

A Snapshot of How Californians are Finding and Using Information



A comparison of the results of two Zogby International Polls
2008

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introduction

New technologies and evolving social trends are changing the way in which people find and use information. Ubiquitous access to online information resources and search engines have enabled every person with access to a computer or mobile device with connectivity to the Internet to search for the information they need to navigate daily life.

As part of efforts to create new information service models that fit into this ever changing information landscape, the Metropolitan Cooperative Library System commissioned the creation of two surveys with Zogby International in 2008. The goal of the surveys was to get information from Californians about how they find and use information.

The first survey was done 1/7/08-1/8/08 by email. A sampling of Zogby International's online panel, which is representative of the adult population of the US, was invited to participate. Slight weights were added age, race, and gender to more accurately reflect the population. The margin of error was +/-3.8 percentage points. There were 706 adults in the state of California that participated in the survey.

The second survey was available via participating California public library websites from 3/4/08 – 3/31/08. This was not a representative sample of Californians. It was a sample of library users who visited their local California public library's website. There were 1926 surveys that were completed.

A version of the survey was available in Spanish. There were 19 surveys taken in Spanish.

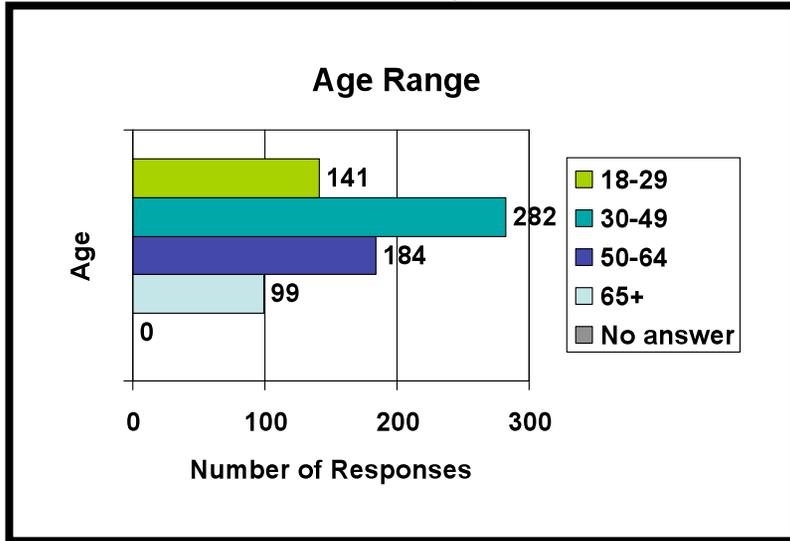
The following report shares the overall results of both of the surveys and some key observations, including some additional pieces of information related to the raw data.

The data collected will be used as we collectively think about how we can provide information services that not only meet our users needs, but will delight them.

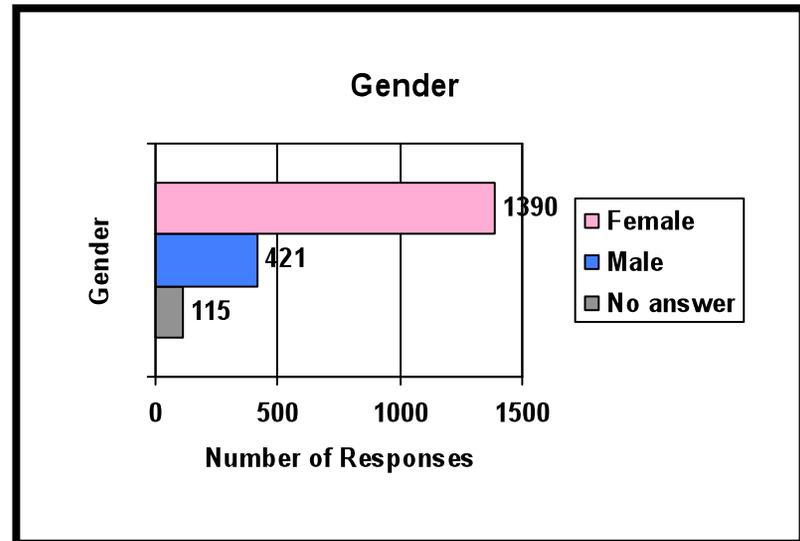
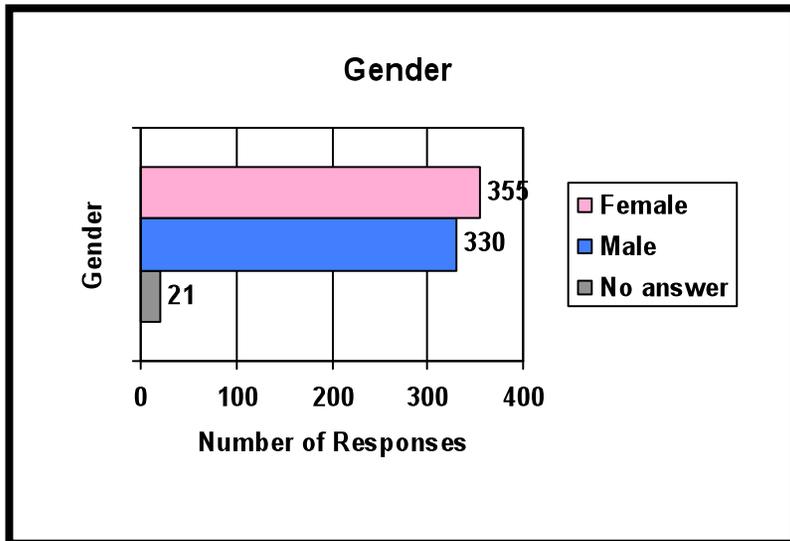
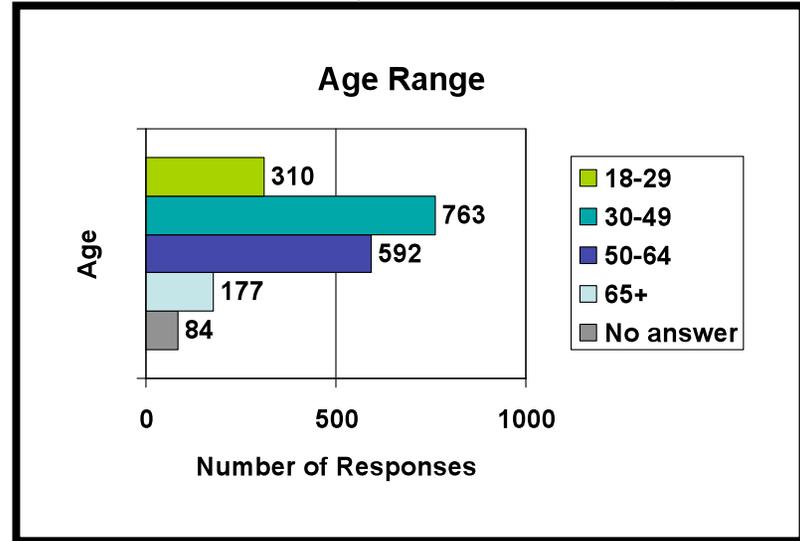


