



## Part 2: Using the Library— In Person and Online

*Studying  
is the top library  
activity for college  
students.*

In Part 1, we reviewed survey findings related to college students' frequency of use, familiarity with and favorability toward a wide range of information sources, including the physical and online library.

In Part 2, we review responses to questions that probe further for respondents' use habits regarding activities pursued at the library and through the online library. Respondents were asked about their levels of familiarity and satisfaction with library-provided electronic information resources and where they seek help when they need assistance using library information resources, as well as questions related to the evaluation of search engines and libraries against a set of performance attributes.

### 2.1 Activities at the Library

*Monthly activity levels among college students are higher than total respondents in all but one category.*

*College students  
are more  
aware  
of the library's  
e-resources.*

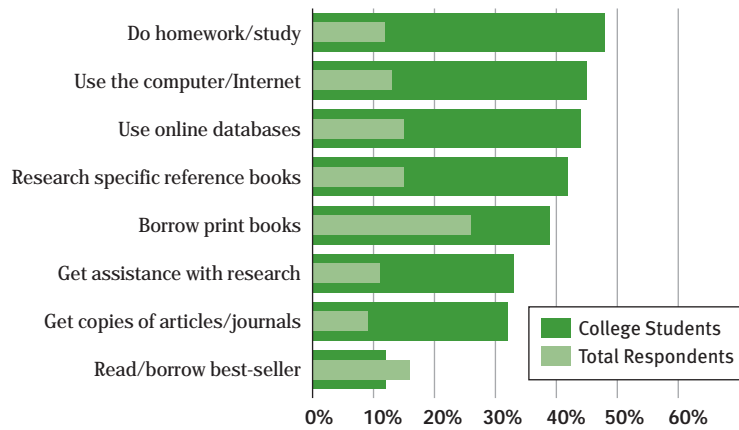
We asked respondents to indicate how frequently they use 20 different library resources, and we focused this section on the top eight activities. Monthly activity levels among college students are higher than total respondents in all but one category (read/borrow best-seller).

Forty-eight percent of college students report using a library to *do homework/study* at least monthly compared to 12 percent of total respondents; 45 percent report *using the computer/Internet* at least monthly compared to 13 percent of total respondents; 44 percent report *using online databases* at least monthly compared to 15 percent of total respondents; 42 percent report *researching specific reference books* at least monthly compared to 15 percent of total respondents; 39 percent report *borrowing print books* at least monthly compared to 26 percent of total respondents; 32 percent *get copies of articles/journals* at least monthly compared to 9 percent of total respondents; and 33 percent report *getting assistance with research* at least monthly compared to 11 percent of total respondents. Only 12 percent of college students report using a library to *read/borrow best-sellers* at least monthly, compared to 16 percent of total respondents.

## Activities at the Library: Monthly Usage— by College Students and Total Respondents

How frequently do you use your library for the following reasons?

Note: At least monthly is a rollup of daily, weekly and monthly.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 840.

## Comparing Libraries and Bookstores

*College students favor libraries over bookstores for free Internet access, free materials and special programs. They favor bookstores for coffee shops, current materials and meeting their friends.*

Respondents were asked to compare a library to a bookstore against a list of 11 activities and attributes. The data show that college students consider libraries more suitable than local bookstores on eight of 11 activities/attributes. The highest ratings for favoring the library for particular activities over bookstores among college students are: free access to the Internet (94 percent), free materials (93 percent) and access to free entertainment (85 percent). Students feel that the local bookstore is a more suitable source than their libraries as a place for a coffee/snack shop, for more current materials and as a place where their friends are.

Of the 11 activities listed, total respondents also feel the library is more suitable than local bookstores in the same eight of 11 activities. Total respondents feel their library is more suitable for providing free access to the Internet (95 percent), free materials (95 percent) and providing special programs (89 percent).

