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Faculty Evaluate Resources and Services, Winter 2006

Eastern Michigan University Library

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Faculty Evaluate Resources and Services - 2006

During winter term 2006, all EMU faculty were invited to participate in an online survey about library resources and services. The survey which was conducted from February 21 through April 5 drew 137 responses. Although not equaling the number of faculty (160) who participated in the 2003 LibQUAL survey, we are nonetheless satisfied with the response rate, recognizing that survey fatigue is fast becoming a significant problem for all of us.

The library's survey of faculty is a follow up to our participation in LibQUAL, a national library survey that measured users' perceptions and expectations of 24 items pertaining to library service quality. Many of the questions in the national survey were too general or ambiguous to draw any meaningful conclusions so we designed our own surveys that would specifically target the concerns and needs of our three main user groups (undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty). Each group would then be surveyed in successive years, followed by participation in LibQUAL in the fourth year. Our disappointing ratings in the 2003 survey impressed upon us the need to develop a continuous assessment plan that would keep us actively engaged with our users and informed about their needs and concerns. We first surveyed graduate students (winter 2005) because according to LibQUAL, they were the most dissatisfied of our users. That survey revealed that the library had achieved some success in improving the quality of our customer service since 2003, while also indicating some specific areas that needed work. As a result of that survey, Materials Access streamlined the process of searching for missing books and notifying patrons of the outcome. In addition, we increased the number of group study rooms and also added quiet study areas for the first time. Information from the new survey will now enable us to actively seek ways to also address faculty needs and concerns.

What are the demographics of our faculty respondents?

Based on the university's count (2005 common data set) of 1,196 full and part time faculty, the response rate to our survey is approximately 12%. The academic rank of the respondents is shown in Chart 1. The number of respondents from each of the university's five colleges (Chart 2) does correlate with the total faculty population in each of the respective units. Table 1 provides the number and percentages of respondents by primary academic department affiliation, showing the survey's representation across the university's entire faculty. The number and diversity of the responses is sufficient enough for us to gain some valuable insights from the survey's findings.

Chart 1

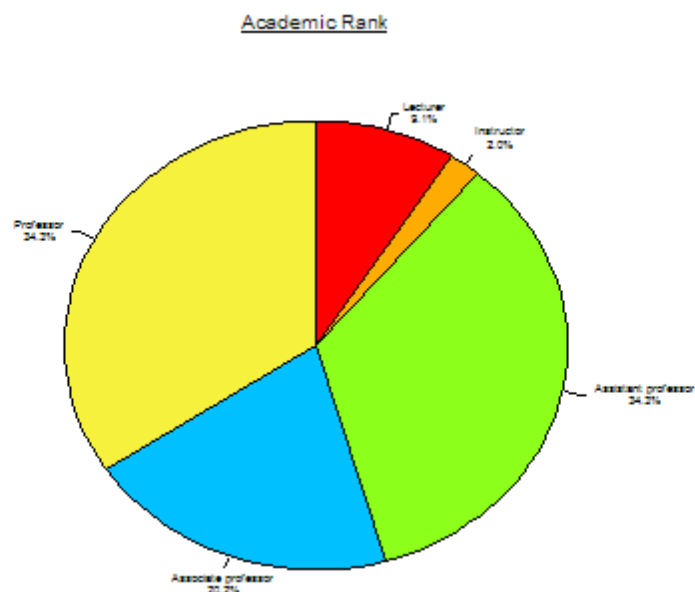


Chart 2

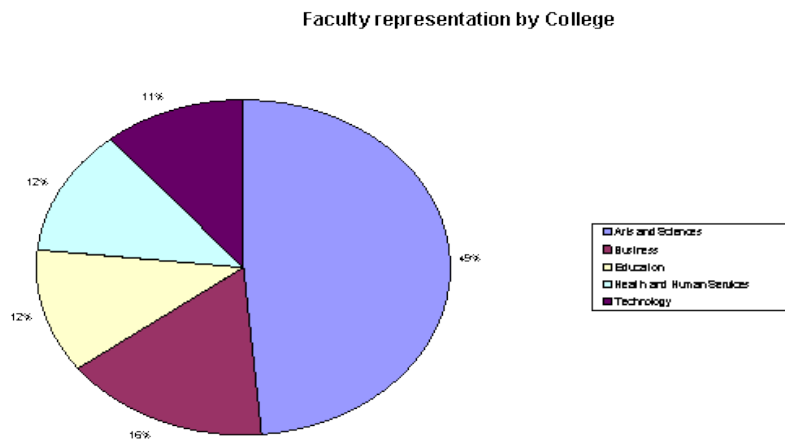


Table 1

Primary Academic Department Affiliation	Number	Percentage
Accounting & Finance	5	4%
Art	6	4%
Biology	9	7%
Chemistry	2	1%
Communications & Theater Arts	4	3%
Computer Information Systems (College of Business)	4	3%
Computer Science	1	1%
Economics	1	1%
Engineering Technology	5	4%
English Language & Literature	5	4%
Foreign Languages and Bilingual Studies	4	3%
Geography & Geology	5	4%
Health Promotion and Human Performance	2	1%
Health Sciences	8	6%
History & Philosophy	10	7%
Interdisciplinary (Technology)	3	2%
Leadership & Counseling	5	4%
Management	9	7%
Marketing & Law	4	3%
Mathematics	1	1%
Music and Dance	4	3%

Nursing	3	2%
Physics & Astronomy	3	2%
Political Science	3	2%
Psychology	5	4%
Social Work	4	3%
Sociology, Anthropology & Criminology	2	1%
Special Education	7	5%
Technology Studies	7	5%
Teacher Education	5	4%
Women's Studies	1	1%
Total	137	100%

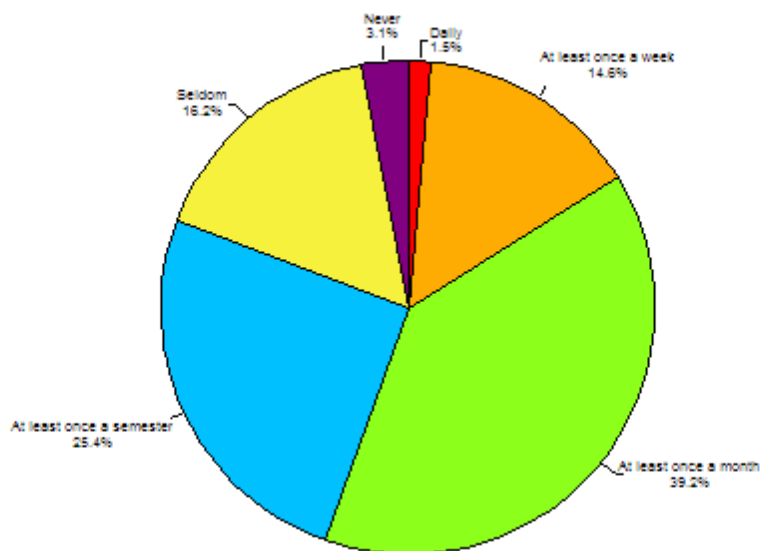
Do faculty use the Library (in-person and/or electronically)?

Typically, it is difficult to obtain information about non-users of library resources and services, but such data is critical in helping libraries identify and correct weaknesses and misperceptions. Only seven of the faculty respondents have not used EMU library collections, services, or facilities within the past year. Four of them report that their work does not require library resources and three use other libraries that have journal and book collections in their specialties. The mission of the library is to provide services and collections to support the curriculum and research needs of the entire campus. When faculty respond that they do not need to use library resources to teach or do research in their discipline, do they also believe that our library has no role to play in their students' learning?

Chart 3 shows frequency of library visits by the 130 faculty who have used our resources and collections within the past year.

Chart 3

How often faculty visit the Library in person

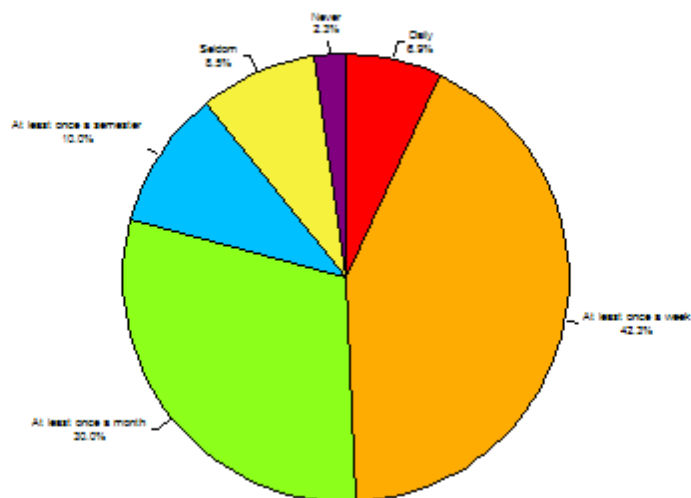


- Faculty most frequently come to the library to find/use resources for their research (76.2%) or for their teaching (65.4%).
- 50% make use of other services in the building (Faculty Development Center, Holman Learning Center, Computer Store, ICT, Paradox Café, etc.)
- 28.5% consult with a librarian.

- 20% meet colleagues and 16.9% teach classes in the building.
 - Only 1.5% do recreational activities such as surfing the Web, emailing, reading, etc.
- While just slightly more than 55% of the faculty respondents come to the library at least once a month, there are considerably more who frequently make virtual visits. Over 96% report having accessed EMU library resources and services from remote locations. Charts 4 and 5 show the frequency of on-campus and off-campus access.

Chart 4

How often faculty access EMU Library collections and/or services electronically from on-campus



- 93% of these respondents report that they do not experience any connection problems on campus.
- 7% have experienced a variety of problems ranging from building rewiring and connections timing out to staff ID numbers not working. (*Note: Please contact ICT or the Eagle Card office to see what kind of problem there might be with the ID. If the problem you are encountering is limited to library circulation and the ARC please contact Rita Bullard.*)

Chart 5

How often faculty access EMU Library collections and/or services electronically from off-campus



- To connect from home, 43.2% of the respondents use cable modems, 36.8% use DSL and 12.8% of respondents use dial-up.
- Only 6 respondents report the following problems connecting to and accessing resources:

- "I get messages such as 'too many users' or the connection drops/freezes without warning."
- "Slowness due to dial-up connection."
- "Occasionally links into some electronic journals, most notably those connected with Infotrac, fail."
- "Students have occasionally mentioned problems downloading things from databases (perhaps because of the size of the documents)."
- "I cannot access some services such as SciFinder from home. I need to come to the campus on weekends for this purpose." (Note: The library's contract with this resource stipulates that we can only provide access from on campus.)
- "Accessing journal links from my home computer is not possible."

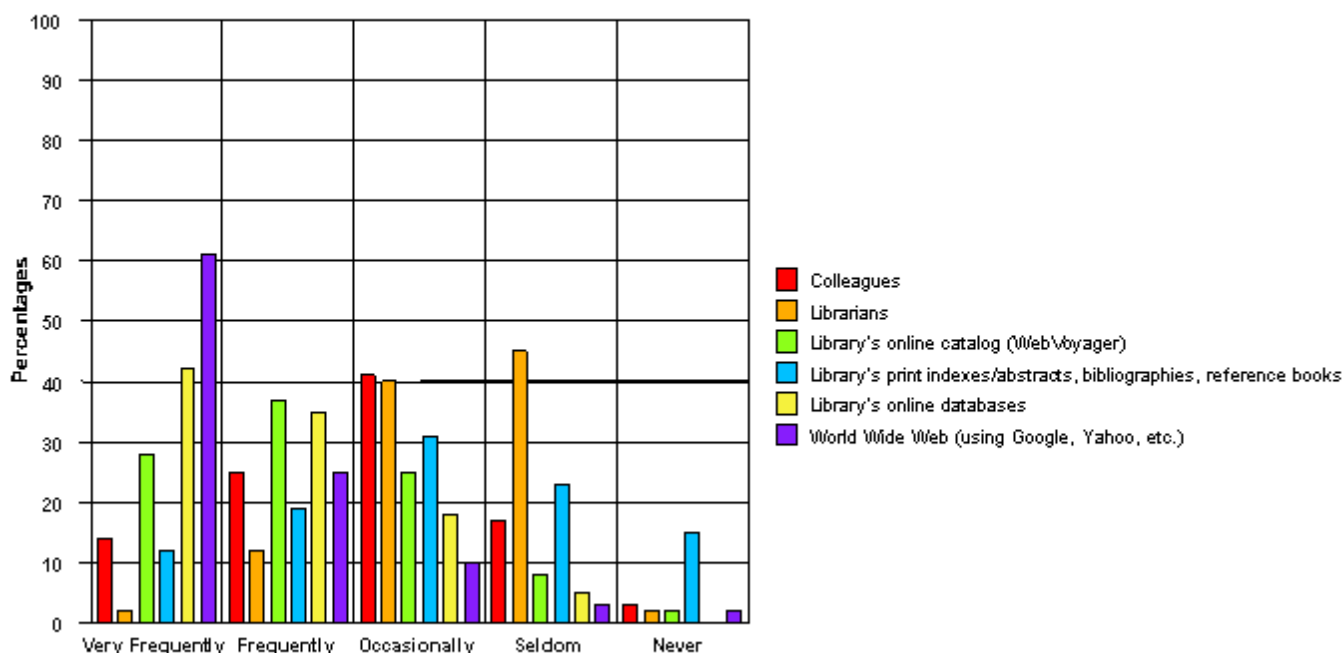
What resources do faculty consult when searching for information?