demographics of survey participants

January 2008 Survey
via email with 706 survey participants

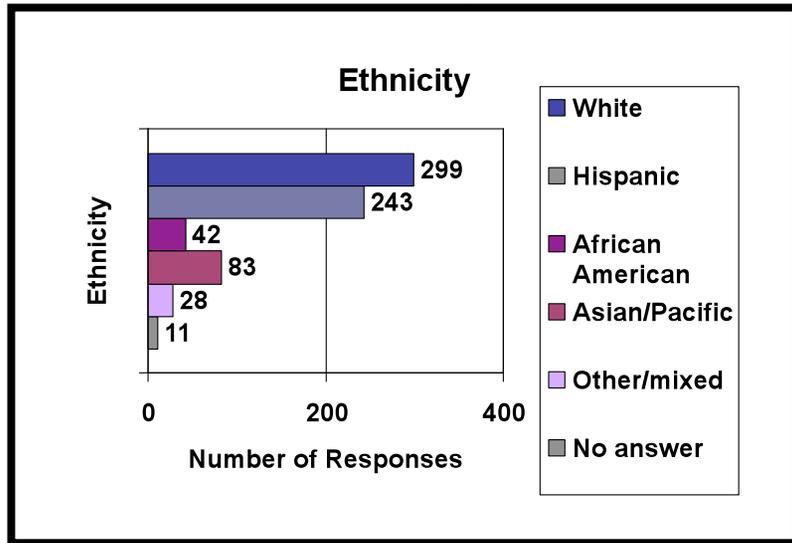


March 2008 Survey
via link posted on public library websites with 1926 survey participants

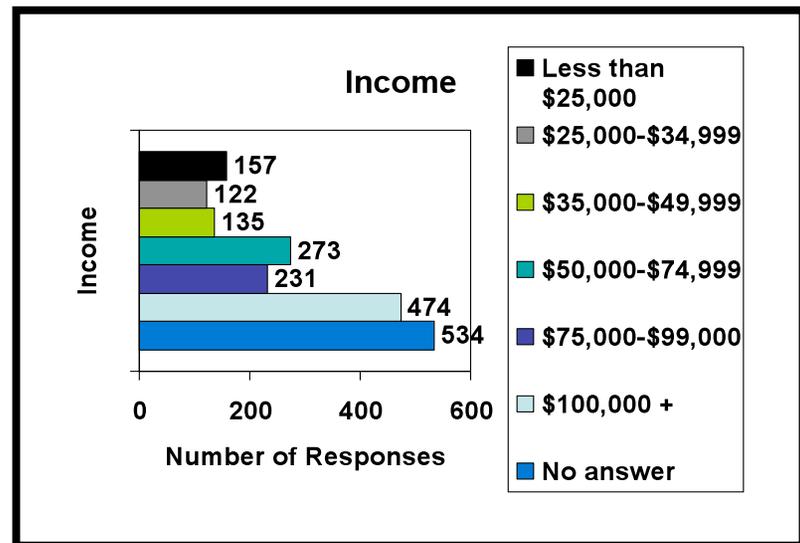
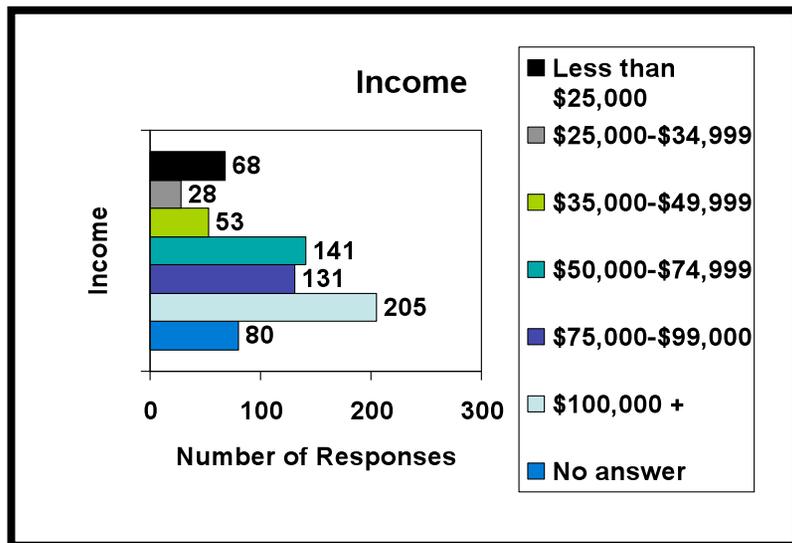
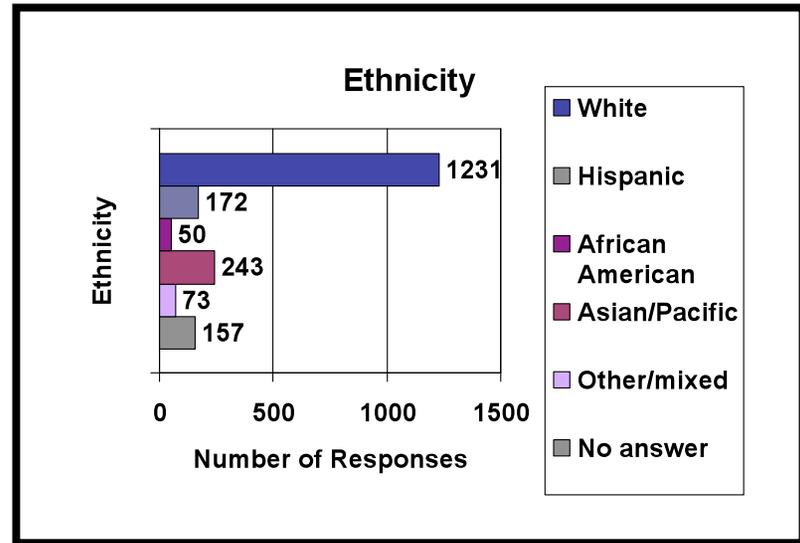


