

MLA background

[INFORMATION BEHAVIOR]

Humanities possess not unitary paradigm.

但是有共同的特質：

- A reliance on older, retrospective materials,
- A preference for monographic literature,
- A value placed on primary texts and unpublished manuscripts
- The importance of originality and independence, which inhibits collaboration
- The crucial role of serendipity in the research process

If progress in science is sequential, in the humanities by contrast it is cumulative.

Science is literal, abstract, and generalizing; art is symbolic, concrete and particular.

The beauty of browsing

Many discoveries and insights are gained by the inadvertent collocation of seemingly unrelated materials.

Humanities rely on monographic literature.

The monographic literature cited by scholars range from 64% to 81%.

Reasons:

1. The arguments developed by scholars are so complex and nuanced, and the evidence needed to support them necessarily cumulative and substantial, that they can't be contained in a journal length study;
2. Because these longer studies are more substantial, both literally and figuratively, they are more highly valued, hence they are cited more often;
3. it is assumed by virtue of the longer time needed to research a monograph-length study that more serious reflection was given to the issues it addressed.

人文學者的資訊來源

1. footnotes cited in books and journals. (because they can readily identify the works of influential peers.)
2. recommendations made by colleagues studying in the same field
3. scholar's personal research files.

Bibliographies are infrequently consulted because they provide little evaluative guidance to the researcher. (the hits are too overwhelm ,沒有任何判斷相關性的線索)

Given the greater value primary literature, rather than secondary literature, has for humanistic research, several studies have recommended that institutions develop databases that identify unique collections and make these more readily accessible to scholars. (數位典藏或許是其中一個 solution)

[HUMANITIES VOCABULARY] 三個實證研究的結果與應用

Humanities research is described in **imprecise** terms.

Humanities titles are notoriously (聲名狼藉的) ambiguous, and the terminology of the controlled vocabularies tends to lack specificity and reliability.

The humanities use a ;soft; vocabulary, its terms having not only multiple denotations (表示, 即; 外延;), but perhaps several connotations (含蓄, 即; 內涵;) as well.

例子: ; betrayal; [MLA thesaurus 之 descriptor] (背叛、出賣) SA ; traitor; (出賣朋友者、背叛者)

→ article indexed under ; infidelity; (不忠實), ; hypocrisy; (偽善), ; lying; (說謊), ; disloyalty; (不忠), ; duplicity; (欺騙、口是心非), ; perfidy; (背叛、不忠), ; fraud; (欺騙), and ; trickery; (欺騙、詭計) would not be retrieved.

Line 認為 because the basic subject matter of the humanities consists of **events**, **individuals**, and **artistic products**, the hard core of the field is made up of easily indexed and retrievable elements.

Wiberley analyzed and the terms contained in over 60 humanities encyclopedias and dictionaries. He divided the terms into three categories:

1. **Singular proper terms**: is the name of a unique entity, either of a person or a single creative work. (單數的專有名詞)
2. **Enumerable proper terms**: is a proper term used as a collective term that designates a group whose membership is so restricted that it can be completely enumerated as a list of singular proper terms. (例子: Prophets ; 先知; → whenever this term is invoked, it always refers to Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, ; etc.)
3. **General proper terms+ common terms**: terms that express a range of meanings, encompass many people, or include a multiplicity of creative works. They have the lowest level of precision, because of the ambiguity or multi-referential function of the words. (例子: Realism, Methodist, Harvard University); A common term means virtually the same thing that common noun means in traditional grammar.

研究發現：

58% of the 678 encyclopedia terms were to singular proper terms,

40% to general / proper common nouns

2% belong to enumerable proper terms of other terms.

研究結果：

The high proportion of singular proper terms challenges the proposition that subject access in the humanities is necessarily very difficult. (應該並不困難)

其他學者對此研究的批評：百科全書和字典中的術語是已經選擇過的詞，不能反應出人文學者真正使用的文字語言。

Wiberley 之後的相關研究

He refined his categories by adding two additional variables. He pointed that ; the vocabulary used in indexing in the humanities are **names** and that the degree of their precision can be assessed by determining how well they are differentiated in **space** and **time**.

His second study examined the terminology used in serial bibliographies. The disciplines they covered were Philosophy, Religion, Art, Music, and Literature.

研究發現：the different frequencies of category terms by discipline.

Religion → more than half the subject headings are common terms, slightly more than a quarter singular proper.

English Literature → roughly 90% of the entry terms are singular proper.

Philosophy → relies on common terms for three-quarters. (75%)

小結：Philosophy and religion constitute one branch of the humanities, while the study of music, art, and literature constitutes another.

結論：Confirm Wiberley's earlier findings, that the vocabulary used in the humanities is more precise than scholars had heretofore assumes.

Given his finding ; the preponderance of singular proper terms in literature, music, and art ; he recommends that indexers give more attention to **high-quality authority work** (for creative artists and their works) rather than adding and refining common terms.

Bates 對 Getty Center of the History of Art and the Humanities 的研究者之檢索詞做分析，發現：

54% of the humanities searches were subject searches of individuals or works. (only 3% of the NSF sample searched these categories)

57% of the humanities searches were common terms (but in the NSF sample the figure was 100%)

結論：thesauri construction must become more responsive to the **proper noun terms**

that characterize most humanities research.

目前索引者與人文學域檢索者的差異

The essence of the problem is that indexes focus on **aboutness** while neglecting **aspect**; the linguistic analogs of these notions are **topic (the subject of discourse)** and **comment (that part of the utterance which adds something new and thus communicates information)** respectively.

The scholar / researcher is primarily interested in comment, and an index limited to identifying the literature about a topic, with only broad subcategorization, is next to useless for the scholar's purpose.

Blair 認為索引描述詞(indexing descriptions)可分為 *subject* 和 *context* 兩類：

- **Subject indexing** is familiar to most scholars and information specialists; it addresses the **content** of a document and attempts to represent it through appropriate terms. [此類索引詞在 Blair 看來是沒什麼用處的，因為 inter-indexer consistency 很少高於 75%，而且 the meaning and indexer might infer from a term may be totally different from that meant by the writer.]
- **Context indexing** represents the context which produced the document or in which it now exists. Author, title, and place of publication are common context tags. Other examples Blair uses, taking a business organization as a hypothetical model, would be descriptors for **internal correspondence, product analysis, market analysis, originating department, or members present at a meeting**. Context descriptors are important to searchers because they indicate **variables, extrinsic** to the subject of a document, that determine relevance.

Given what Stoa and others have said about the nature of humanistic research, particularly the scholar's reliance on footnotes to foreground an argument, the development of **citation indexes** was propitious. Researchers can determine the significance of a document not only by the appearance of key terms, but by the referencing of **key studies germane** to the topic.

Citation searching as a factor critical to **recall** has been demonstrated by Pao and McCain, who found that from **24% to 33% of additional references** were found by including citation searches with traditional subject searcher.

[MLA 的作法]

It assign both **subject** and **context** specific descriptors to each document indexed.

In addition to the usual information ; the author's name, title of article, title of source

document, publisher, and date ; indexers will add subject descriptors drawn from a thesaurus.

An innovation in humanities indexing is MLA's introduction of **descriptor subfields**. Where **subject descriptors facilitate recall, descriptor subfields enhance precision**. Descriptor subfields are added to **classifying** descriptors (e.g., those descriptors that establish the nationality of the literature being indexed, or its time period) and to subject descriptors (e.g. literary authors and their works)