Faculty have a plethora of resources available, including their own subject expertise, when it comes to initiating an information search. One of the most surprising survey findings is the frequency with which the faculty rely on Internet search engines such as Google for this purpose. Over 85% use these tools very frequently or frequently, followed by the library's online databases (77%) and the library's online catalog (65%). This stands in sharp contrast to the findings of last year's Graduate Student Survey which ranked online databases first in frequency of use (92%), the online catalog second (72%) and Internet search engines third (66%). Admittedly the number of graduate student respondents was low (71), making statistically significant comparisons difficult, but this would be an interesting topic for further investigation.

It is ironic that while we are continually urging our students to use the library's website as their primary gateway to information rather than relying on Internet search engines to locate scholarly resources, our faculty appear to be doing just the opposite. When searching for information, faculty also consult their colleagues much more frequently than they do librarians who for the most part are asked for assistance only occasionally (40% of respondents) or seldom (44.6% of respondents). Chart 6 provides a usage breakdown of the six types of resources.

Chart 6

How often faculty consult the following resources when searching for information



What do faculty think about the quality of our book and journal collections?

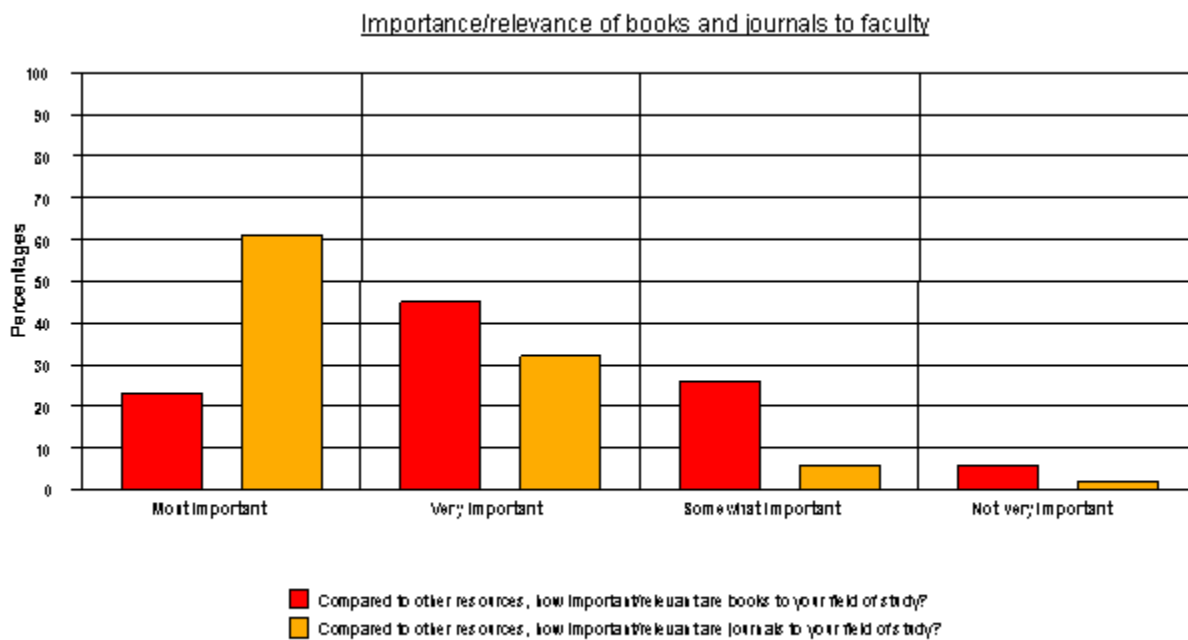
The 2003 LibQUAL survey did not adequately distinguish between books and journals or between paper and electronic resources. This survey, like the Graduate Student Survey, has separate sections for books and journals, with additional breakdowns by format, making it easier to determine what library users think about the quality of our resources and the ease of finding, accessing/locating and using them.

With a declining acquisitions budget and escalating serial costs, we need to be more cognizant of the collection usage preferences of our patrons in order to achieve the maximum cost/benefit ratio when allocating monies. Faculty are actively encouraged to be part of our collection development process, both in terms of suggesting books and journals to order and if budget cuts dictate, journals to cancel. This survey therefore provides an opportunity to examine faculty attitudes about the collections they have helped to build. It is evident from the quantitative and qualitative responses concerning our book and journal collections that the faculty believe the library should be acquiring substantially more titles in many subject areas.

Through consortia agreements, we are making great strides in providing access to hundreds of electronic journals and books that we could never afford to purchase in print. In addition, interlibrary loan/document delivery can be used to obtain books and journals we do not own; statistics show that our ILL service is very rarely unable to fulfill patron requests.

Like the graduate students, faculty respondents in general believe that compared to other resources in their disciplines, journals are the most important, by nearly a three to one margin over books (Chart 7). Unfortunately, the library is now forced to reduce the number of our journal subscriptions by 8 to 10% every year just to keep up with inflation.

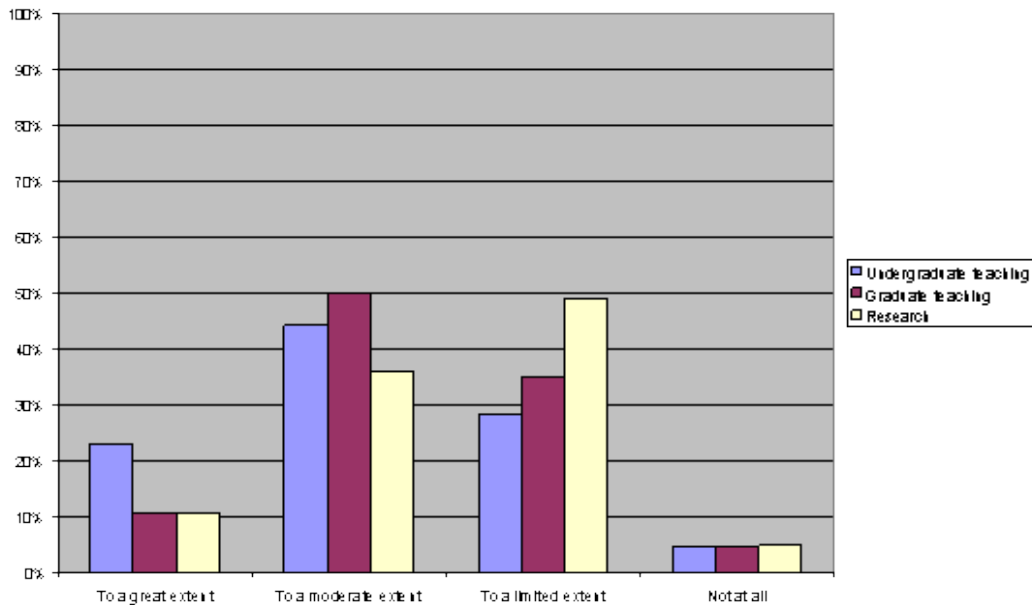
Chart 7



The next critical issue is how well our book and journal collections are meeting the needs of the faculty in terms of their undergraduate teaching, graduate teaching, and research needs. Charts 8 and 9 reveal how faculty perceive the adequacy of our book and journal collections. For undergraduate teaching, 72% of the respondents report that our journals meet their needs to a great or moderate extent while 67% are satisfied with our books. In terms of graduate teaching needs, 68% of respondents are satisfied with the journal collection and 61% with the book collection. For research, 56% find that our journals meet their needs to great or moderate extent while 46% feel similarly about the book collection. However, significant numbers of faculty, with percentages ranging from 30% to 50% based on type of usage, are dissatisfied with our journals and books, expressing the opinion that their needs are met only to a limited extent or not at all.

Chart 8

Extent to which EMU library book collections meet faculty needs

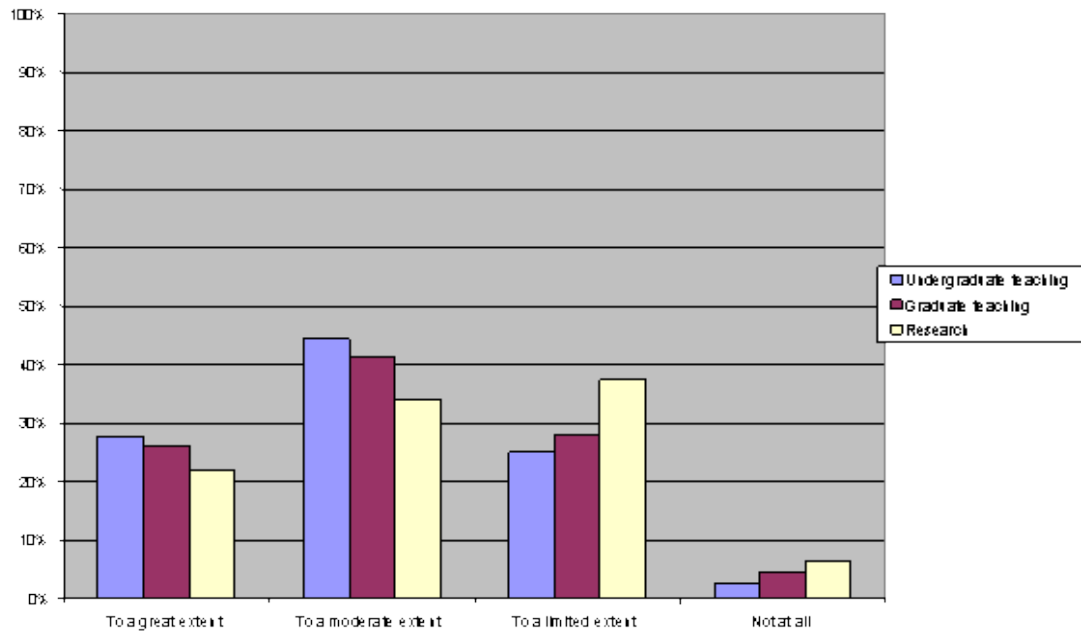


49 respondents expressed opinions about the quality of our book collection. Here is a representative sample:

- "Adequate for the last 20 years, spotty for important older works" (Biology)
- "It would be better if faculty in our department made a more organized effort to provide recommendations. I think we are probably falling down on the job." (Physics and Astronomy)
- "Our accrediting agency's site visitors always comment on the great library resources we have." (Interdisciplinary Technology)
- The political science collection seems to be fairly strong – rarely am I unable to find at least a few books on topics that I'm beginning to research or that I'm covering in my courses." (Political Science)
- "Not enough books for my students to really use the library. UofM has a much more extensive collection for design books at their art and architecture library that my students and I find much more current and helpful." (Art)
- I am continually surprised at how good our holdings are in my field (modern military history)." (History and Philosophy)
- "Book collections are inadequate for both teaching and research. Book acquisition budget needs big and sustained increases." (History and Philosophy)
- "Keep older materials on education for research purposes. Graduate students need older research material to compare recent trends." (Leadership and Counseling)
- "Many years of not buying books in the '80s and early '90s left the library with many old and out-of-date books. In recent years it seems that the collection is being built up again—gratefully, but progress is slow." (Art)
- "Adequate for my teaching and research purposes." (Chemistry)
- "Simply need more. I often have to order through ILL or purchase the books I need." (English Language and Literature)
- "Good but not enough for my area of instruction." (Engineering Technology)
- "We need more of the latest editions of reference books. New editions are published very frequently, which makes the ones in the library obsolete." (Computer Information Systems, COB)
- "You do well with our needs." (Health Sciences)
- This will exceed the 15 minutes allotted for this survey." (Foreign Languages and Bilingual Studies)

Chart 9

Extent to which EMU library journal collections meet faculty needs



48 faculty expressed opinions about our journal collection. Here is a representative sample:

- "It is not extensive in my area, but adequate for our size institution." (Biology)
- "The collections are very limited in my area." (Nursing)
- "Somewhat weak in area studies, but quite good overall." (Political Science)
- "Enough with the cutting. The administration must be forced to recognize the increasing price of journals. A wide-range of current journals is essential for research." (Geography and Geology)
- "Very few graduate level journals. Enhanced availability through JSTOR, etc., full text (including equations) is what is important to me and access has made it much better for both research and teaching needs." (Economics)
- "Could definitely weed out unused journals. For undergraduate student use, books are more useful as resources." (Art)
- "They are ridiculously limited. 99% of the time I have to get articles via interlibrary loan." (Marketing and Law)
- "We get the most common journals in our field, many of which publish practical or action-based research. We don't have as many journals that publish the scientific research or the journals that we need to use in our research." (Teacher Education)
- "They need to be more current; the most recent in JSTOR (for example) is 2002." (Geography and Geology)
- "Seems like the major journal focus is on cutting them. Is this a university library or a community college? Library needs to be more effective in waging budget campaign." (History and Philosophy)
- "For the extent of how journals are utilized in health care programs on EMU's campus, the library does a good job of seeking input from faculty on those journals that are most needed and seeking input on the preferred format." (Health Sciences)
- "The library subscribes to very few of the journals I have used for my research." (Physics and Astronomy)
- "Less scientific kinds for my undergrad and grad students." (Marketing and Law)
- "My research is highly specialized and for the most part the UM library has the materials I need. I prefer that the library concentrate on materials useful for undergraduate students." (Art)

What do faculty think about paper versus electronic format for books and journals and about the access and availability issues unique to each format?