demographics of survey participants

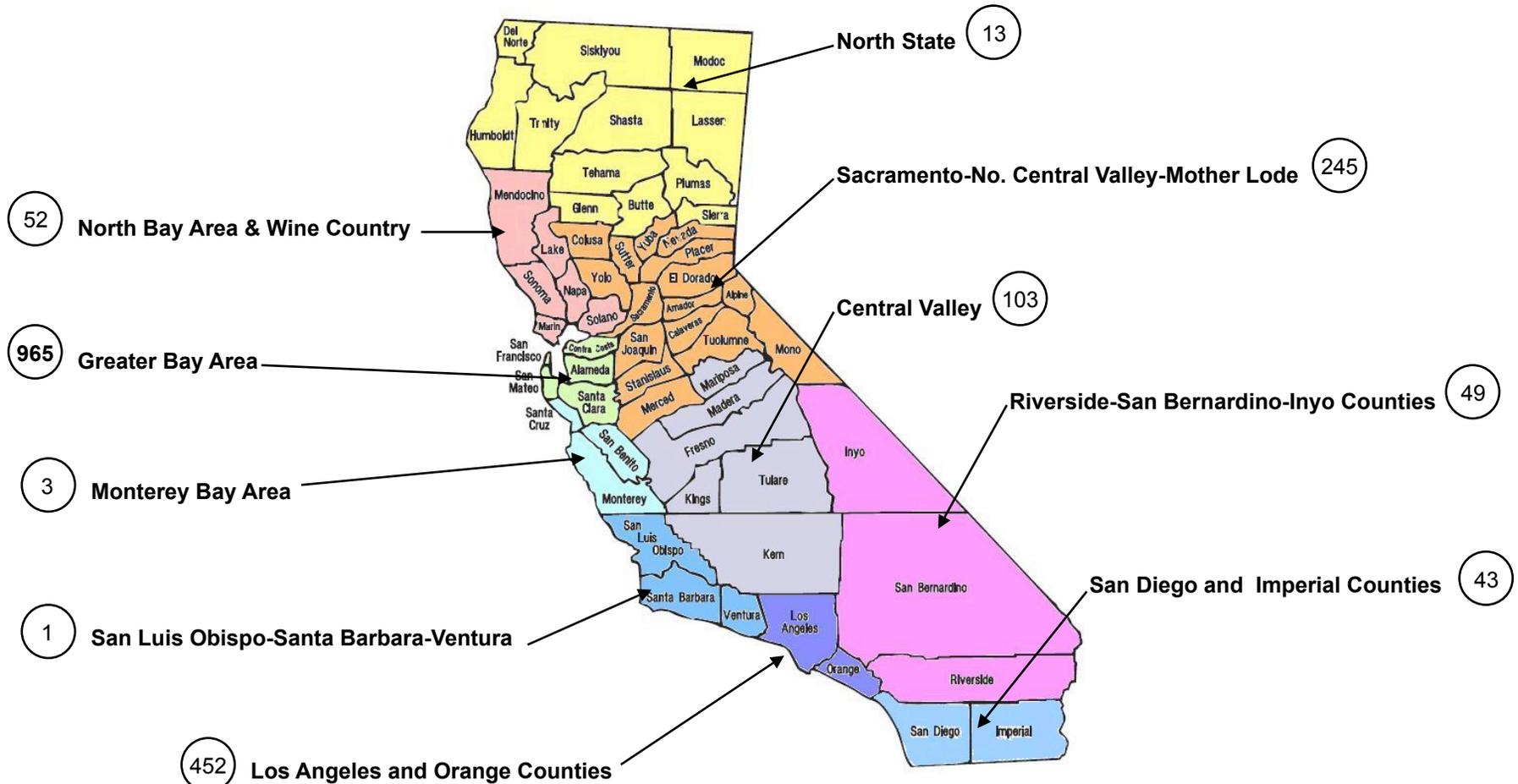
January 2008 Survey
via email with 706 survey participants



March 2008 Survey
via link posted on public library websites with 1926 survey participants



March 2008 Survey number of survey participants by region

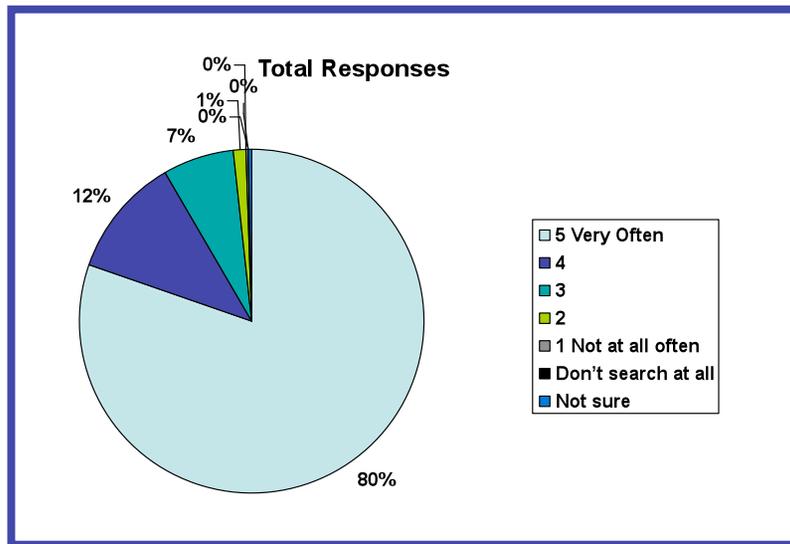


NOTE: This data was not collected in the January email survey.

