

METHODOLOGY

OCLC commissioned Harris Interactive, Inc. to field a blind study to evaluate library resource use, perceptions and impressions of libraries, and people’s preferences for using information discovery tools. We also measured the impact current economic conditions had on those preferences and perceptions. Harris drew a sample of potential respondents from the Harris Poll Online panel consisting of millions of individuals worldwide. The OCLC Market Research team analyzed and summarized survey results to produce this report.






The online survey was open to residents of Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States and was conducted in English. A total of 2,229 respondents, age 14 and older, were surveyed between January 6 and January 13, 2010.

This report summarizes findings from U.S. respondents. The collected U.S. data have an overall statistical margin of error of +/- 2.68 percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the online population in the U.S. The online population may or may not represent the general population. Based on the statistics from www.internetworldstats.com, 77% of the U.S. population have Internet access. All survey data were weighted demographically to represent the online general population for each country.

In general, question wording and issues related to conducting surveys may introduce some error or bias into opinion poll findings. A total of 100 questions were included in the survey. The survey included a series of branching questions such that a participant’s response to a question could lead to a series of follow-up questions.

The survey also asked open-ended questions to ensure that respondents had the opportunity to provide input in their own words. The survey results included more than 20,000 verbatim responses, a subset of which were categorized by the OCLC Market

Total U.S. respondents

BY AGE		RESPONDENTS	
		# OF	% OF
	Age 14–17	234	18%
	Age 18–24	353	26%
	Age 25–45	176	13%
	Age 46–64	196	15%
	Age 65+	375	28%

BY COLLEGE STUDENT		RESPONDENTS	
		# OF	% OF
Total		256	19%
▶	Graduate		15%
▶	Undergraduate		85%



U.S. data have an overall statistical margin of error of +/- 2.68% at the 95% confidence interval.

Percentage of U.S. population with Internet access

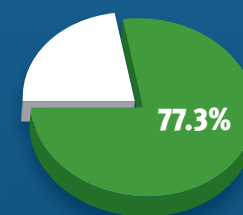
310,232,863
POPULATION (2010 EST.)

239,232,863
INTERNET USERS

12%
USER GROWTH (2005–2010)

Source: www.internetworldstats.com

Population with Internet access in 2010 (% of population)



Research team and presented in this report. Verbatim responses from questions are also presented throughout the report. All verbatim comments are presented as entered by survey respondents, including spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.

Respondents were asked to identify the library that they use primarily (e.g., public, college/university, community college, school, corporate, other) and were asked to answer all library-related question with that library in mind.

“College students” is used in the report to refer to postsecondary students, both graduate and undergraduate, responding to the survey.

The survey results are also reported by employment status in some instances, comparing those who have had a negative impact in their employment status during the recession to those who reported no changes. “Economically Impacted” is defined as those who reported a negative impact in their employment status, based on a roll-up of respondents who answered the question, “What changes have occurred in your employment status due to the current economic environment?” with any of the following responses:

- Laid off from job and still unemployed
- Laid off from job and took another job with lower pay
- Laid off from job and took another job with similar or higher pay
- Received a reduction in pay at current employer
- Have had to work more than one job to make ends meet
- Have had to increase hours of work to make ends meet
- Reentered the work force (e.g., retired, stay-at-home parent, student, etc.) to make ends meet.

“Not Impacted” is defined as those respondents who responded “No changes.”