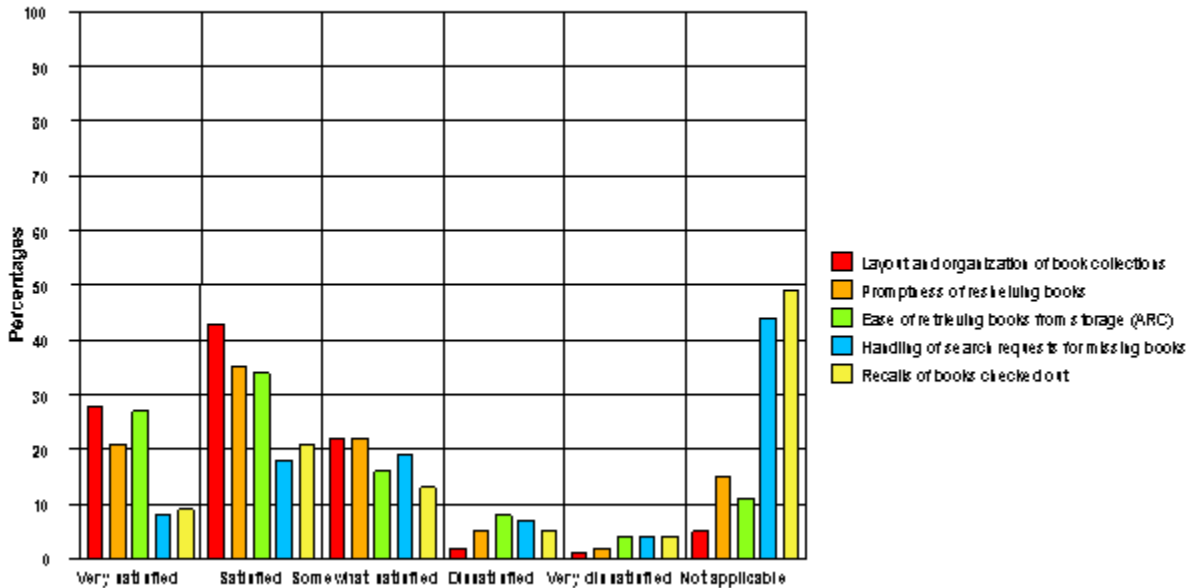
Books

Over 92% of respondents have used our books in paper form and 62% prefer using books in this format (17% prefer electronic and 21% express no preference). Faculty are generally either very satisfied or satisfied with how the book collection (paper) is organized and maintained (Chart 10). However, faculty do express some dissatisfaction with the way search requests for missing books and recalls of books checked

out are handled. As already mentioned, missing books were also a problem for graduate students so we streamlined the search process during the winter 2006 semester. Patrons can now [place a search request online](#) and will receive an email response within five days. If the book is found, it is placed on the hold shelf and the patron is notified. If the book is charged out, a hold is placed and the patron will be contacted when the book is returned. If the book is not found within five days, the patron is advised to either consult with a Reference Librarian to find comparable material or to request the material through Interlibrary Loan.

Chart 10

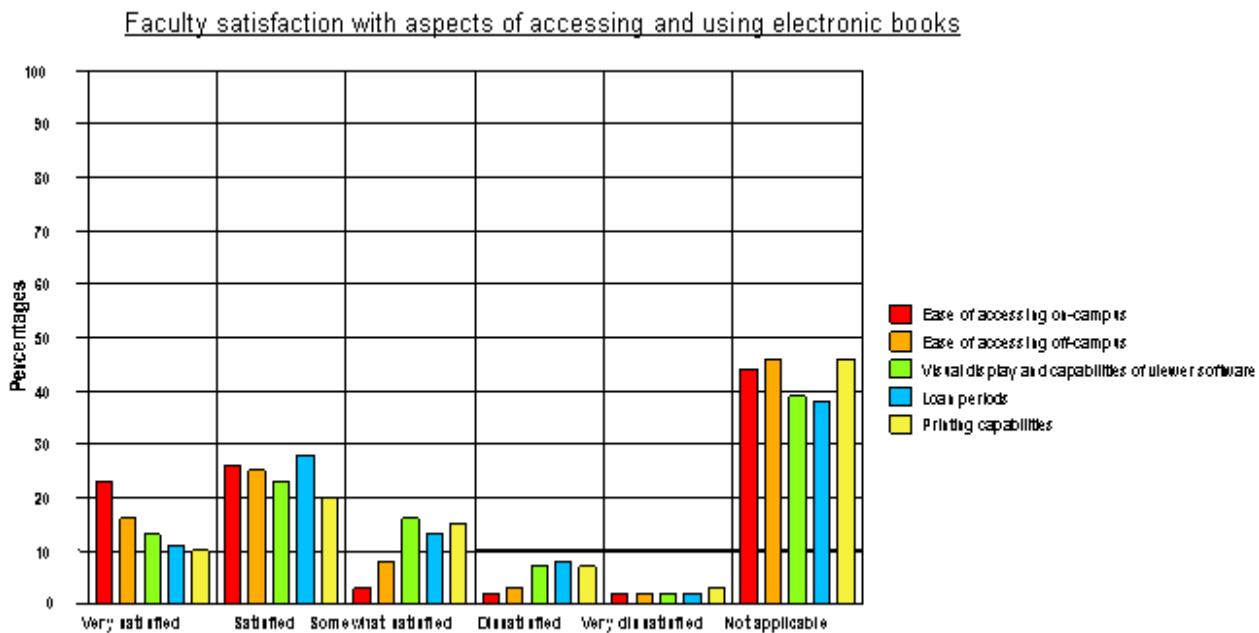
Faculty satisfaction with aspects of locating and using books in paper format



- Some of the respondents also offered comments on these issues.
- "It would be helpful if after a book is recommended for purchase, the recommender be informed of the action taken by the library. Sometimes I have been informed when the item arrived, but usually I have received no notification." (Note: We are currently in the process of modifying our online "Book Request Form" to include the option to notify the requester when the book is in.)
- "There is a faculty member in my department who never returns books even if recalled! Something must be done about this."
- "Put all the books on the shelves, not in ARC."
- "In some ways I would like to see the materials for the visual arts together in a separate section or library, which would make it more accessible to students. I definitely feel that art books should not be put in storage. They should be available for students to peruse."
- "The ARC system is inconvenient for browsing."
- "I think it is a big mistake to house books in storage. It greatly inhibits my research."
- "My main problem with the library has been when a book needed to be retrieved. It has taken multiple hours (four hours) to get a book, and this is why I am not inclined to use the library if I have other access to the information. I strongly prefer the sections where I can retrieve the materials myself." (Note: In general it should take about 10 minutes to retrieve a book from the ARC, unless we have an equipment problem or you request a very large number of books. If there is a long delay, feel free to ask to speak to a supervisor.)
- "It would be great if we could have a drop box to return materials in the College of Business!" (Note: At the end of June 2006, a book return box was installed at the College of Business on the main floor. Books are picked up on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and brought back to the library.)
- "I would like to have open reserves so students can peruse the books rather than having them hidden behind the front desk."

Approximately 73% of the respondents have used the library's electronic books available through such collections as NetLibrary and Safari and express the following opinions (Chart 11):

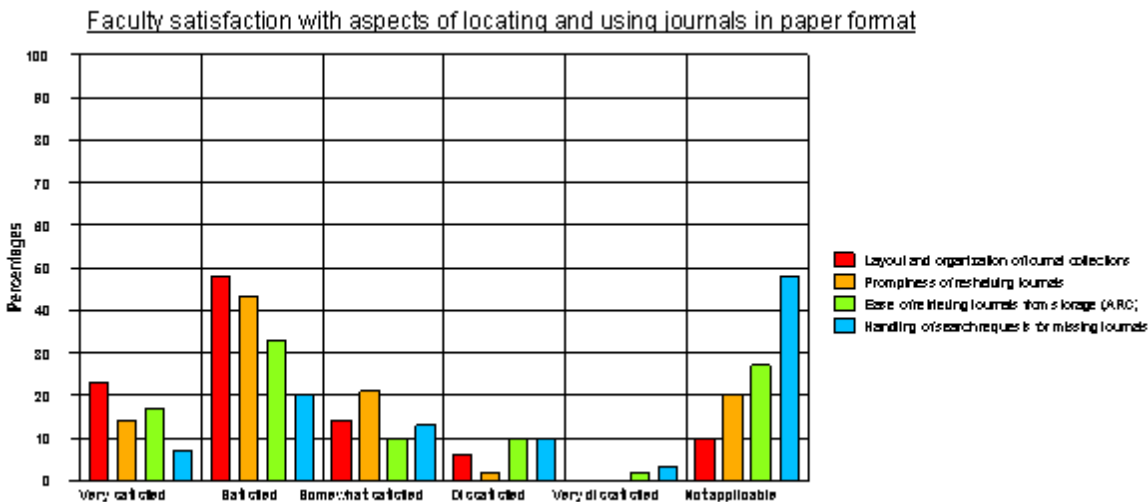
Chart 11



Journals

Over 75% of the respondents have used the library's journals in paper format and express the following opinions (Chart 12) regarding access and availability issues.

Chart 12

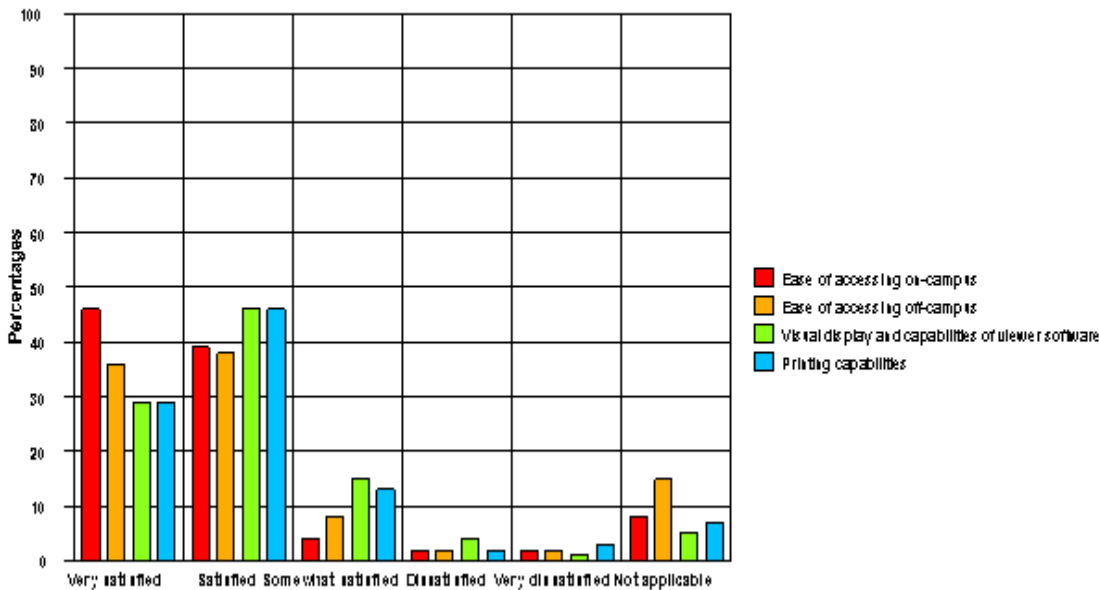


- Some of the respondents also provided comments about these issues.
 - "Journals are organized in a way that makes it hard to find and use newly arrived journals. Please consider a browsing area for all new journals of the last week or two."
 - "Would like more paper copies."
 - "Just because the journal is in electronic format, not every article is accessible in that format. Please keep the paper copies of important journals in the education field."
 - My only concern [with ejournals] is that if we have a budget shortfall, we risk losing access to the entire electronic collection. If we have a print subscription, however, we at least have hard copies of the previous issues if we run out of money to maintain the subscriptions." (Note: We routinely negotiate the ability to archive contents even if we cancel the subscription.)
- Electronic journals are more heavily used than the other serial formats. Approximately 85% of the respondents have used ejournals and 66% prefer this format (compared to 23% for paper; 11% express

no preference). The overwhelming majority are either very satisfied or satisfied with the various aspects of accessing and using electronic journals (Chart 13).