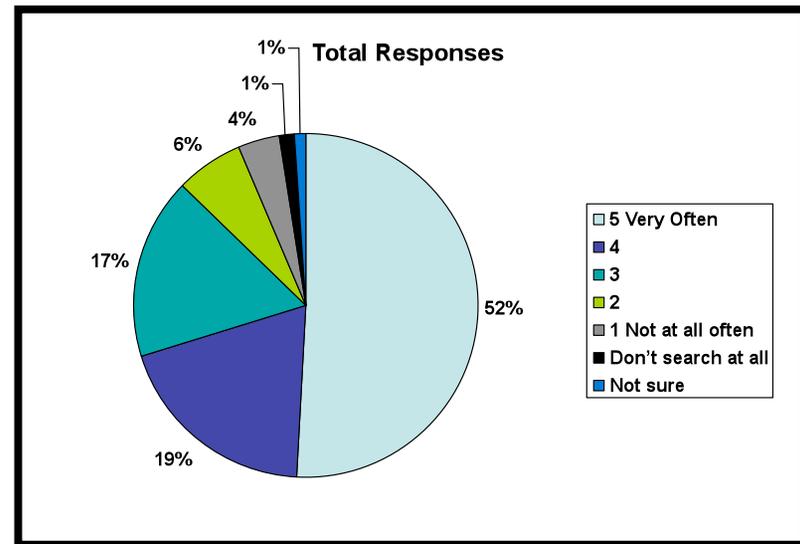
question 1

How often do you find yourself searching for information about a specific topic, or do you not find yourself searching for information at all?

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



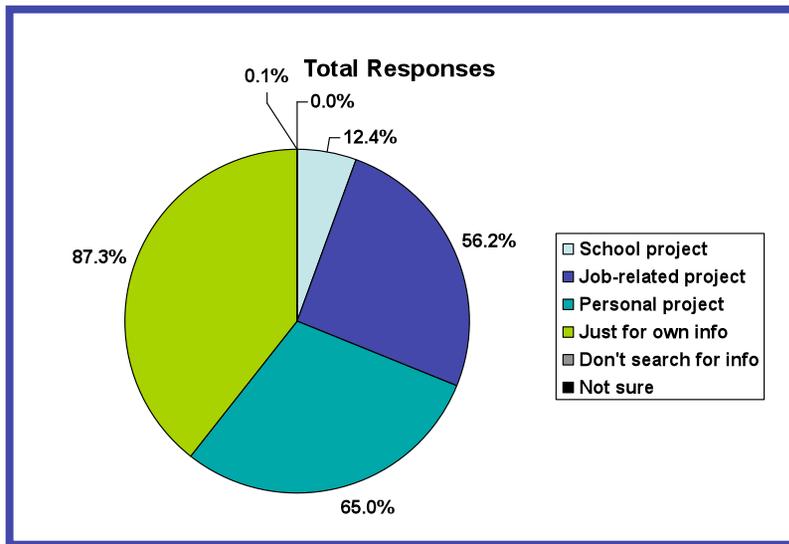
Key Observations:

- 92% of the email survey participants search for information about a specific topic VERY OFTEN or just below at 4.
- 71% of the web survey participants search for information about a specific topic VERY OFTEN or just below at 4.
- More than 70% of all survey participants are searching for information.
- Looking at the raw data, across all age groups, ethnicities, and income, VERY OFTEN was the most selected response for this question.

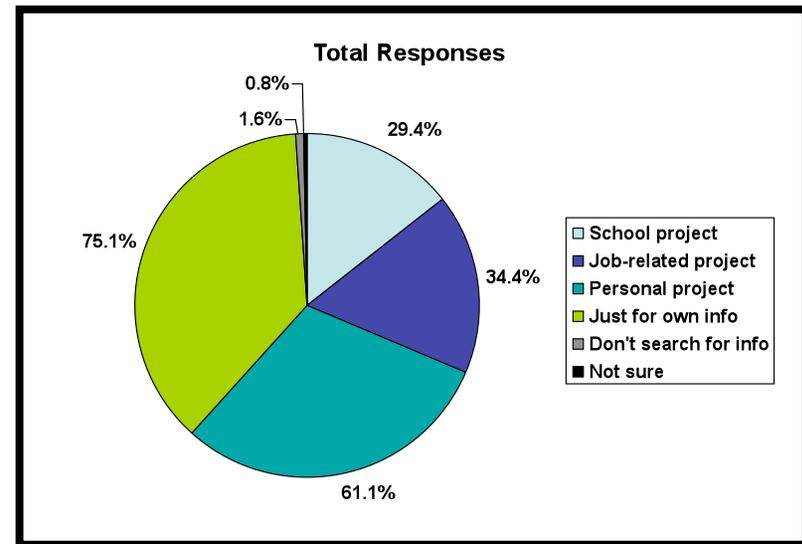
question 2

When you are searching for information are you doing it for a school project, a job-related project, for a personal project or just for your own information?

