

Users: How do they seek information?

By

Dan Subramanian
The University of Mississippi

Abstract:

- This poster will present the findings of a user survey of chemistry undergraduate students conducted at the University of Mississippi
- The main purpose of this study was to examine user needs, preferences, priorities, and satisfaction level of the Science Library collections and services
- This is part of a long-term project which will be expanded to sophomores, juniors, seniors and graduate students
- The survey questions were distributed to the freshmen during their chemistry laboratory sessions
- The survey had questions that would identify users' information seeking habits and how often they use library resources
- The questions revealed how often the students used the web to seek information
- The survey also identified the most frequently used search engines by the students. I am anticipating a lively discussion of the results

Survey facts

Students background:

- Class: Chem 115, General Chemistry laboratory
- Prerequisite: Chem 105, Lecture part of General Chemistry. This course requires a minimum ACT mathematics score of 20
- Survey forms were distributed to the students during their chemistry lab sessions
- 106 out of 112 students responded to the survey, hence the response rate was 94.64%

3

About the Survey

- The form had 9 questions in total
- The question number 8 had 5 sub questions within itself
- Each question gave the student to choose from 5 options
- Questions 4,6 and 7 gave the students an option to select multiple answers

4

About the Survey

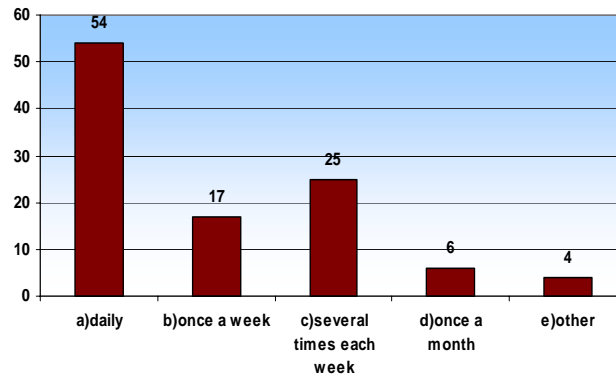
- Questions from 1-4 were designed to find out the online information seeking habits of the students
- Questions 5,6 and 7 would help to identify the usage of the Science library and its services by the students
- Question # 8 was planned to get an understanding of how satisfied are the students with the Science library and its services
- Question # 9 would help us to understand the students' expectations and needs from the Science Library

5

Survey results in graphs

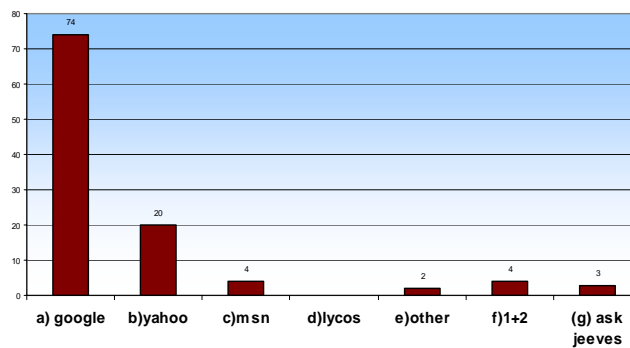
6

1) How often do you go online looking for information? (106 respondents)