Chart 13

Faculty satisfaction with aspects of accessing and using electronic journals

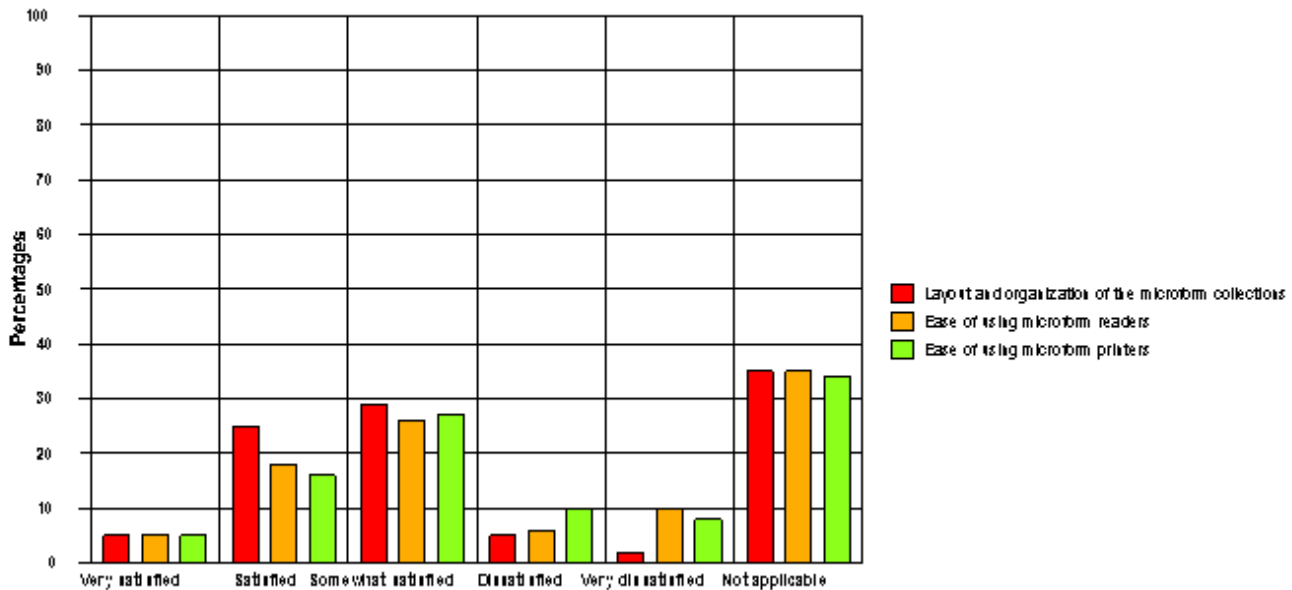


- The following comments were offered about using electronic journals:
- "There remain many steps to checking whether a journal is available electronically or in the library."
- "I have really relied heavily upon electronic journals and I find them very convenient to use."
- "I and my students are very excited about the number of full-text journal articles now available. They can be accessed from home or the office and the probability that previous users have damaged or destroyed the info we want is reduced to zero."
- "I wish I could get hard copies of more journal articles via my own computer and our printer."
- "Even electronic subscriptions would be preferable to no subscription at all!"
- "Electronic journals work best for me, by far."

Not surprisingly, the respondents prefer not to use microform journals; only 68.5% have used our journals in this format. The majority of faculty using microforms report being either satisfied or somewhat satisfied with access and usage issues (Chart 14).

Chart 14

Faculty satisfaction with aspects of accessing and using microform journals



The following opinions about microform journals were typical:

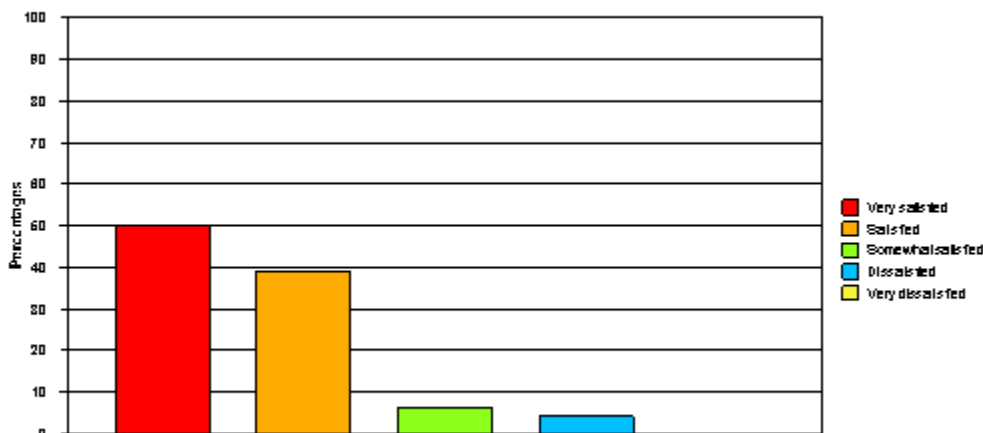
- "Microform copiers are grossly inadequate."
- "My biggest problem occurs when I need journal articles that Halle only has in microfiche. Microfiche is tremendously hard to read. And, it's really hard to make legible copies of."
- "The microform printers have very low print quality."
- "Using microform equipment is not my favorite means of getting information. It becomes more time consuming when I have to change the machine two or three times in one visit before getting copies of what is needed from the reference."

Do faculty use our interlibrary loan service and what do they think about it?

Approximately 71% of the respondents have used interlibrary loan/document delivery to obtain books or journals that the library does not own or provide access to. Chart 15 shows satisfaction levels for those who have used the service.

Chart 15

Faculty satisfaction with interlibrary loan/document delivery service



48 respondents voiced opinions about the quality of this service.

- "The limitation of requests for doctoral and, at times, masters students inhibits the research process. I shouldn't have to set up a proxy account for a student just so they can complete an effective literature search for their thesis, dissertation or class assignments." (Note: Our ILL policies page has stated, "During

peak times, we may be able to process only five ILL requests at a time for an individual.” However, in actual practice we have never needed to invoke any such limit, and so we are removing that misleading caveat from our ILL policy. There are no limits on the number of requests an individual may submit, simultaneously or over any period of time. There is also no need to set up proxy accounts for students; we do not treat currently enrolled EMU students any differently than their professors.)

- “Online forms are far more convenient than the old system. Delivery is slow, though I only request pretty obscure things.”
- “It is a lot easier to use than I expected it to be; it could be that other faculty are hesitant to use it because of this same incorrect impression.”
- “This service used to be terrible, but it has gotten much better in the last couple of years. Has anyone looked at the amount spent on ILL requests that would be saved if we had better holdings in our own library?” (Note: Yes, this is a regular part of our procedures. We often rush-purchase and rush-catalog a book for a requestor rather than borrowing it. At the end of each fiscal year, we also establish new subscriptions for some of the journals we had borrowed most often.)
- “I don’t like the fact that I’ve been told I can’t get books if we already have them in electronic format. Then, at other times, I get them!” (Note: Our policy is that we will borrow a book if our library holds it only in electronic format, so we apologize for the mistake. All ILL staff have been reminded of the policy.)
- “This service, probably more than any other, has enabled me to be a scholar at EMU.”
- “Easy to order on the net, always prompt.”
- “It always takes too long to get the materials.” (Note: It takes 9 days for us to borrow an article and 11 days to borrow a book from another library. Of those 9-11 days, our work here is completed in less than 2 days. The rest of that time is out of our control. Based on statistics from over 12,000 borrowing transactions during the last two years, we process ILL requests in less than 24 hours, even after counting all the hours and days that expire on evenings and weekends when we are not on duty. For example, a request submitted at 5 p.m. on Friday will not be processed until around 8 a.m. the following Monday (63 hours later). The bottom line: we have a very fast ILL operation. The national average is 16 days; our average is 9-11 days. A complaint about the time required to borrow material is really a complaint about the inherent time requirements for any library to borrow materials from another library.)
- “It’s silly that our doc students can’t borrow more materials at one time.” (Note: See response to first comment.)
- “Did not get about half of the materials requested.” (Note: Sorry about your bad luck. Our statistics show that we fill about 95% of valid requests; 76% are filled by borrowing from another library and 11% turn out to be in our own library. Around 8% are duplicate or otherwise problematic requests. Only about 5% of legitimate requests cannot be filled.)
- “Interlibrary loan is slower than it needs to be. When you email, the staff never answers. No office to come to complain! You are told Interlibrary Loan is not a public office. Why not?” (Note: Libraries organize and locate their various operations in many different ways. It is not unusual for an ILL department to be placed in a staff-only area. When our ILL was attached to our Circulation department, staff members who needed to process ILL requests were constantly interrupted to help at the service desk and this made it difficult for them to keep up with ILL requests. When we transferred all ILL processing to a non-public area, we also implemented the ILLiad software which empowers students and faculty to manage their own ILL accounts and track the progress of each of their requests online. That greatly reduced the need for customer inquiries. Nevertheless, we are certainly willing to meet directly with a customer when necessary. We did experience some email glitches recently. For example, the password for our email account was changed for security reasons and we did not know about it until some messages had been lost. Normally we are very responsive to email communications. Please phone us if we have failed to respond to email inquiries.)
- “The folks doing this behind the scene have been great! I wish the checkout periods were longer, of course, but they’ve been pretty prompt about getting things I request.”
- “Don’t change it! It is absolutely necessary for both my teaching and my research.”
- “The interlibrary loan service is great, but the student workers have a great deal of difficulty locating the materials I have been notified have arrived.”

What do faculty think about the quality and accessibility of other library collections in their disciplines?