## Suitability of the Library and the Bookstore for Specific Activities—by College Students

Comparing the library to your local bookstore, which do you feel provides a more suitable environment for activities/materials in regard to the following?

| Libraries are more suitable than bookstores for... | Bookstores are more suitable than libraries for... |
|--|--|
| Free access to the Internet: 94%                   | Coffee/snack shop: 86%                             |
| Free materials: 93%                                | More current materials: 66%                        |
| Access to free entertainment: 85%                  | It's where my friends are: 55%                     |
| Special programs: 78%                              |  |
| Comfortable seating/meeting area: 65%              |  |
| Friendly environment: 62%                          |  |
| Book club/story hour: 58%                          |  |
| Access to music: 56%                               |  |

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1230.

*They give people access to books that they could not afford to go to the store and buy. They allow people who can not afford a computer to use the one at the library.*

22-year-old undergraduate from the United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812a, "Please list two positive associations with the library."

## 2.2 Awareness of Library Electronic Resources

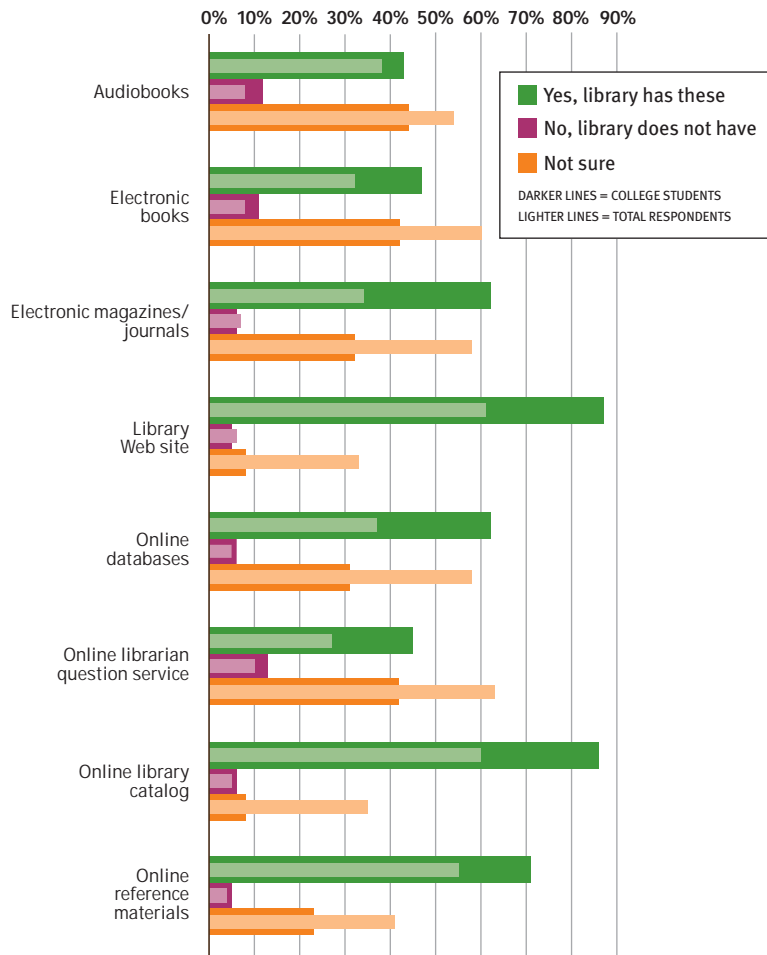
*Most college students are aware of library electronic resources. Awareness among total respondents is low.*

Respondents were asked to indicate if their library provides various types of electronic resources. College students surveyed show high levels of awareness of library electronic resources across all eight categories. Nearly three quarters or more are aware their library has a library Web site (87 percent), an online library catalog (86 percent) and online reference materials (71 percent). Nearly half or more of college students are aware their library has electronic books (47 percent), an online librarian question service (45 percent), electronic magazines/journals (62 percent) and online databases (62 percent). The awareness of whether their library has audiobooks (downloadable/digital) is mixed, with 43 percent who are aware the library has this resource and 44 percent who are *not sure* if their library has audiobooks.