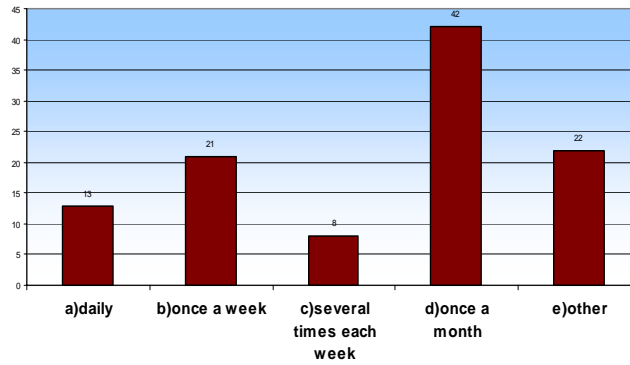
7

2. Which search engine do you frequently use?



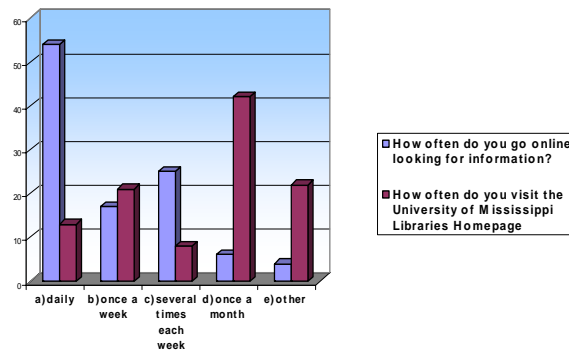
8

3. How often do you visit the University of Mississippi Libraries homepage?



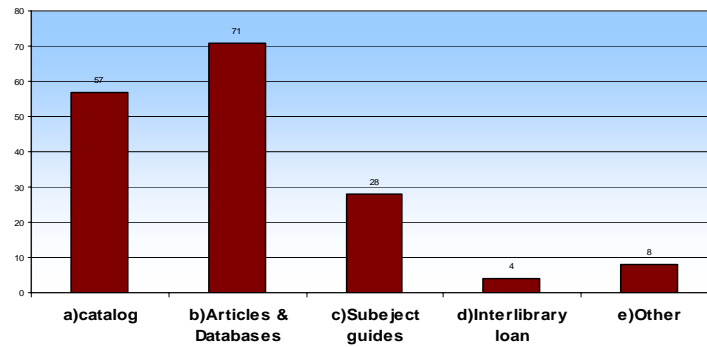
9

How often Online Vs How often library homepage visits



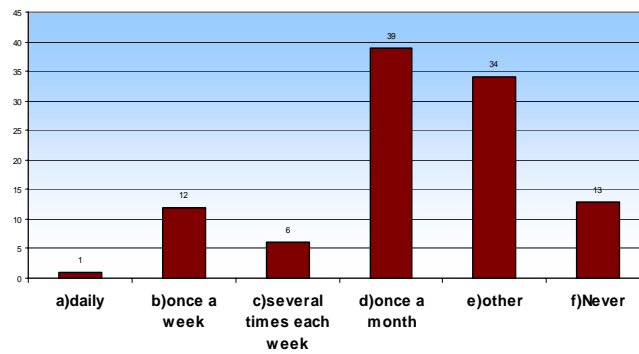
10

4. What services do you use from the library homepage?



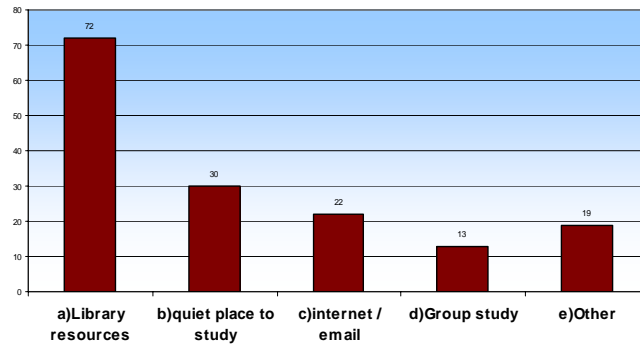
11

5. How often do you visit the Science Library?



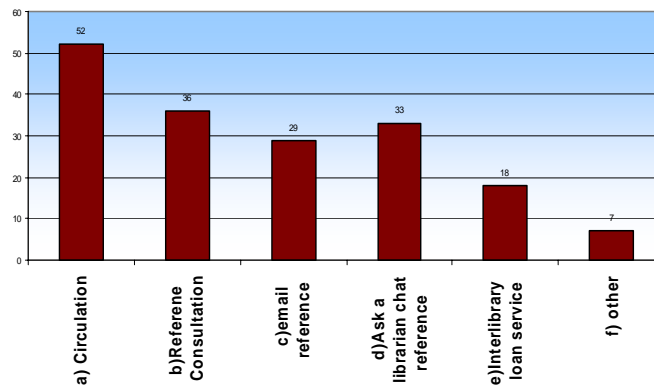
