

## HarpWeek's Use at Dutchess Community College

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In a recent email to Barbara Liesenbein, Library Director at Dutchess Community College, Larry Randall, SUNYConnect Project Coordinator, wrote:

"As you may have noticed from the monthly statistics, Dutchess CC is one of the heavy users of [HarpWeek](#). You obviously have been very successful in promoting its use and I'd like to know how you've accomplished that. Would you or someone on your staff be willing to write a brief description of your 'secrets' to send to me?"

**DUTCHESS**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Barbara asked Ron Crovisier, Head of Reference at Dutchess to respond. Ron wrote:

"Since it's not everyday we have usage figures that equal or exceed those of libraries in the university system, I've also been trying myself to figure out why our numbers are so high, and I suspect it's less a question of something special we've been doing than a combination of timing and, in an interesting fashion, the limitations of our periodical collection.

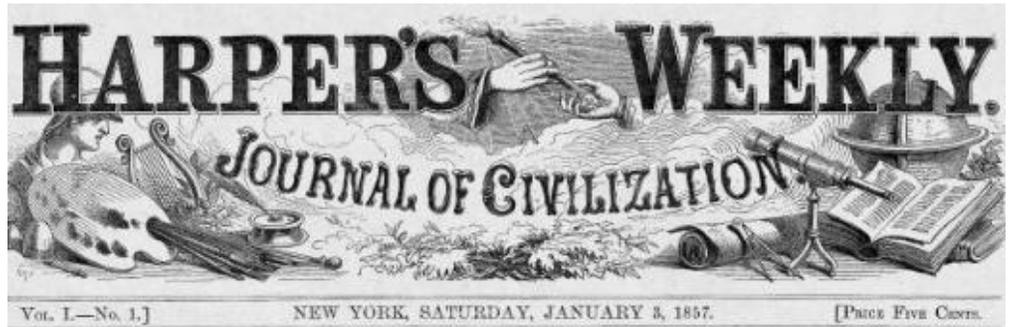
"First, we didn't do anything especially different in promoting HarpWeek once it was available. As we always do when a new database is rolled out, every faculty member on campus was sent a "new service" flyer announcement with information on the database's content, how to access the service and special features. And, whenever a faculty member came by the reference desk for a month or so, Tom Trinchera and I buttonholed them and gave them a quick demo of HarpWeek. I also contacted the History and Government Department chairman and asked that person to make an announcement about the database at their next departmental meeting.

"Timing comes into play because I was already scheduled to do a program for the college's Advisory Staff Council the month HarpWeek became available, so I was able to incorporate a demo of it into my presentation for that group. The result of the presentation was that even more staff members got a chance to see HarpWeek; and, of course, my demo added to the number of visits and page hits for that month.

"The second, (and, I suspect, main) reason that our numbers are high is that HarpWeek is literally the only primary source of articles we have for the 19th century. Before HarpWeek was available, if students needed articles from that time period, their only choice was ILL, an option which few students were fond of. Now, whenever a student comes by with an assignment that requires them to get material from the 1860s, we lead them right to HarpWeek. Last semester a few of the history professors also gave their students assignments that required the use of the database. We also regularly suggest HarpWeek as a source for more in-depth research. An example: A student was writing a paper on the Irish in America. She was finding lots of contemporary material and historical articles on the subject. But we also had her look in HarpWeek to get 19th century attitudes towards the Irish. She was so pleased

with the results that most of her bibliography consisted of HarpWeek sources. Another student was writing on U.S. attitudes toward Voodoo. HarpWeek was a handy source for him to document the prejudice exhibited toward Haitians and their religion in the 1800's.

"So if there are any 'secrets' in DCC's success with HarpWeek, I'd say that it's a combination of factors, the most important being that it fills an important gap in our collections. Credit is also due to HarpWeek itself. The interface is very easy to use, the ability to search by either keyword or index terms and the images very clear and readable."



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