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



Key Observations:

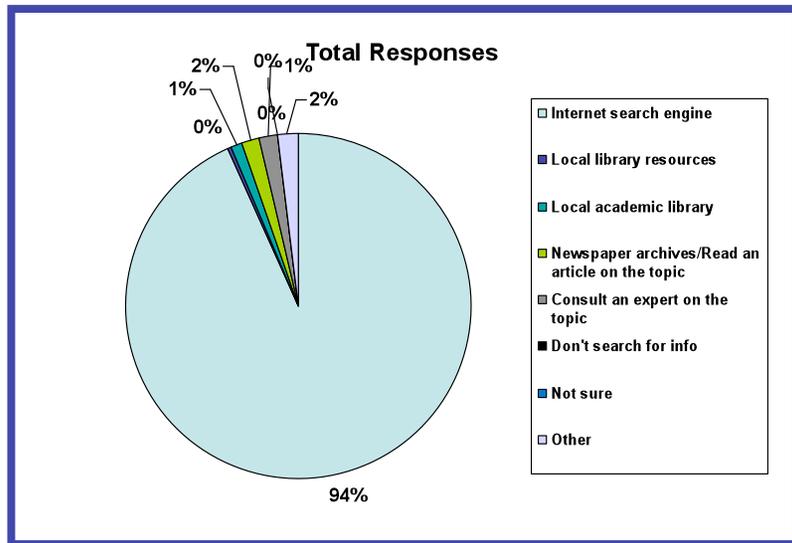
- The largest majority of responses to this question were for JUST FOR OWN INFORMATION or PERSONAL PROJECTS.
- Job related searching was the third highest response for both surveys.
- Looking at the raw data from the March 2008 survey, 58.7% of those 18-29 responded that they were searching for information for a school project, which was still 3rd most frequent response after JUST FOR OWN INFORMATION or PERSONAL PROJECTS.

NOTE: Percentages do not equal 100% because participants could select more than one response.

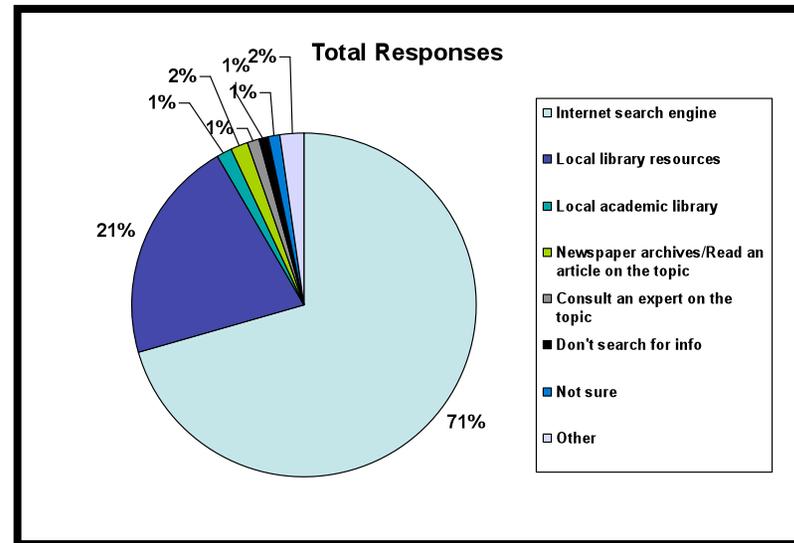
question 3

When searching for information which resources do you most often begin with?

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



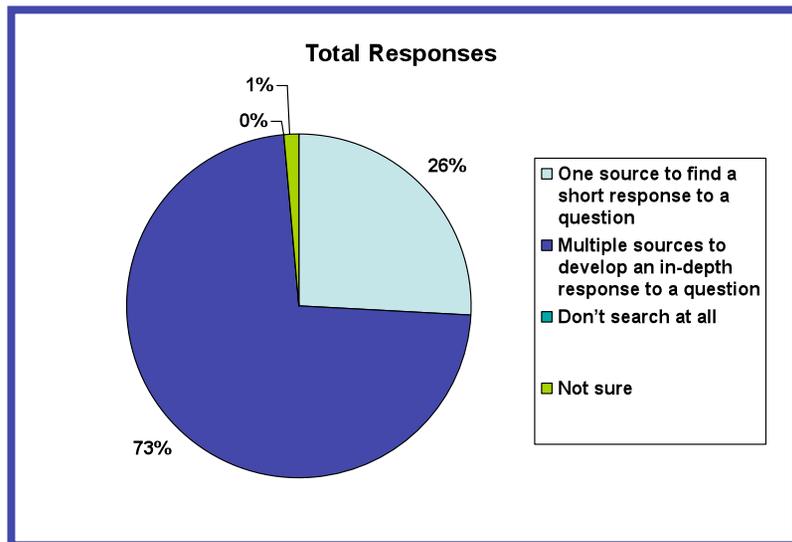
Key Observations:

- No great surprise. The majority of survey participants regardless of demographics reported that they start with an Internet search engine.
- For the library users, the library is their next resource of choice. For the participants of the email survey, it was other, which included responses like personal library collection and various resources.

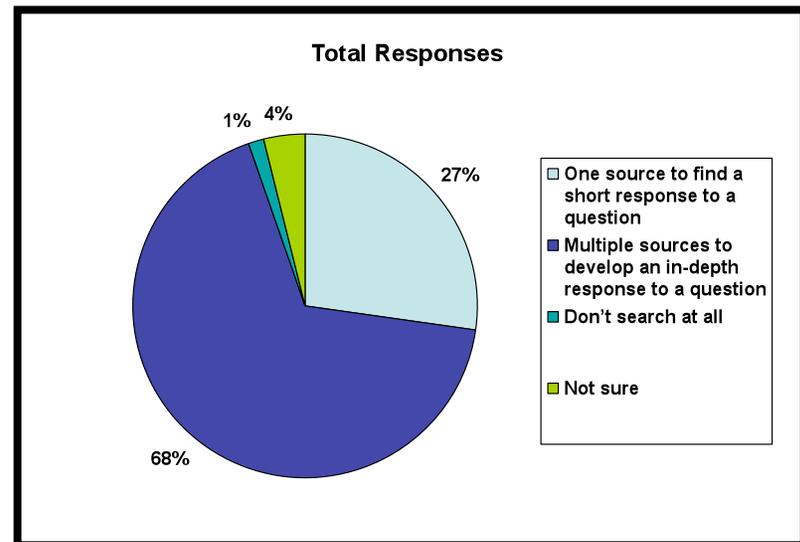
question 4

When searching for information on a topic for a specific need, do you find that you are most often looking for one source to find a short response to answer a question, or are you looking for multiple sources to develop an in-depth response?