12

6. What is the reason for visiting the Science Library?



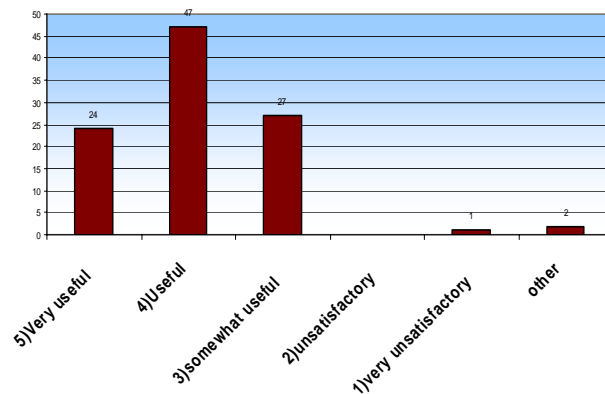
13

7. Which of the following library services that you are familiar with?



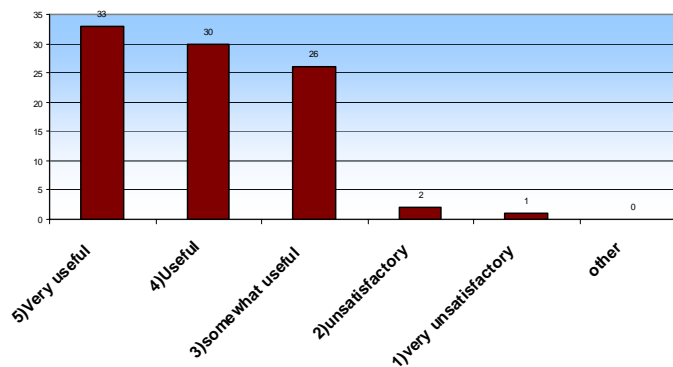
14

8.a) How would you evaluate the Science Library's collections?



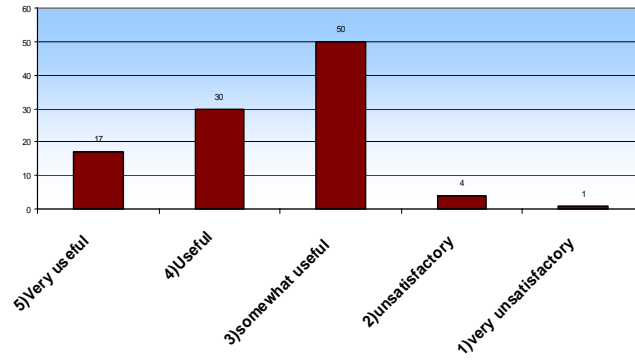
15

8.b) How would you evaluate the courtesy of the Science library staff?



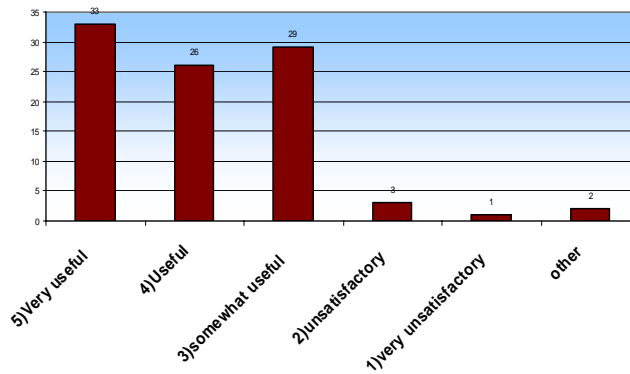
16

8.c) How would you evaluate as to the ease of finding materials at the Science library?



