

2022-05-06


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Repository Citation

Stevens GA, Fajardo FJ, Morris M, Berry J, Parker RM, McLean KD. (2022). LGBTQ+ Health Research Guides: A Cross-institutional Pilot Study of Usage Patterns. UMass Chan Medical School Publications. <https://doi.org/10.13028/z7ey-3y41>. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/publications/55>

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LGBTQ+ health research guides: A cross-institutional pilot study of usage patterns

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Introduction

Multiple studies have recommended that health sciences libraries use research guides to promote LGBTQ+ health information, connect with their users and the community, and improve health equity. However, little is known about LGBTQ+ health guide usage patterns and whether such guides really meet the information needs of their users.

Based on usage patterns from LGBTQ+ health research guides, we planned on assessing the types of LGBTQ+ health information of greatest interest to health sciences library users and how, if appropriate, these guides might be revised to be more relevant to user needs.

Methods

- Data for LGBTQ+ health research guides of five health sciences libraries were studied
- Usage data retrieved for a three year period (July 2018-June 2021)
- Two factors chosen for analysis
 - Monthly guide usage over time
 - Excel line graphs with trendlines
 - Individual resources clicked by users
 - Top twenty most clicked individual resources from each guide
 - Total of 80 links
 - Individual resource data not available for McGill guide
 - Open coding in Google Sheets by resource type

The guides used in this study were:

- Dalhousie University/Nova Scotia Health Authority, *2SLGBTQIA+ Health*: <https://dal.ca/libguides.com/2SLGBTQIAHealth>
- Florida International University, *Transgender Resources*: <https://libguides.medlib.fiu.edu/transinfo>
- Kansas City University, *LGBTQ Health Resources*: <https://kansascity.libguides.com/lgbt>
- McGill University, *LGBTQ Health*: <https://libraryguides.mcgill.ca/lgbtqhealth>
- Stony Brook University, *LGBTQ+ Health*: <https://guides.library.stonybrook.edu/lgbtqhealth>

Results

1. What types of resources are most popular?



- **Community, local, state, and provincial organizations**
 - 64.11% of total clicks (n = 1220)
 - 35 clicks per resource (during 3 year period)
- **Find a provider, health service, or testing resource**
 - 53.23% of total clicks (n = 1013)
 - 36 clicks per resource
- 1903 total clicks of most-used resources

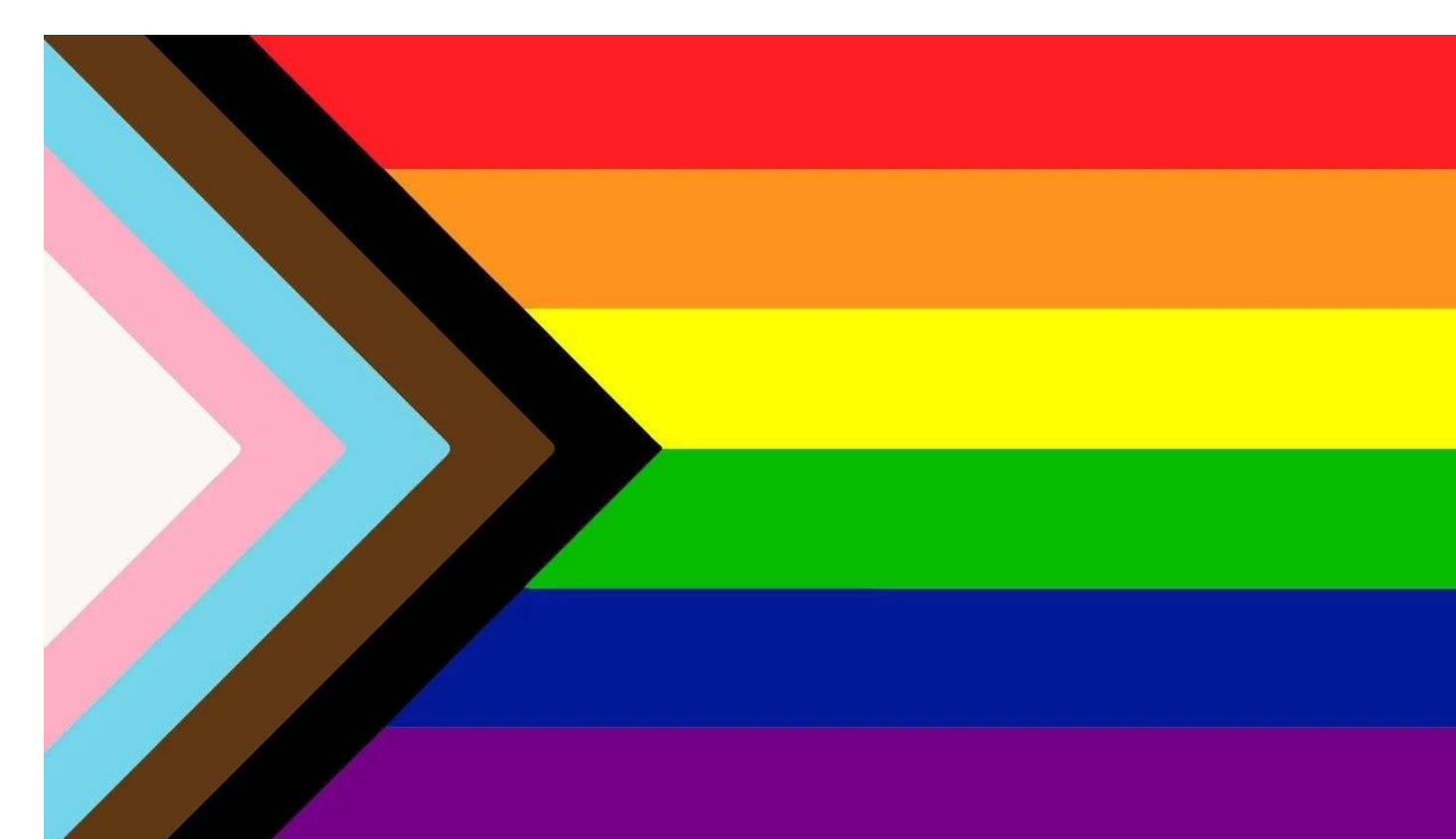
2. How often are guides used?



- Increasing usage trend for Dalhousie/NSHA, Stony Brook, and Kansas City
- Decreasing usage trend for Florida International and McGill

Takeaways for librarians:

- **Create a guide**
- **Focus on consumer health**
- **Keep it local!**



Discussion and Conclusions

- Guide usage relatively low
 - Size of the LGBTQ+ community is relatively low compared to the general population (est. 4-5% of population in USA and Canada)
 - LGBTQ+ health is category of minority health
- We would argue that the importance of providing quality LGBTQ+ health information outweighs any concerns of large-scale usage
 - Providing such guides promotes health equity
 - Promoting guide can lead to greater awareness and usage
- People are looking at more local resources than national
- People want help getting connected with healthcare providers and services
- Future research directions
 - Deeper statistical analysis, including time series/seasonal analyses
 - Data from more guides to test reliability of findings
 - Measure impact of recommendations from this pilot on usage and guide uptake

References

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For data set and open coding, scan the QR code to the left, or go to <https://bit.ly/3LzDARe>