Results indicate that awareness among total respondents is low for most of the library's electronic resources. For example, 58 percent of all respondents are *not sure* if their library offers access to online databases. Of the eight library electronic resources evaluated, total respondents show the highest level of awareness for the library Web site and online library catalog, with at least 60 percent who are aware the library has these resources.

## Awareness of Library Resources— by College Students and Total Respondents

Please indicate which electronic information sources  
your primary library has.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 850.

*advertise to students  
when they first arrive*

22-year-old graduate student from the United Kingdom

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1240, "If you could provide one piece of advice to your library, what would it be?"

## 2.3 Using Library Electronic Information Resources

**42%**  
use online  
databases at  
least monthly.

*College students' use of library electronic resources is higher than that of overall respondents.*

Use of library electronic resources among college students at least monthly is higher in all of the eight categories than that of respondents overall. Fifty-six percent of college students report using the library Web site at least monthly and 47 percent of them report using the online catalog at least monthly.

College students report low monthly use of online librarian question services and audiobooks, at 17 percent and 16 percent respectively.

Total respondents' monthly use of online databases, electronic magazines/journals, online reference materials, electronic books, online librarian question services and audiobooks is less than 20 percent in each category.

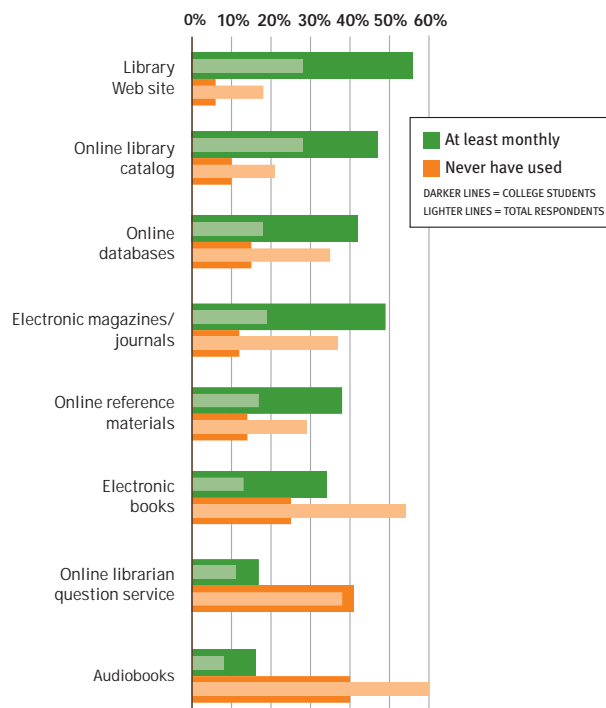
### Usage of Library Resources— by College Students and Total Respondents

Which of the following library electronic information sources have you ever used from your primary library and how often do you use them?

Base: Respondents who indicated their primary library has the following electronic information resources.

Note: At least monthly is a rollup of daily, weekly and monthly.

**15%**  
never have used  
online databases.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 855.

## 2.4 Seeking Assistance in Using Library Resources

*Most respondents do not seek assistance when using library electronic resources.*

Fifty-four percent of college students do not seek assistance when using library electronic resources, while 64 percent of total respondents report they have not sought help when using the library's electronic resources.

### **Assistance in Using the Library—** *by College Students and Total Respondents*

**Did you ever seek help when using your library's electronic resources or when searching for information at your library?**

Base: Respondents who have used the library, either walk-in or online.

|   | College Students | Total Respondents |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes, have sought help when using library's electronic resources | 46%              | 36%               |
| No  | 54%              | 64%               |

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1035.

*Need more staff to help people get used to the new technologies of the library*

22-year-old undergraduate from the United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1240, "If you could provide one piece of advice to your library, what would it be?"