Chart 16

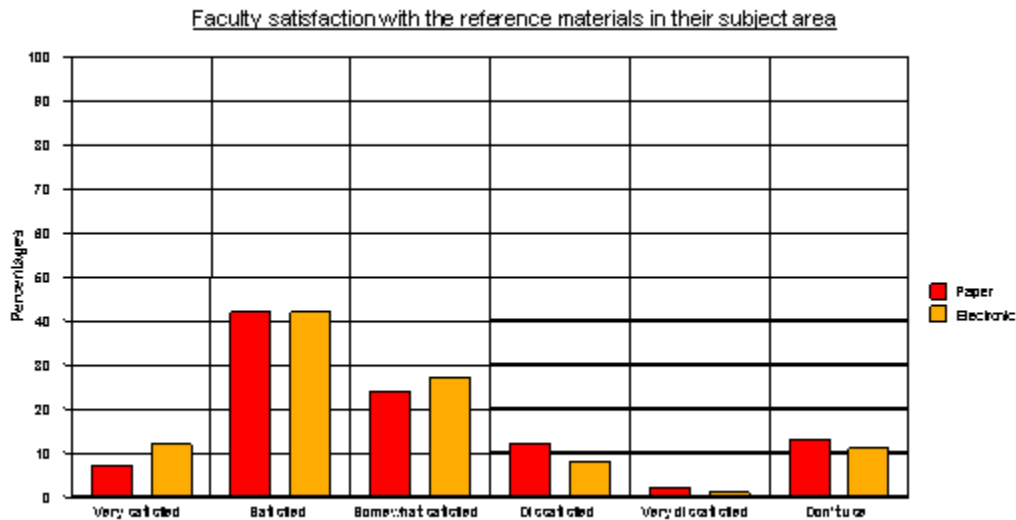


Chart 17

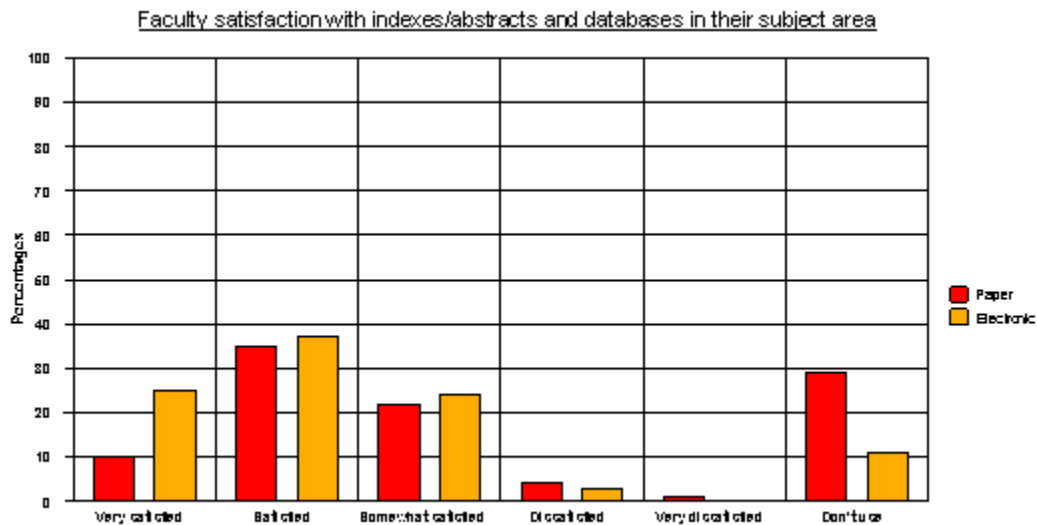


Chart 18

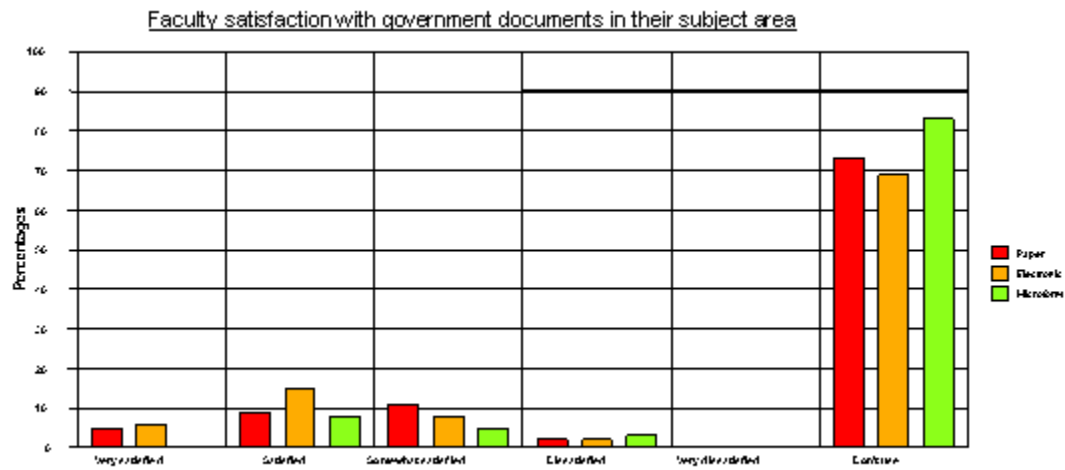


Chart 19

Faculty satisfaction with maps in their subject area

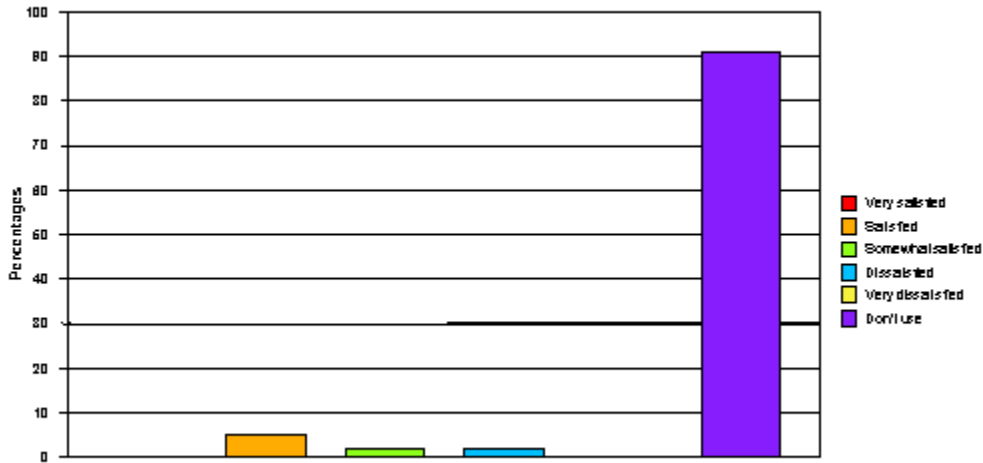


Chart 20

Faculty satisfaction with theses and dissertations in their subject area

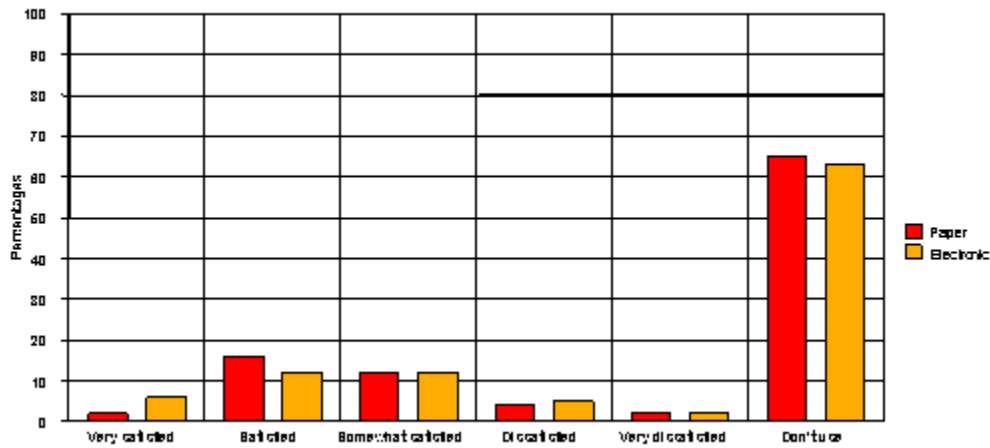


Chart 21

Faculty satisfaction with University Archives collections in their subject area

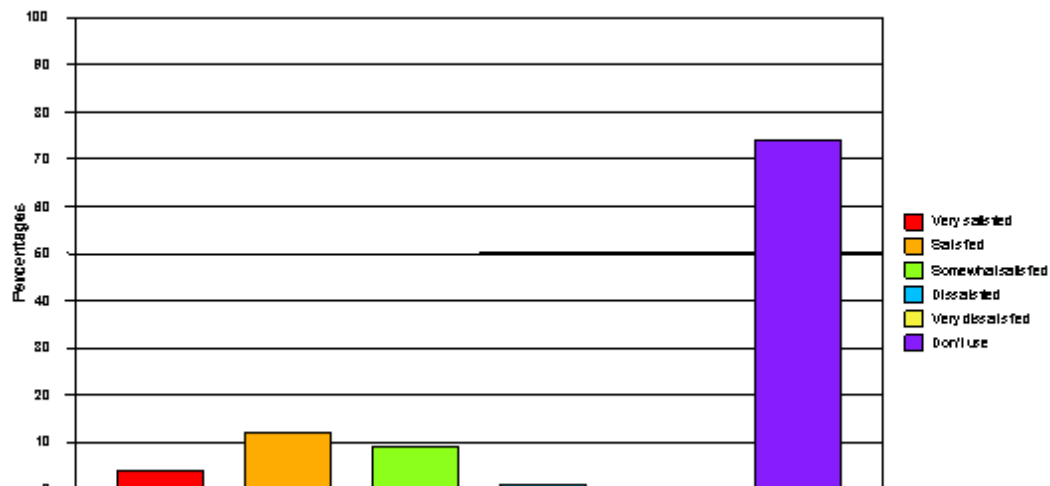


Chart 22

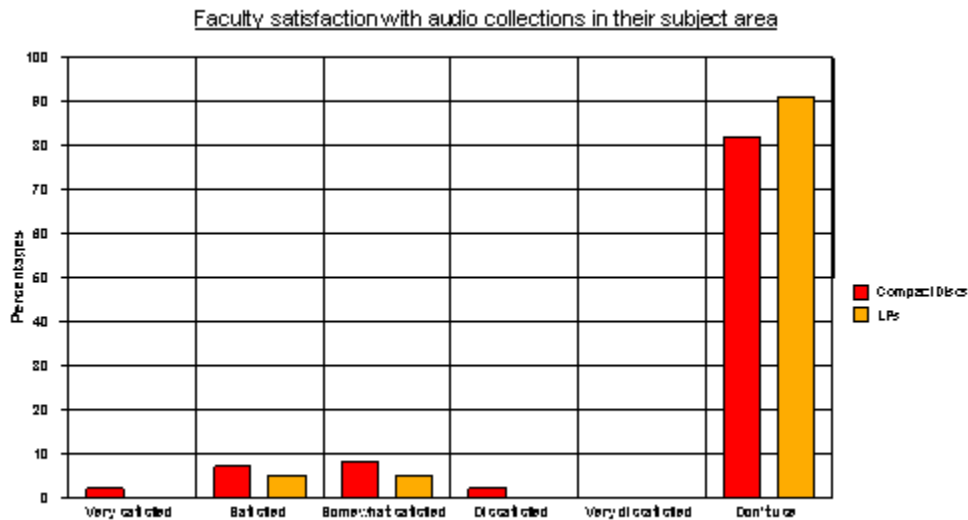
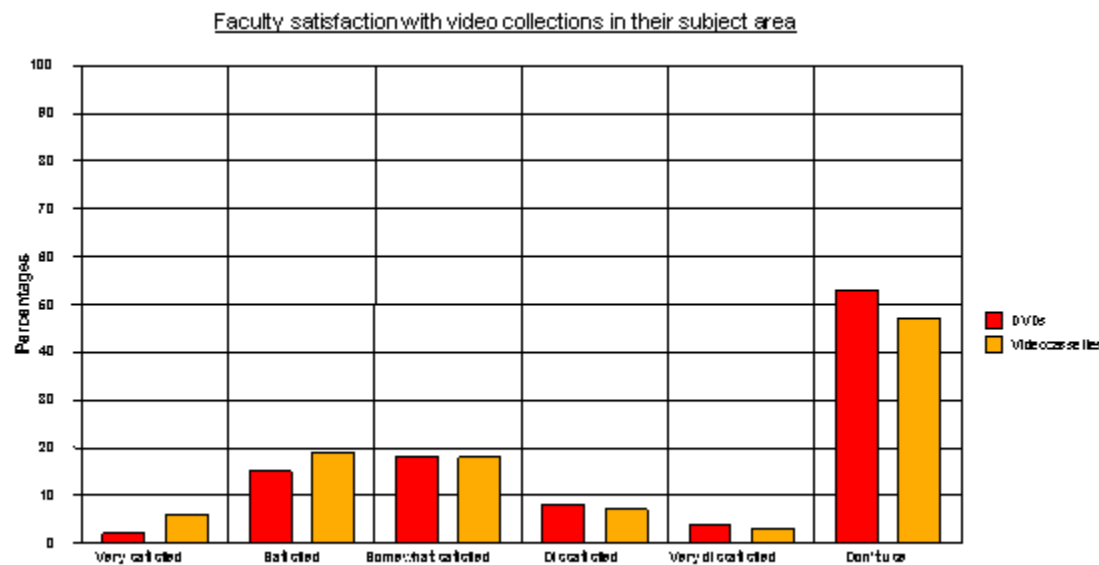


Chart 23



These charts graphically illustrate how seldom faculty, like graduate students, are using these materials. With the exception of reference materials and indexes/databases, which at least in electronic format, are used by approximately 90% of the respondents, the other collections are used by anywhere from 10% (maps) up to 50% (videos) of the respondents. The relevance of specialized collections such as maps, archives, and audio materials, varies enough by academic discipline that we would expect limited usage. Although only around 30% of the respondents indicate that they have used our separate collection of federal government documents, the actual usage of government publications is most likely higher because the most popular documents are cataloged as part of our reference, reserve and regular book collections. Many faculty, recognizing that students have different learning styles, are obviously incorporating videos into their instruction. In fact, nearly all the comments (21) that were provided about these other collections specifically concern the audio and video collections (17).

