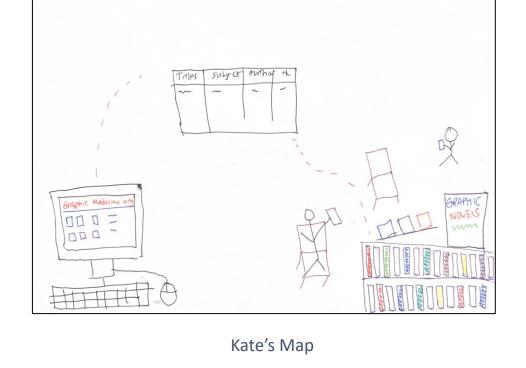
For some participants, personal and professional experiences with comics are blurred and a clear distinction cannot be made.



Absence of a Personal World

Some participants do not actively engage with comics in their personal life and only articulated a work-related world.

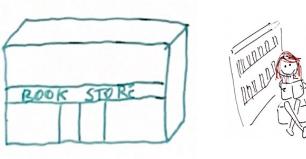


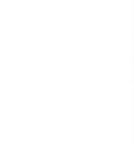


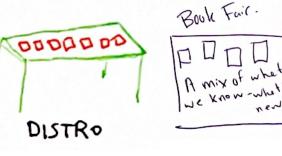
Sources of Comics-Related Information











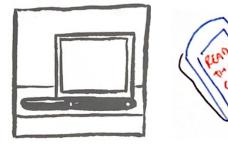
Comic Festivals

- The Material
- Bookstores Public Library
- **Physical Collection**

In-Person Resources

- Zine Fairs **Book Fairs**

Events



Online Resources

- Instagram
- Awards Publisher Lists Articles

- Users
- Artists/Creators Friends
- Colleagues Vendors

Information Needs

- Collection Usage
- **Budget & Costs**
- Professional Skills
- **Best Practices & Trends**
- Purpose of the Collection
- User Community Needs
- **User Community Interests**
- **Trusted Information Sources**
- Awareness of Publishers & Titles

Information Behaviours

Active and Passive Information Encounters

Searching for Specific Titles

Browsing for Information

- **Monitoring Trusted Source**
- Reading Comics

Professional Practices

- **Engaging the Community**
- Selecting and Purchasing
- Presenting as an Expert
- Collection Assessment
- Displaying Materials
- Providing Access

Limitations & Future Research

This study was exploratory in nature and did not provide a detailed analysis of any one aspect of comics librarianship or specific role. The study was also placed within a limited, Canadian context. Future work can address these limitations and consider how resources can be created to effectively support the informational needs of comics librarians, many of whom do not have specific training or extensive personal knowledge of comics to draw from.

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Acknowledgements

Graphic Medicine collection

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