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



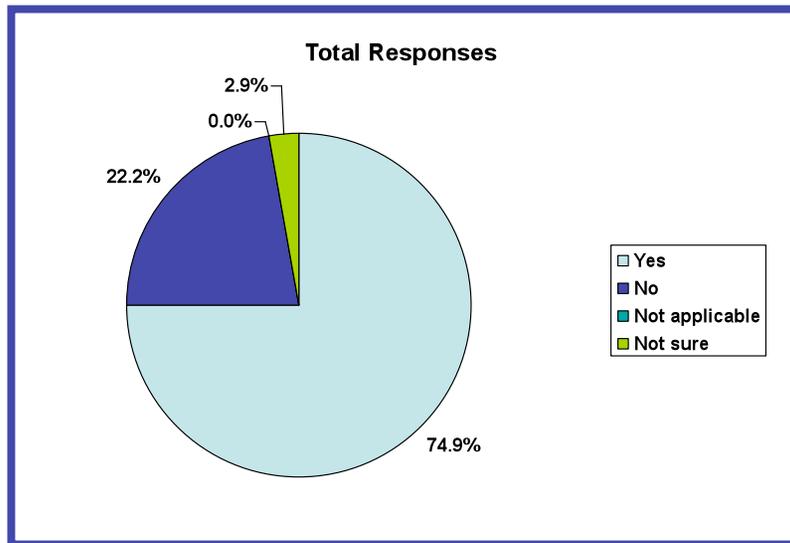
Key Observations:

- It is clear that most people are looking for multiple sources to develop an in-depth response. This was true across all demographics.

question 5

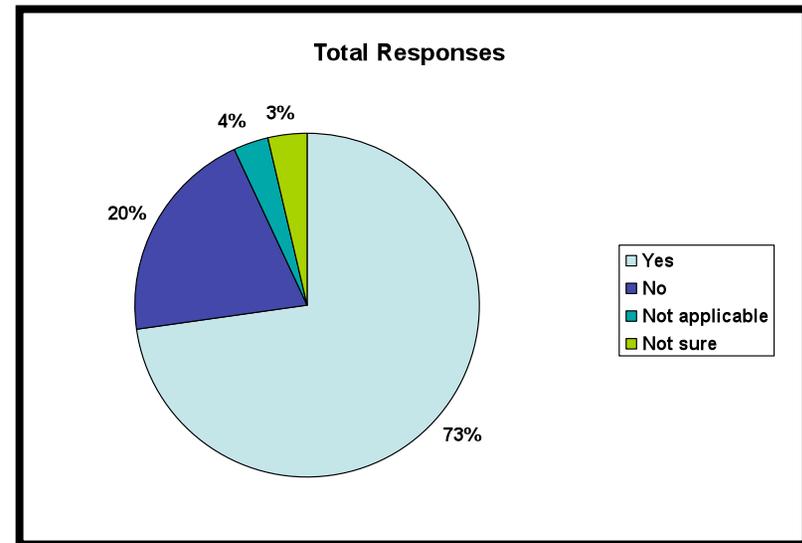
When you are doing an Internet search from home, do you ever look for library materials that may be available to you on the Internet?

January 2008 Survey



note: only 21 responses were received for this question.

March 2008 Survey



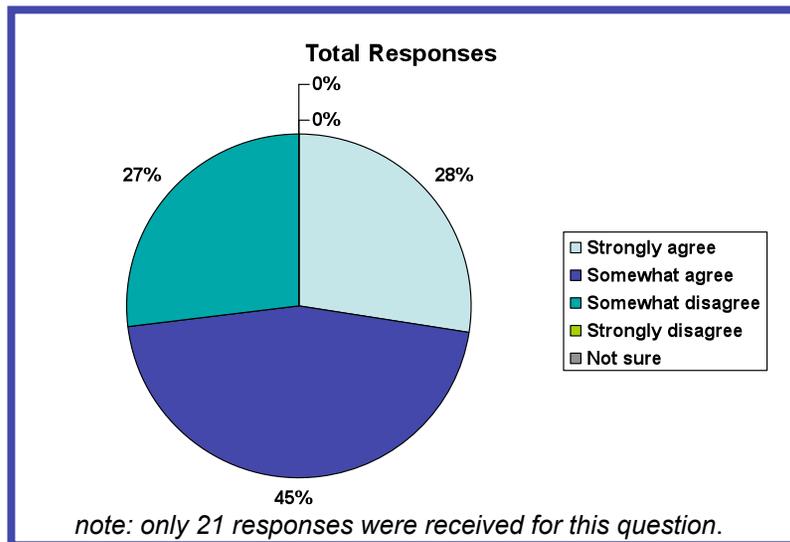
Key Observations:

- Of the participants surveyed in March, it is clear that a majority do look for what's available at the library.
- There were only 21 responses to this question from the participants of the January email survey. Even though a low response rate, the results are very similar to the March survey.
- Of the questions that related to libraries, there were few responses from the email survey. It is possible that this reflects that this group does not use the public library regularly.

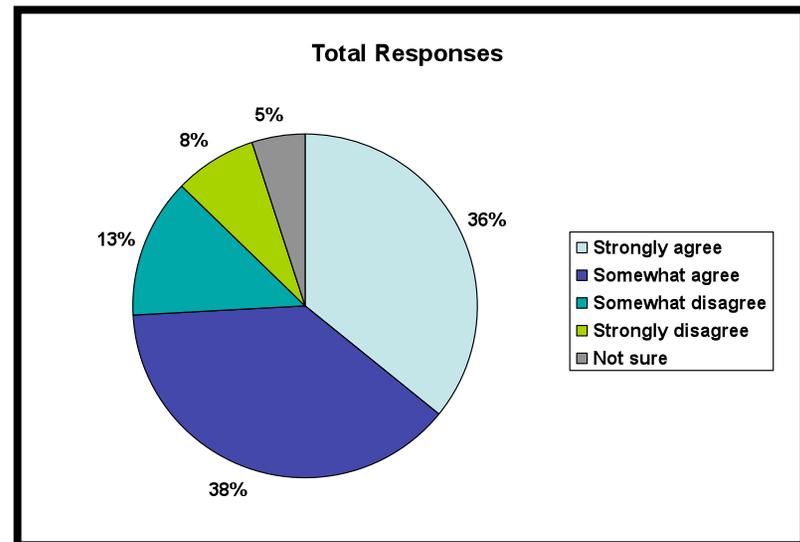
question 6

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree that you visit your local library because you are aware there is information available which is only accessible at the library?