- "I would like to see the video collection increased significantly to assist with course instruction and clinical supervision. Frequently if the video has some sort of workbook, the storage retrieval will not contain all parts (video and book)." (Psychology)
- "Given that EMU is an undergraduate institution, it's surprising that we don't have more educational videos. In the last year, most of the videos I've used in class (on international topics), I have borrowed from the University of Michigan video collections." (Political Science)

- "I find it much harder to find the video I need compared to finding a book or a journal article. The web interface is confusing."
- "DVDs and videocassette collections are very limited." (Computer Information Systems, COB)
- "Very difficult to search video collections."
- "The recent purchases made that I requested were wonderful. I have up-to-date materials to use in my classes with my students. They can now see all the current research being transformed into practical classroom techniques." (Teacher Education)
- "Need more current videos in the areas of marketing, international business, and different supply chain components." (Marketing and Law)
- "I would like to see a much larger collection of (classical music) CDs and DVDs." (Music and Dance)
- "It is hard to look up DVDs and CDs. There should be a listing of them alone to search thru like one would on a library shelf."
- "I wish CDs, LPs, and DVDs were catalogued differently. When I'm looking for a specific music score, I end up with a lot of entries for CDs and LPs. At the U of M, one can separate the audio collection entries from the book collection entries. This may be possible in our system, but if so, I have never been able to figure it out."
- "It would be nice to have a more extensive collection of videos, particularly since many of the videos are old and damaged. I put notes on them when I find I can't use them; it would help if that actually made a difference and the library used resources to replace damaged or lost material." (Leadership and Counseling)
- "I find the AV request form to be confusing, especially the drop-down calendar. This calendar starts on Mondays, so the third column is Wednesday. On any other calendar in the western world, the third column of a calendar is Tuesday. This has led me to problems (no AV equipment) more than once." *(Note: We made a change to the AV form and so the calendar display has been modified per your suggestion. However, in order for it to display correctly on your machine you need to empty or refresh the cache in your browser.)*

What do faculty think about the quality of our customer service?

The next group of survey questions dealt with the responsiveness, courtesy, and knowledge of library staff at our various service points. Faculty who had participated in the 2003 LibQUAL survey reported that even their minimum expectations were not met when it came to library employees understanding their needs, having the knowledge to answer questions, and dependably handling service problems. Four other library staff attributes barely met faculty's minimum expectations: willingness to help users, readiness to respond to users' questions, being consistently courteous, and dealing with users in a caring fashion. The general nature of the LibQUAL questions made it impossible to identify where problems were occurring. In addition, our facility shares space with several heavily used student-centered operations which the library does not manage, such as Multimedia Services and the ground floor computer lab. However, we did realize that customer service quality was uneven among library departments and that we needed to be more cognizant of the skills needed by our front line employees.

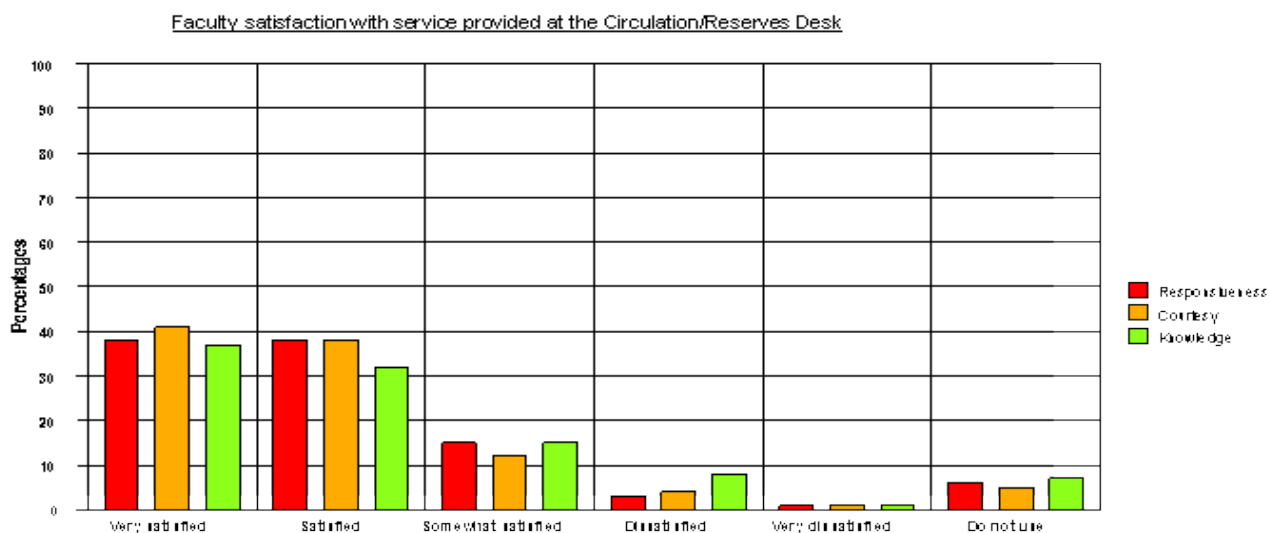
In the last three years, some staffing changes were made and more customer service training has been provided for both staff and student assistants. These improvements were evident to the graduate students who reported in last year's survey that our customer service quality was considerably better than it had been two years before. This positive trend was also confirmed by the faculty survey whose respondents give us even higher marks than the graduate students did. Of the 45 comments faculty made about customer service quality, 31 of them are positive and in some cases single out individual librarians and staff for praise. Some of the comments, most of which are general in scope, are provided below. Comments about overall customer service quality.

- "Some people (especially librarians) go the extra mile. Some do the minimum."
- "I have been satisfied in every way."
- "The people I've dealt with have all been very helpful, courteous and knowledgeable."
- "Excellent, very professional."
- "I think that the library and librarians do a wonderful job with the resources they have. There is a genuine sense from those I've worked with that they want to help and are willing to assist all (faculty and students). Keep up the good work."
- "Very personal, timely and patient; I lack skills."
- "Usually good when I get it."
- "Service is very good. Staff is extremely helpful/courteous."

- "I think you are responsive to the needs of your clients and that you run a very user-friendly library."
- "Generally, I am very impressed with the friendly, helpful attitude. Often the student help simply doesn't know enough."
- "I have nothing but compliments for the folks that work in the library. Always friendly and helpful."
- "Students complain that they can't get enough detailed help, which I can't verify myself, but I think our students are very needy and I don't think the library is well staffed enough for student needs."

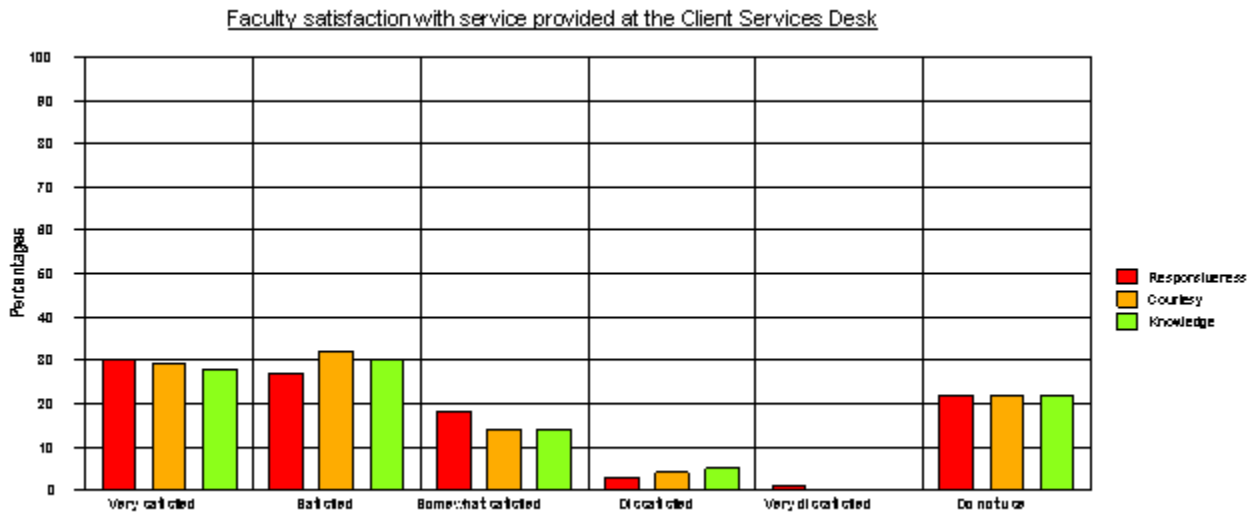
The following charts show the faculty's level of satisfaction with the help they receive at each of our seven service points. 94.6% of the respondents report that the number of these service/help desks are adequate for their needs and 96.9% are satisfied with the hours those desks are open.

Chart 24



- Comments about customer service provided by Circulation/Reserves staff.
- "The students at the circulation desk are often not helpful even with simple questions. Also the students seem to move very slowly when checking out books/journals. Finally my assistants with proxy accounts frequently encounter problems with circulation staff not knowing how to handle a proxy account." *(Note: We receive a number of complaints about the students at the Circulation Desk and have tried to address this problem in the past. Meetings are now being planned to come up with new solutions).*
- "There is frequently a line. There are often people milling around doing things, maybe shelving, while the line gets long."
- "My students constantly have run-ins with circulation desk employees who are very unhelpful and unknowledgeable. If a book is on reserve, these people should be able to find it. Typically after a half-hearted attempt to find the reserve item, they give up and say they don't have it. I've had to give students lower grades because they couldn't get the materials they needed from reserve."
- "Circulation desk workers often do not seem to know where interlibrary loan materials are located. My research using the stacks verifies that an awful lot of books are on the shelves out of order. *(Note: We make an effort to keep the books in correct order and we check them on a regular basis. With the large number of people who take books off the shelves and perhaps accidentally place them in the wrong location, the books do get out of order. If you find an area that needs to be corrected, please tell the staff at the Circulation Desk and they will check into it.)*

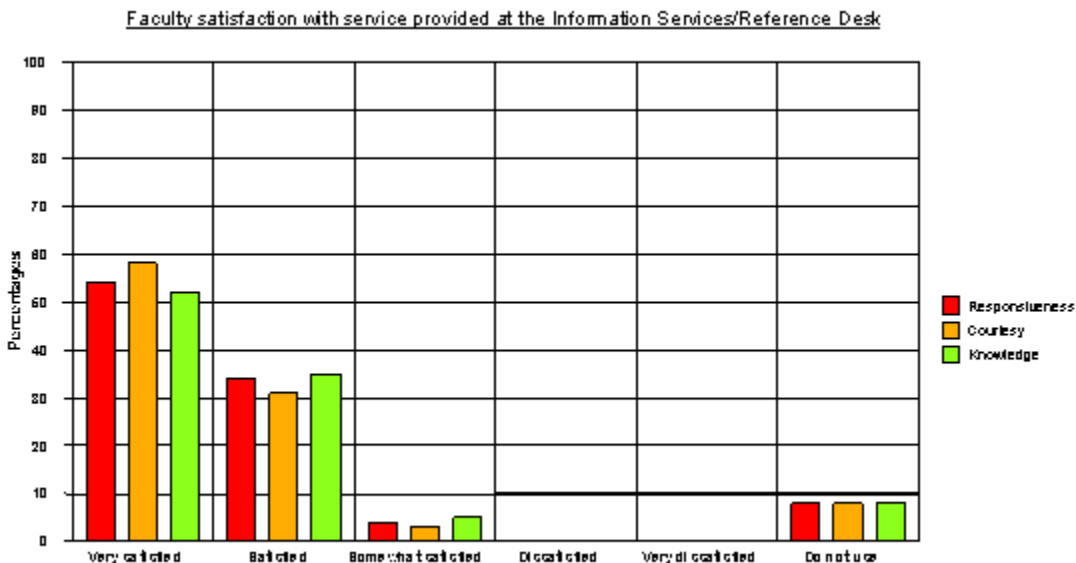
Chart 25



Comments about customer service provided by Client Services staff.

- "I teach only evening and weekend classes. Classrooms can be frustrating; employees in customer service are slow to open rooms, refill paper, fix printers, etc. Further, I use the labs for access to SPSS and, even after calling and confirming, the license had expired. The last time I called to confirm it had SPSS, I was told I could come check myself." (Note: We make an effort to have up-to-date information about the equipment and software that is in the classrooms. We will try to respond to questions in as timely a manner as possible. We also recommend that you make any requests at least one week in advance to ensure that you get a response before your class time. If you do not feel you are getting good service, please ask to talk to a supervisor. On Saturdays, the Client Services Office is staffed only by student employees and we do not have technical staff on duty. Although we make an effort to train students thoroughly, they may not always know the answer. They can try to find someone who knows or take a message and have a staff member contact you on Sunday or Monday.)

Chart 26



Comments about customer service provided by Information Services/Reference Desk staff.

- "I am very impressed with the quality of service from the EMU librarians. They are always very helpful."
- "I find it difficult to figure out how things are organized and categorized. I always have to ask for help...Fortunately the reference librarians are helpful, but they often have to problem solve for a while to find things."