## Sources of Help at the Library

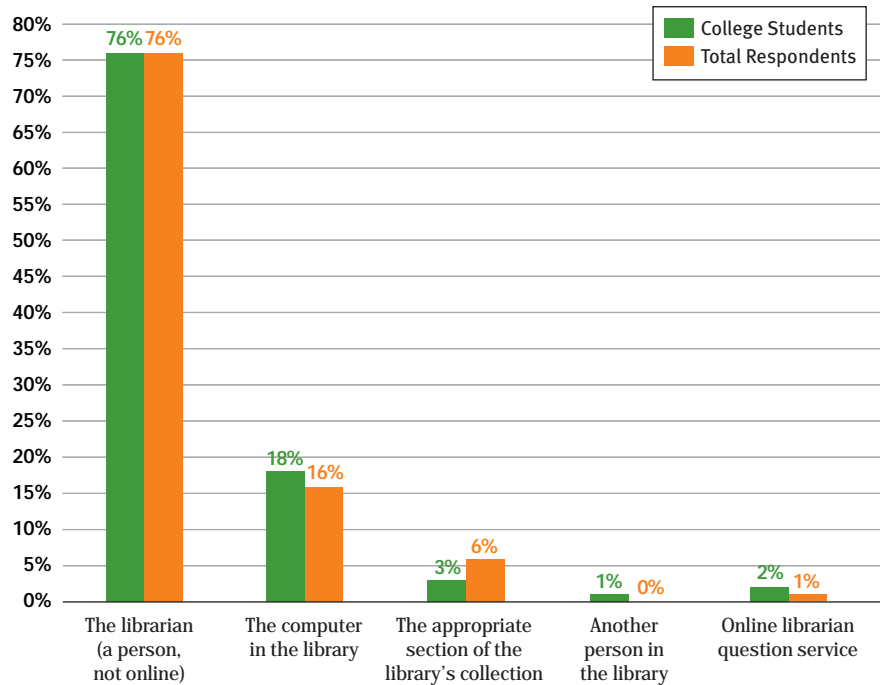
*When college students seek help at the library, librarians are the clear choice.*

Of the 46 percent of college students who have sought help using the library's electronic resources, 76 percent of them indicated a *librarian* was their first choice as a source for help. Responses for sources of help were very similar among college students and total respondents.

### First Source of Help at the Library— by College Students and Total Respondents

What is the first source you typically go to for help with your problem?

Base: Respondents who sought help at the library.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1040.

*more staff would be helpful*

57-year-old graduate student from Canada

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1240, "If you could provide one piece of advice to your library, what would it be?"

## 2.5 Familiarity with the Library Web Site

*Most college students have used a library Web site.*

Respondents were asked about their familiarity with library Web sites, the main point of access to libraries' catalogs and resources. College student respondents are more familiar with library Web sites than the total respondents.

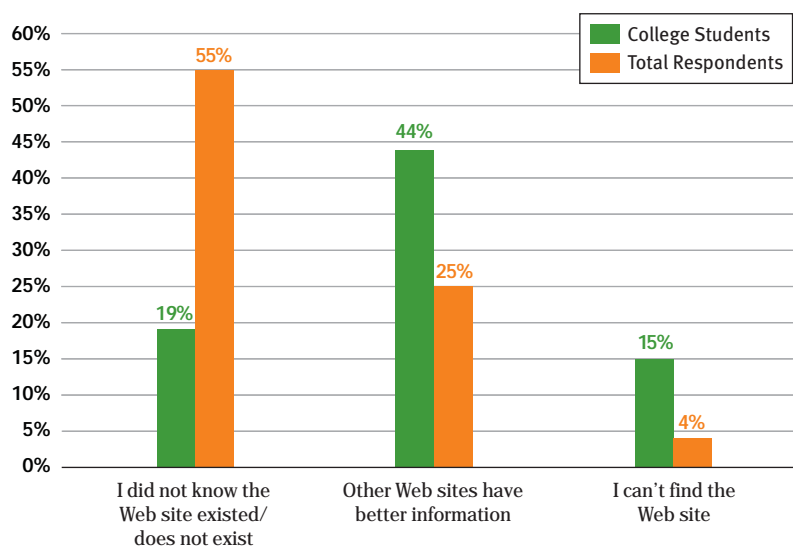
Most college students know the library Web site exists, and 35 percent are either *extremely familiar* or *very familiar* with the library Web site. Among college students who have never used an online library Web site, the main reason is that *other Web sites have better information* (44 percent). Nineteen percent of college students say they *did not know it existed or it does not exist* and 15 percent reported they *could not find the library Web site*.