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



Key Observations:

- There were only 21 responses to this question from the participants of the January email survey, but of that group the majority strongly or somewhat agreed. A larger percentage of this group disagreed
- Of the questions that related to libraries, there were few responses from the email survey. It is possible that this reflects that this group does not use the public library regularly.
- Of the March responses, less than 30% did not agree or were unsure. More than 70% are aware of the local library resources.

question 7

When you visit your local library, what types of information are you looking for?

January 2008 Survey

March 2008 Survey

Types of Information	Percentage
Specialized info to supplement info you found on the Internet	63.7%
Do-it-yourself Information	55%
Health/Medical Information	50.1%
Government information/Political news	40%
Information pertaining to job related assignments	36.8%
Legal/Law information	26.2%
Information pertaining to a school or training assignment	19%
Other	17.1%
Financial Information	15.9%
Business/Career Information	12.2%
Historical/Genealogical info	11.5%
Not sure	8.9%
I am not looking for information	8.0%

Types of Information	Percentage
Do-it-yourself Information	50.5%
Specialized info to supplement info you found on the Internet	44.6%
Health/Medical Information	41.2%
Info pertaining to a school or training assignment	31.4%
Historical/Genealogical info	27.5%
Information pertaining to job related assignments	26.7%
Business/Career Information	25.3%
Financial Information	23.2%
Government information/Political news	22.1%
Legal/Law information	16.3%
Other	9.8%
I am not looking for information	8.8%
Not sure	4.0%

note: only 21 responses were received for this question.

Key Observations:

- The top three categories were the same for both groups.
- Users want supplemental information to their searching and they want to be able to find do-it-yourself info.

question 8

What types of resources are you using when you visit your local library?

January 2008 Survey

March 2008 Survey

Types of Resources	Percentage
General reference link	24.3%
Books - Non-Fiction	20.5%
Newspaper/Journal/Magazine articles	19.4%
Federal/State/Local agencies links	16%
Other	8%
Technology resources	3.4%
Statistics	2.1%
Federal/State/Local government links	2.1%
Other library links	2.1%
Not sure	2%
Books – Fiction	0
E-Books	0
Government/Laws/Regulations	0
Genealogy and library catalogs	0
Braille and talking book links	0
Law links	0

Types of Resources	Percentage
Books - Non-Fiction	36.7%
Books - Fiction	23.4%
Other	13.9%
General reference link	5.7%
Newspaper/Journal/Magazine articles	4.8%
Other library links	3.7%
Technology resources	2.9%
Genealogy and library catalogs	2.3%
Not sure	2.2%
E-books	1.5%
Federal/State/Local government links	1.1%
Federal/State/Local agencies links	.7%
Government/Laws/Regulations	.4%
Law links	.4%
Braille and talking book links	.3%
Statistics	.2%

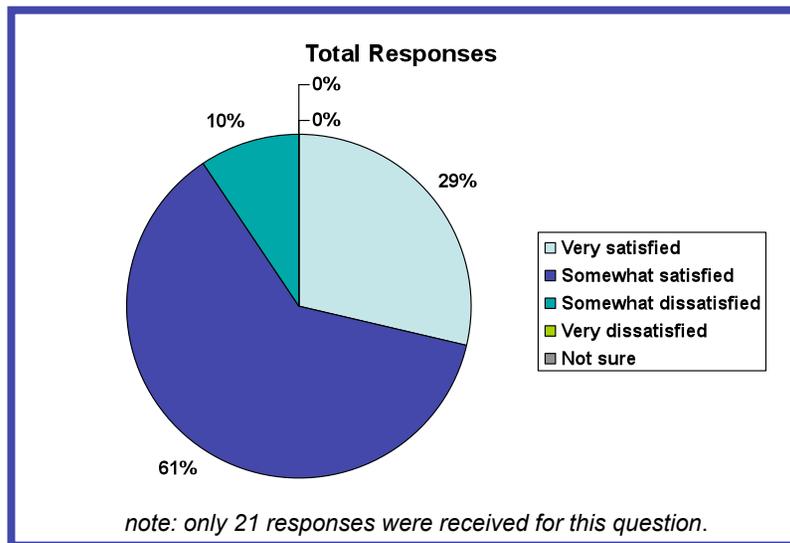
note: only 21 responses were received for this question.

Key Observations: The January survey participants want links to information. The March survey participants use books most frequently.

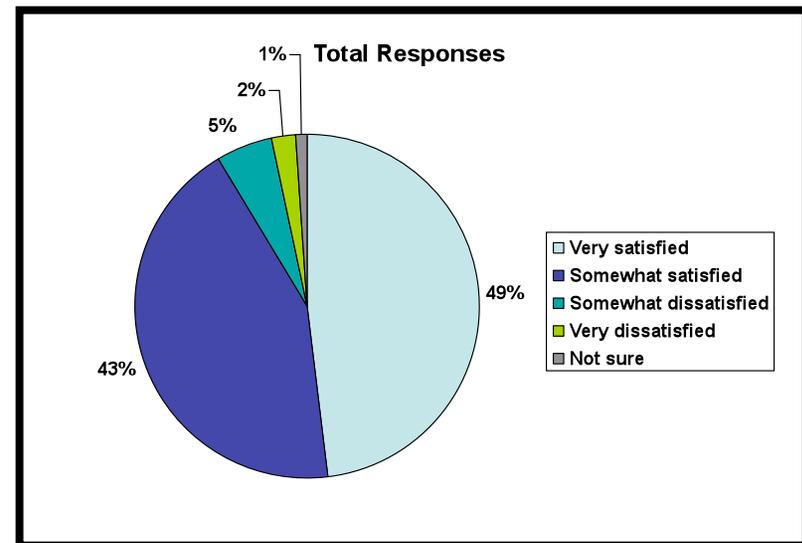
question 9

Generally speaking, when you visit your local library to find what you are looking for are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the results?