Chart 27



Chart 28

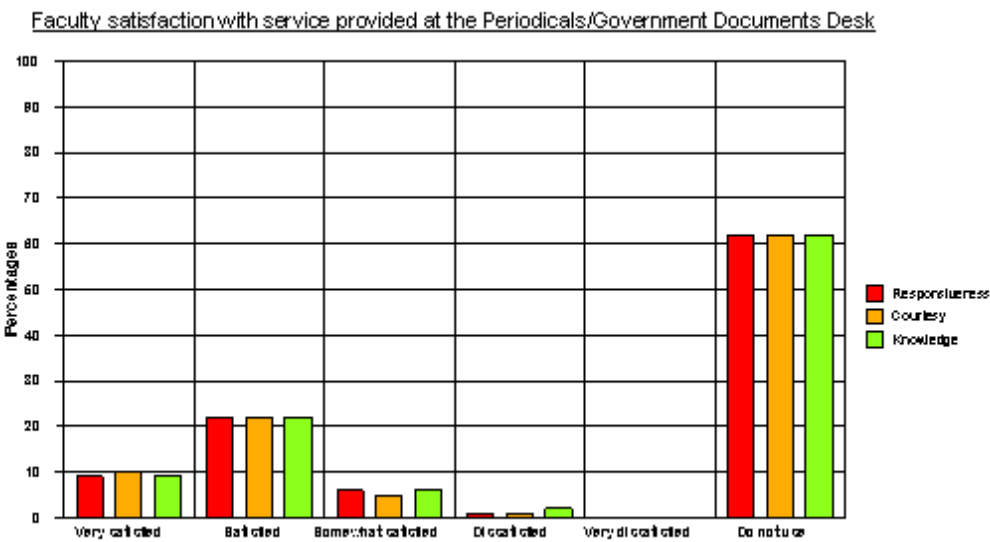


Chart 29

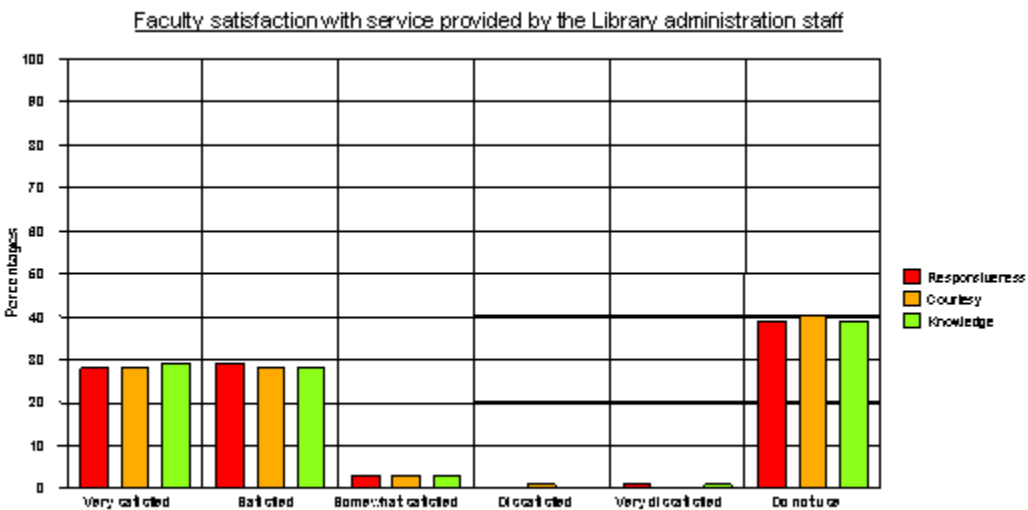


Chart 30

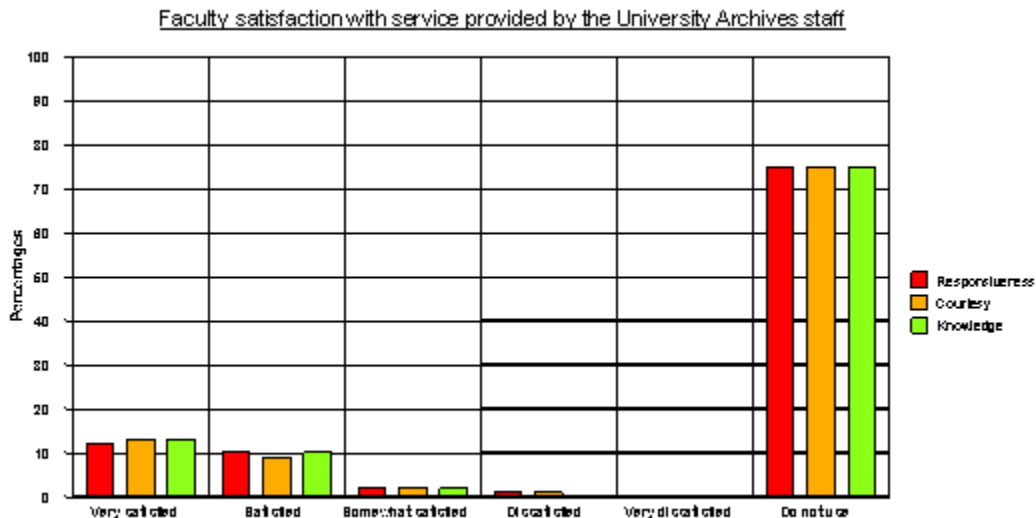
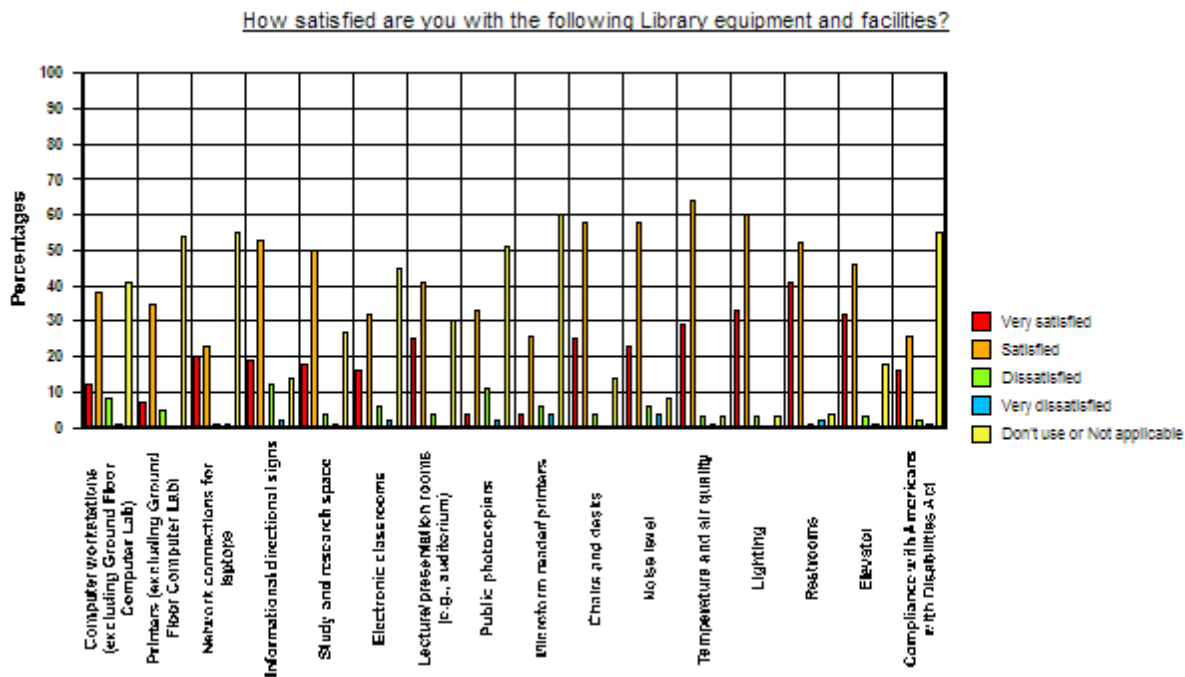


Chart 31



Comments about our facilities and equipment

- "The library seems to be underutilized. I never seem to see anyone in the microforms, for example."
- "The library is not handicap accessible above the first floor. The doors to the stacks meet the fire code, but only meet the letter of the law in making the building truly handicap accessible. This was a major design flaw for a new building and showed a lack of institutional commitment to handicapped students." (Note: In late October of 2004, door assist buttons were added to floors 2 and 3 on the south side doors of the Halle Library.)
- "Elevator is extremely slow!" (Note: Unfortunately, we have only one public elevator. There are additional elevator shafts in the building and with proper funding in the future, another elevator might be added.)
- "Elevator should have brighter lights. Lots of people use it and it seems gloomy inside." Note: The lighting was recently improved by replacing the ceiling panel.)
- "Lovely building. Currently more students eat and socialize at the library than at the union. This makes reading and learning more difficult."
- "The meeting rooms, auditorium, and carillon space are important additions to the campus resources. Wireless internet access is very much appreciated."

- “The bathrooms are pretty gross a lot of the time.” *(Note: We continue to work with Physical Plant on improving the conditions of the bathrooms.)*
- “Many of the computers on the upper levels do not work.” *(Note: The library did have a number of old computers in the open areas, but they were replaced in late 2005 with newer equipment.)*
- “Why is it always so loud in the library? What can be done to keep the library quiet?” *(Note: Unfortunately noise is a major problem in the building; library staff do ask people to lower their voices or move.)*
- “It is a great facility.”
- “The large room, often used for receptions, has terrible acoustics.”
- “I’ve taught in or worked with colleagues in two of the electronic classrooms in the last year. On both occasions, many computers didn’t function well (froze up or weren’t in sync with the instructor’s computer, etc.). It seems that the equipment needs to be updated.” *(Note: We know some equipment in the labs is out-of-date and we are replacing computers as funds become available. We upgraded Room 110 in 2005.)*
- “I use G07A sometimes. Could it have (1) a permanently installed projector I could hook my laptop to, and or (2) a small cart to set up a projector and laptop on, and (3) power strip and extension cord. Also, G07A needs trash cans.” *(Note: Because of the pillar in the middle of G07A, option 1 is not feasible, but you can request a media cart with a projector when reserving that room. Trash cans have now been added.)*
- “The computers for use by classes are out of date and do not run WebCT. They should be completely compatible with modern software and software purchased by the university. You should have a ‘cry room’ for students to use computers with their children. My single parents have a difficult time accessing online portions of my class.”
- “Copying fee should be reduced. Faculty should be allowed to use copy machines and then charge back to the department. Some inter-departmental charging system should be set up for this purpose.” *(Note: Departments can purchase a copy card for faculty and staff use. Currently there is not a campus-wide system for handling charges electronically. The price we charge per copy is comparable to other institutions; we have not raised the fee in over 20 years.)*
- “For such a new building, it should have much more efficient use of energy, more zones for climate control.” *(Note: Unfortunately, the building was not designed with climate control zones and such a change now would be cost prohibitive.)*
- “I think this is a beautiful facility and it is well cared for. I have used the presentation rooms, computer labs, work stations, office space, and the main library. I love to see the students there congregating, working on projects. I think that the staff have made this a comfortable place for the students. We are fortunate to have this library.”

What do faculty think about the importance and role of library instruction?

As Chart 32 illustrates, the overwhelming majority of faculty do not use librarians for personal or class instruction on a regular basis. 17% of the respondents report using group instruction for their students frequently or very frequently, 44% occasionally or seldom, and 39% never (personal instruction usage percentages are similar). Interestingly however, 65% of all the respondents recommend that librarians offer more instruction for their students and 45% feel that more library instruction would be helpful to faculty in their department (Chart 33).

Chart 32

How often have you utilized personal or group instruction by librarians on how to use EMU Library resources and services?