For the total respondents who reported they have never visited an online library Web site, *I did not know the Web site existed/does not exist* is the primary reason cited for lack of use. Fifty-five percent of total respondents report they *did not know the library Web site exists* or say *it does not exist*.

### Reasons for Never Using the Online Library Web Site— by College Students and Total Respondents

Why haven't you ever used the online library Web site?

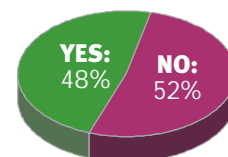
Base: Respondents who indicated they do not visit the library online, question 815.



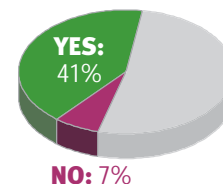
Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1090.

### Accessing the Library from the Web— by College Students

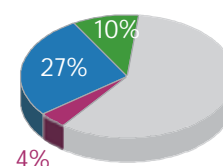
Have you ever started your search for information using a search engine and ended up at a library Web site?



If yes... did you use the library Web site?



If yes, did the library Web site fulfill your information needs?



**27%: YES**  
but I also had to use other resources

**10%: YES**  
the only resource I needed to use

**4%: NO**  
not enough information available

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, questions 1005, 1010, 1015.

## 2.6 The Internet Search Engine, the Library and the Librarian

*Libraries are seen as more trustworthy/credible and as providing more accurate information than search engines. Search engines are seen as more reliable, cost-effective, easy to use, convenient and fast.*

Earlier in this report, we reviewed data that show search engines are the preferred starting place for survey respondents when searching for information. Respondents were asked to compare search engines and libraries against a set of seven performance attributes.

Total respondents and college students rate libraries higher than search engines along two of the seven performance attributes: *trustworthy/credible sources of information* and *accurate*. Seventy-seven percent of college students and 60 percent of total respondents indicate libraries are best described using the attribute *trustworthy/credible*, while 76 percent of college students and 56 percent of total respondents indicate that libraries are best described using the attribute *accurate (quality information)*.

Search engines are rated higher than libraries by total respondents and college students in five of the seven performance attributes: reliability, cost-effectiveness, ease of use, convenience and speed.