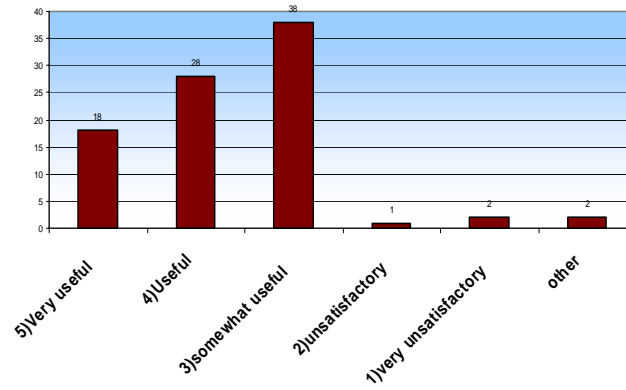
17

8.d) How would you evaluate checking out materials at the Science library?



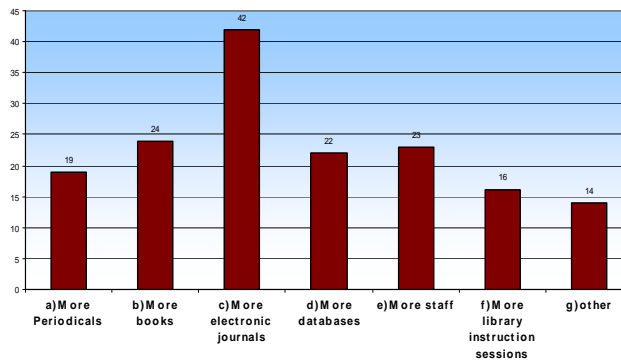
18

8.e)How would you evaluate the Science Library's interlibrary loan services?



19

9.Please list your needs that you would like the Science Library to offer



20

Survey Findings

21

Online information seeking habits

- Half of the respondents went online daily to look for information
- Almost 70% of the students preferred Google as their choice of search engine and Google was way ahead of its competition
- Nearly 60% of the students indicated that they use the library home page once a month or occasionally
- When they visited the library homepage, the students used the catalog (54%) and databases (71%) to a great extent

22

Using the Science library

- The number of students visiting the Science Library was low. Nearly 81% of the students said that they visited the Science library once a month(37%), occasionally(32%) or never been there(12%)
- While evaluating the reasons for visiting the Science Library, the students indicated the the library resources(68% of those who visited the science library) as their primary reason for visiting and the ambience (a quiet place to study) was the secondary reason (28% of those who came to the science library)
- 49% of the students were familiar with circulation, 34% were familiar with reference consultation and 31% knew that they could use 'ask a librarian' chat service if they needed help

23

Evaluation of the Science Library's collections, services and staff

- 67% of the students thought the collections were useful(44%) or very useful(23%)
- 59% of the students found the library staff to be helpful(28%) or very helpful(31)
- 47% of the students thought the ease of finding of materials was somewhat useful (average or acceptable)
- Almost 66% of the students felt that checking out materials was very useful or somewhat useful
- 34% of the students thought that the interlibrary loan services department was useful or very useful

24

What the users want us to offer?

- Almost 40% of the students wanted more electronic journals and that was their top priority in terms of needs or expectations from us
- 23% of students wanted more books, 20% wanted more databases and an equal amount of students wanted more staff
- Only 15% of the students wanted library instruction

25

Conclusion

- This survey helped us to identify the online information seeking habits of the students and gave us an understanding of their satisfaction level with our services and their expectations from us
- The survey results will be discussed among the Science library faculty and staff and appropriate measures will be taken to improve the services and meet the students' expectations
- Similar surveys will be conducted for sophomore, juniors, seniors and graduate students in the upcoming semesters

26