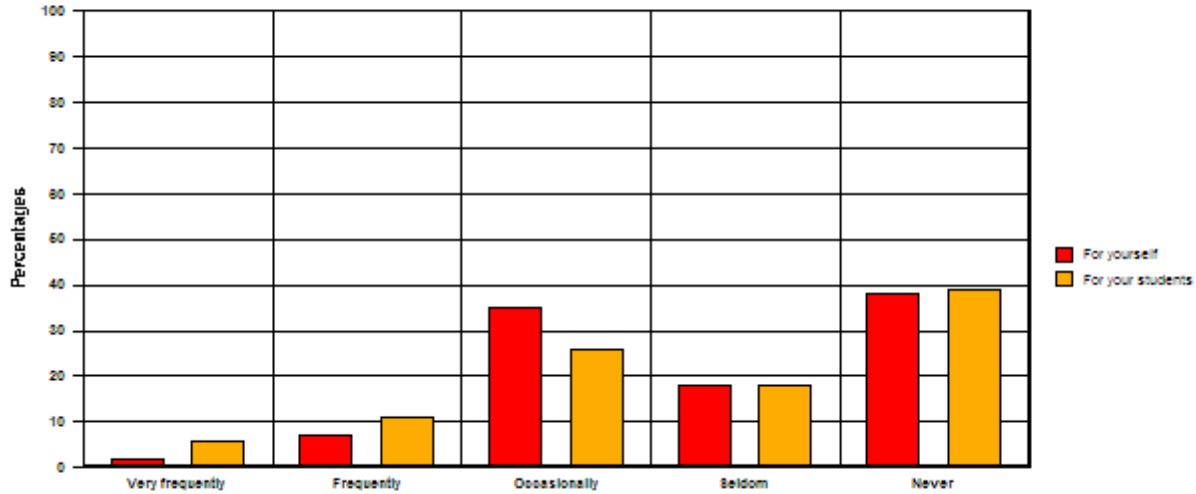
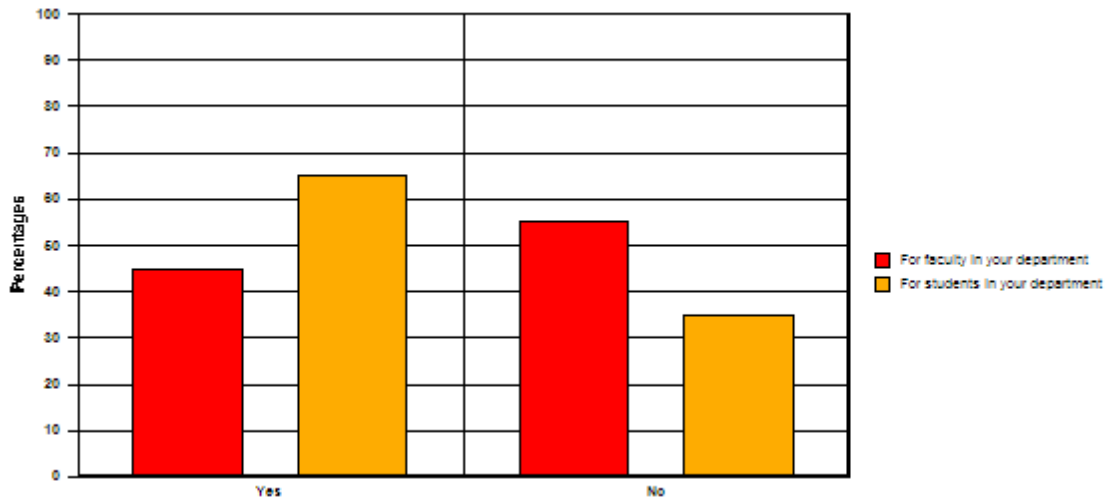


Chart 33

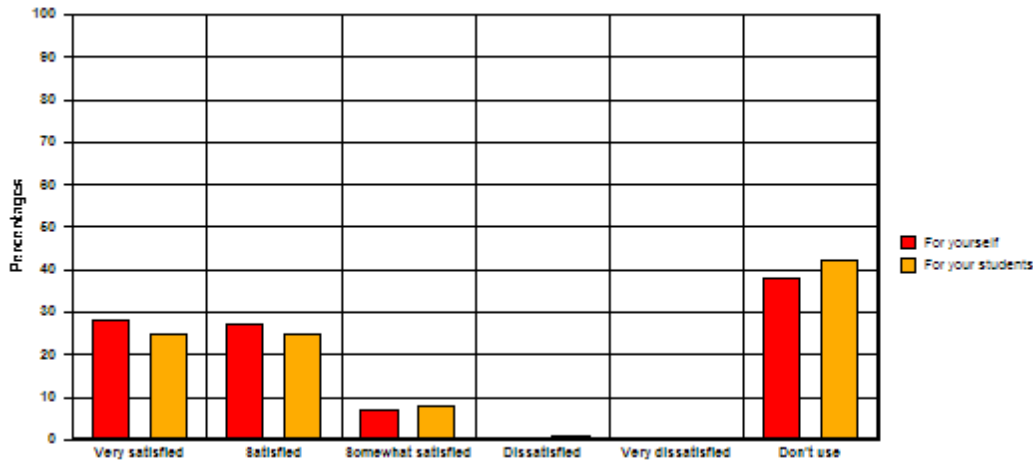
Do you think more instruction should be offered on how to use EMU Library resources and services?



Survey results (Chart 34) reveal that satisfaction levels for those respondents who have had librarians provide instruction to their students are high, with over 85% either very satisfied or satisfied. 10 respondents (13%) report being somewhat satisfied and only 1 respondent is dissatisfied. For those faculty who have received personal instruction on using library resources and services, approximately 46% are very satisfied, 43% are satisfied, and 11% are somewhat satisfied.

Chart 34

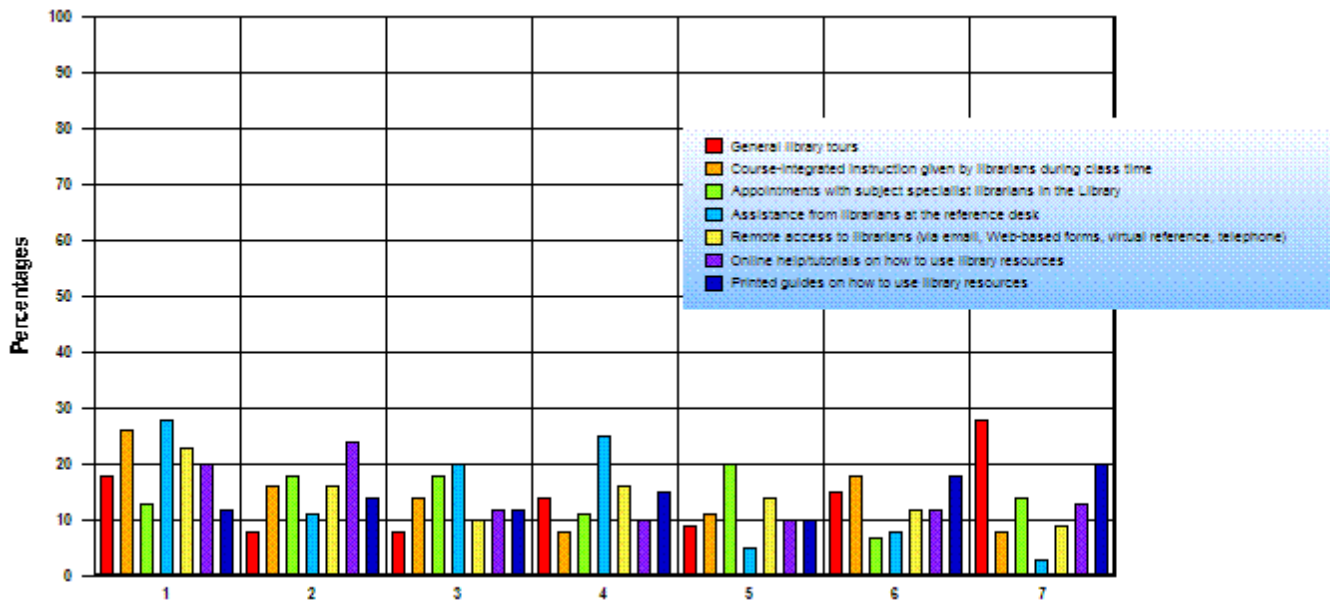
How satisfied are you with the quality of personal or group instruction by librarians on how to use EMU Library resources and services?



Unfortunately a rating scale for two questions on the effectiveness of various forms of library instruction was not specified as several respondents pointed out. However, based on how closely the responses to these questions matched other feedback we have received, it is evident that the scale was, for the most part, correctly interpreted as 1 being high (most effective) and 7/8 being low (least effective). Looking at those instruction methods that received the most 1 to 3 rankings, faculty report that assistance from librarians at the reference desk, course-integrated instruction given by librarians during class time, and online help/tutorials on how to use library resources are the most useful in terms of meeting their students' needs (Chart 35). According to the respondents, the least effective methods for students are general library tours and printed guides on how to use library resources. These findings are in line with those from the Graduate Student Survey.

Chart 35

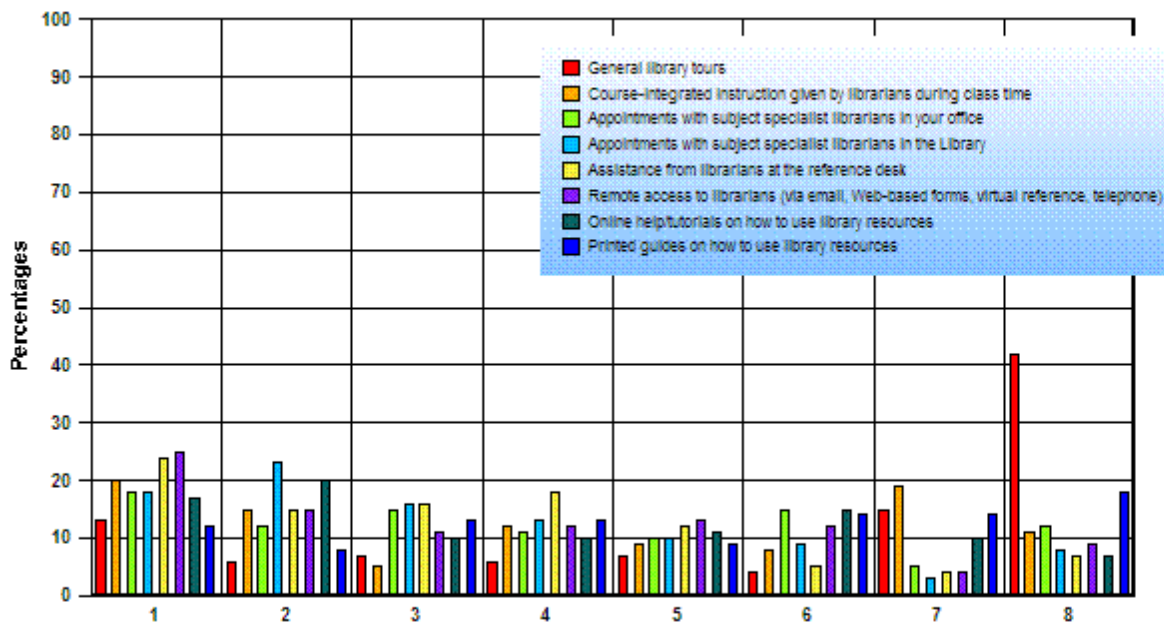
Based on your students' needs, please rank the following seven methods of instruction in order of their usefulness.



In terms of their own needs (Chart 36), again looking only at methods ranked 1, 2, or 3, faculty prefer appointments with subject specialists in the library, assistance from librarians at the reference desk, and remote access to librarians (via email, Web-based forms, virtual reference, telephone). General library tours, by an overwhelming margin, are considered to be the least useful.

Chart 36

Based on your needs, please rank the following eight methods of instruction in order of their usefulness.



Conclusion

This survey, particularly the written comments, demonstrates how strongly the respondents feel about library collections and services. Faculty represent a core constituency and their input regarding how well our resources and services support their teaching and research needs is critical to our continuous improvement process.

In many areas, the respondents corroborated what we learned from the Graduate Student Survey. Both groups of users access our resources and services remotely far more often than they come to the building; in fact, over 50% of both faculty and graduate student respondents make virtual library visits on a daily or weekly basis. With this being the case, these users need the ability and power to function independently when accessing our resources and services. Consequently, the importance of the work done by library technical services and network/systems staff to ensure and improve upon the accuracy, availability, and ease of use of our online catalog and electronic resources cannot be overemphasized.

According to both surveys, faculty and graduate students overall rely more heavily on journals than books for their work and electronic journals are definitely preferred over their paper counterparts. Faculty respondents provided us with many recommendations for improving our book and journal collections and these suggestions are currently being reviewed by our collection development librarian. Some of our special collections, sources of unique and diverse information, are seldom used by faculty or graduate students. Better promotion of these collections is necessary because as one respondent pointed out "you're mentioning lots of stuff I did not know you have."

The number of faculty utilizing library instruction for their classes is surprisingly low, but two-thirds of the respondents feel more instruction for students should be offered. We have hired an information literacy librarian who will take the lead on this initiative.

Faculty report that their satisfaction with service quality has improved since LibQUAL in 2003; the ratings and comments this time around are overwhelmingly positive. That said, the negative feedback we received, in particular about our student employees, is being taken seriously. We recognize that more emphasis must be placed on high-quality customer service not only during initial training but also through regular in-service workshops.

As noted in this article, improvements that lent themselves to immediate implementation have already been made as a result of the survey. Other needs and concerns expressed by faculty regarding collections,

services, staffing, and equipment will be investigated and reported on in the coming months. Thanks again to all those who participated and please continue to give us your feedback.

June 7, 2006

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