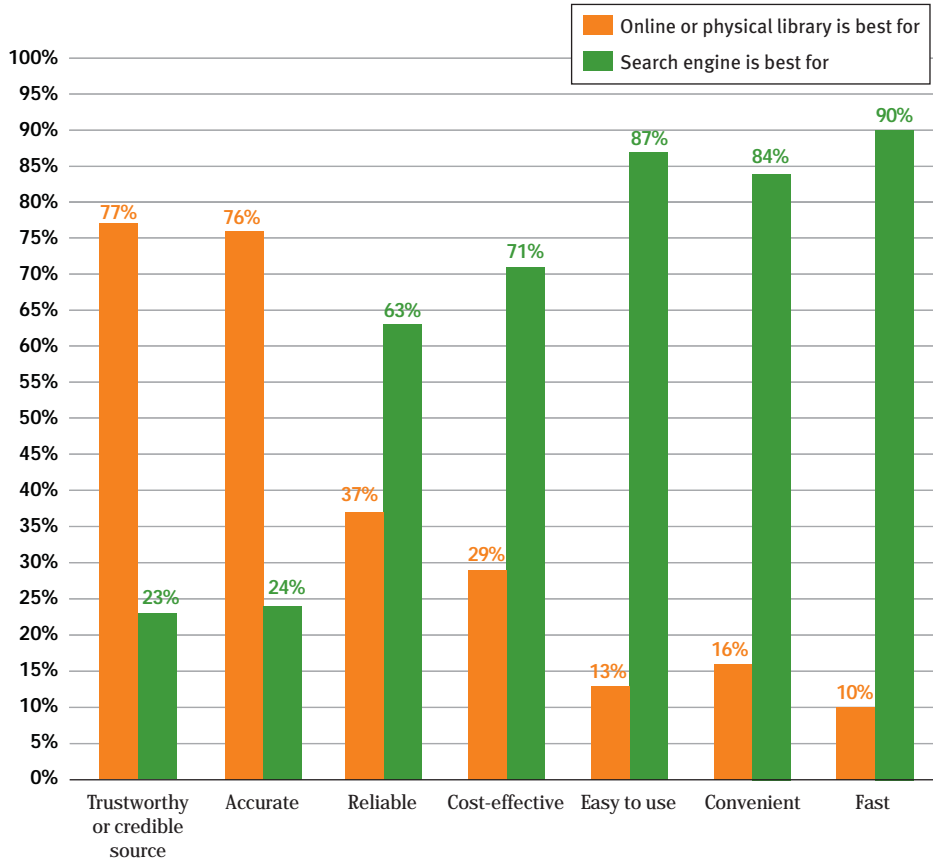
*Have to actually go into the library  
Takes alot of time to search  
through all the books*

18-year-old undergraduate from the United Kingdom

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812b, "Please list two negative associations with the library."

## Attributes of the Library and Search Engine— by College Students

Comparing an online or physical library to a search engine, please indicate which source is best described by the following:



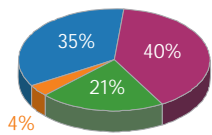
Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1355.

## Librarians and the Search Process

*Respondents who have used a librarian for assistance agree that librarians add value to the search process.*

We reviewed data reporting the percent of college student respondents who have sought help from a librarian when looking for information or using electronic information resources. Those survey respondents who have used the assistance of a librarian were also asked to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree that the librarian adds value to the search process. The data from both college students and total respondents were similar. Seventy-five percent of college students *completely agree* or *agree* that the librarian adds value to the search process, while 77 percent of total respondents *completely agree* or *agree* that the librarian adds value to the search process.

### Librarian Adds Value to the Search Process— by College Students

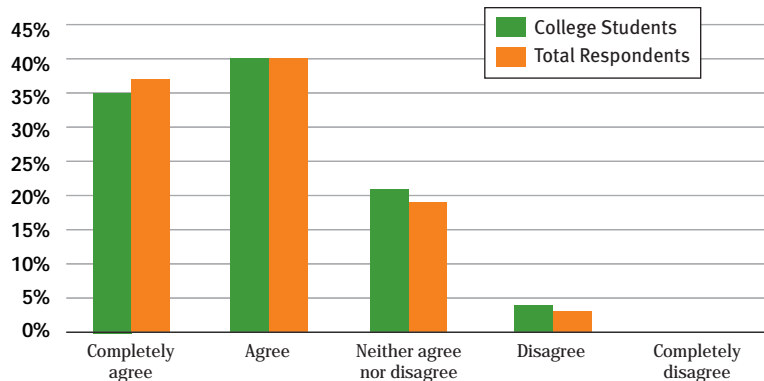


- Completely agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Completely disagree 0%

### Librarian Adds Value to the Search Process— by College Students and Total Respondents

Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree that the librarian adds value to the information search process.

Base: Respondents who have used a librarian for assistance.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1070.

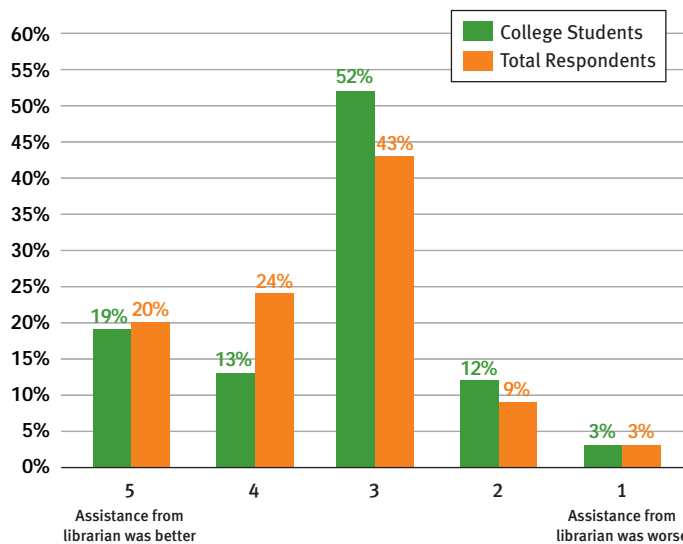
## Comparing Assistance—Search Engines and Librarians

Respondents who indicated they have used a search engine to assist in searching for information and who also indicated they have sought assistance from a librarian in the process of using library electronic resources or in searching for information were then asked to compare that assistance. Fifty-two percent of college students responded that the assistance they received from the librarian was the same as the search engine, compared to 43 percent of total respondents.

### Assistance from Search Engines and Librarians— *by College Students and Total Respondents*

Please compare the assistance you received from a librarian to that of the assistance from a search engine on a 5-point scale.

Base: Respondents who have used a librarian and a search engine for assistance.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1065.

*Hire more staff to assist  
not just put away books.*

21-year-old undergraduate from the United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1240, "If you could provide one piece of advice to your library, what would it be?"

## Satisfaction with Search Engines and Librarians

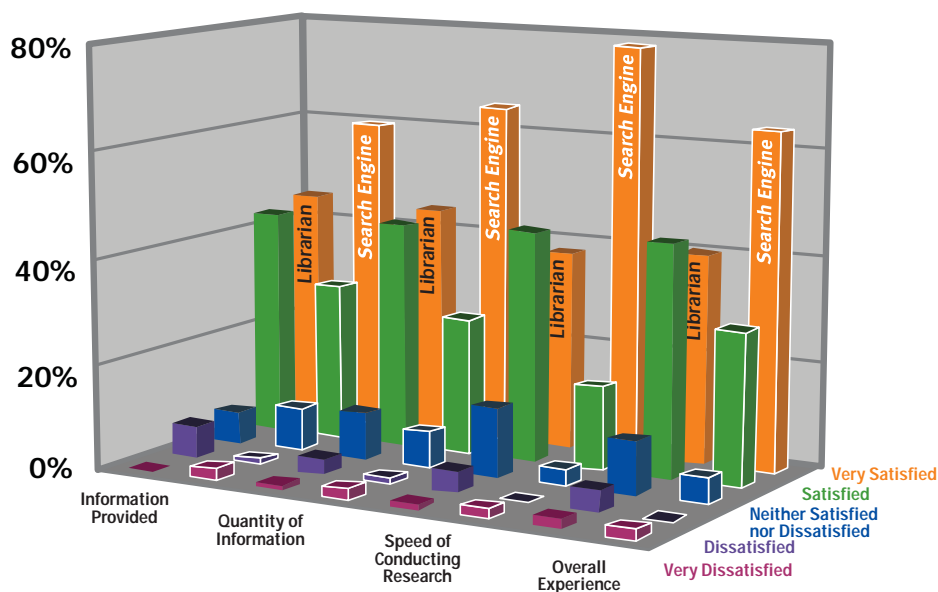
*College students are satisfied with both librarians and search engines.*

Respondents who indicated they have used the assistance of a librarian and a search engine were asked to indicate their levels of satisfaction with the information provided, the quantity of information received, the speed with which the search was conducted and their overall search experience from the two sources.

### Satisfaction with the Librarian and Search Engine— by College Students

Based on the most recent search you conducted through (librarian/search engine), how satisfied were you in each of the following areas?

Base: Respondents who have used a search engine or a librarian.



Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, questions 665 and 1050.

### Satisfaction with the Information Provided

Levels of satisfaction for both the librarian and the search engine with respect to the information provided were high among college students. Eighty-eight percent of college students were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the information provided from their most recent search conducted with the assistance of a librarian, while 90 percent were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the information provided using a search engine.

The results of total respondents were similar. Eighty-eight percent of total respondents indicated they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the information provided from their most recent search conducted with the assistance of a librarian. Eighty-nine percent indicated they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the information provided from their most recent search using a search engine.

### Satisfaction with the Quantity of Information Provided

Eighty-seven percent of college students were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the quantity of information provided from their most recent search using the assistance of a librarian, and 91 percent were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the amount of information provided in their most recent search using a search engine.

The results of total respondents again were similar. Eighty-four percent of total respondents were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the quantity of information provided from their most recent search using the assistance of a librarian. Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the amount of information provided in their most recent search using a search engine.

### Satisfaction with the Speed of Conducting the Search

Satisfaction with the speed of conducting the search is the attribute for which there is the largest difference between a search engine and a librarian. More college students are *very satisfied* with the speed of conducting the search using a search engine compared to using a librarian, 78 percent and 38 percent, respectively. When *very satisfied* and *satisfied* are combined, ratings are more similar to the speed of conducting the search using a librarian and using a search engine, 82 percent and 94 percent, respectively.

Total respondents again had similar responses. Seventy-two percent of total respondents were *very satisfied* with the speed of conducting research using a search engine, and 41 percent of total respondents were *very satisfied* with the speed of conducting research with a librarian. When *very satisfied* and *satisfied* ratings are combined, the difference is less drastic: 81 percent for a librarian vs. 92 percent for a search engine.

### Satisfaction with the Overall Experience of the Search by the Librarian and Search Engine

Ninety-three percent of college students were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the overall experience of using a search engine, while 84 percent were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the overall experience of using a librarian.

Total survey respondents again responded similarly. Ninety percent of total respondents were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the overall experience of using a search engine. Eighty-four percent of total respondents were satisfied with the overall experience of using a librarian.

*Can be hard  
to find good  
information.  
Slower than  
the internet.*

20-year-old undergraduate  
from Canada

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 812b, "Please list two negative associations with the library."

## 2.7 Keeping Up-to-Date with Library Resources

*Nearly half of all college student respondents use the library Web site to stay current with library resources. Over a quarter do not keep up with library resources at all.*

### more signs

18-year-old undergraduate from the United States

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1240, "If you could provide one piece of advice to your library, what would it be?"

College students are likely to use the *library Web site*, in addition to *calling or walking in the library*, to keep up-to-date with library resources. Almost twice as many college students use the *library Web site* to keep up with resources available at the library as do all respondents, at 49 percent and 25 percent respectively.

Twenty-six percent of college students indicate they *do not keep up with resources available*. Of total respondents, 33 percent indicate they *do not keep up with resources available* at the library.

### Keeping Up-to-Date on Library Resources— by College Students and Total Respondents

How do you typically keep abreast of the resources available to you at your library?  
(Select all that apply.)

|  | College Students | Total Respondents |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Library Web site   | 49%              | 25%               |
| Call or walk in the library                                  | 48%              | 48%               |
| I don't keep up with resources available                     | 26%              | 33%               |
| Point of use materials (signs/fliers/posters at the library) | 25%              | 22%               |
| School bulletin boards                                       | 21%              | 6%                |
| E-mail lists   | 19%              | 10%               |
| Friends/neighbors/relatives                                  | 18%              | 18%               |
| Community/local paper  | 9%               | 20%               |

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, question 1215.