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



Key Observations:

- There were only 21 responses to this question from the participants of the January email survey, but of that group the majority selected some satisfied more frequently than the participants of the March survey.

question 10

What are the reasons why you are generally dissatisfied with the results of your search at the local library?

January 2008 Survey

Reasons for dissatisfaction	Responses
There were not enough resources available to me to conduct my research.	73%
The librarian or member of the library staff I spoke with was not very helpful.	32.6%
Other	27%
There was not enough staff to address the needs of all patrons with questions.	23.7%
The hours set for the services I need do not fit within my needs.	0
Not sure	0

note: only 2 responses were received for this question.

March 2008 Survey

Reasons for dissatisfaction	Percentage
There were not enough resources available to me to conduct my research.	75%
The hours set for the services I need do not fit within my needs.	24.3%
There was not enough staff to address the needs of all patrons with questions.	18.8%
The librarian or member of the library staff I spoke with was not very helpful.	17.4%
Other	10.4%
Not sure	7.6%

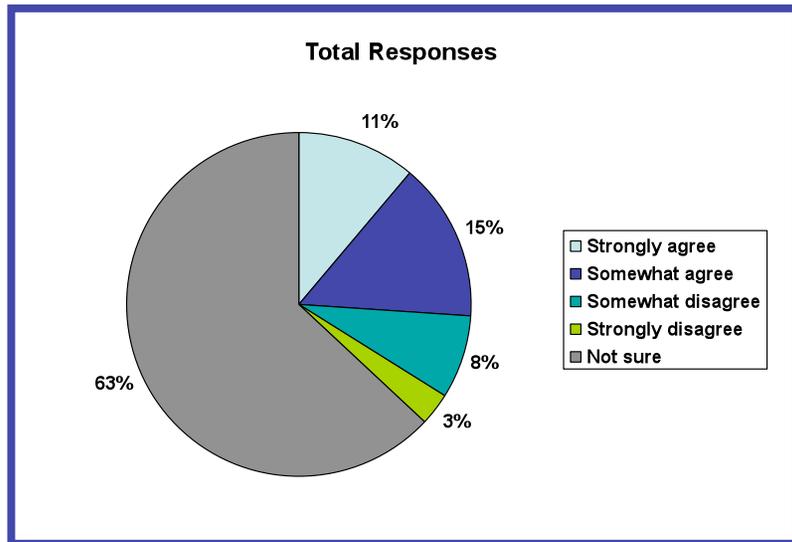
Key Observations:

- Available resources appears to be the most dominant reason that participants in the survey were dissatisfied.

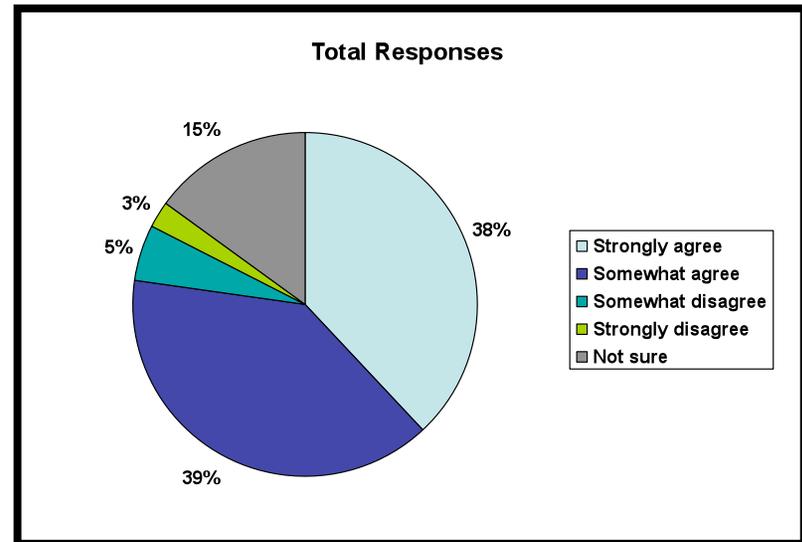
question 11

My local library has done a good job with modifying the Internet services they provide to keep up with technology changes.

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



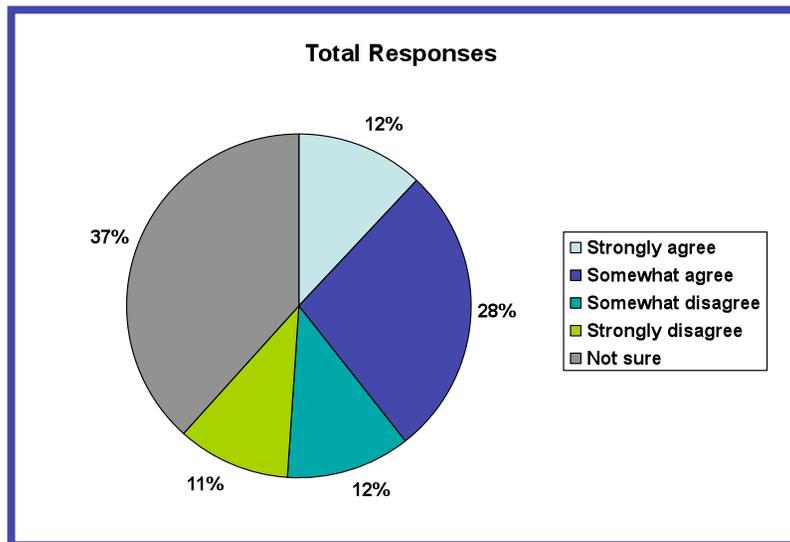
Key Observations:

- The January survey group were not sure, which is another indication that maybe this group was not a strong library using group.
- Of the March survey participants, a majority think the library is doing a good job of keeping up.
- Looking at the raw data for the March survey, those 18-49 selected somewhat agree most frequently, while those 50-65+ selected strongly agree most frequently.

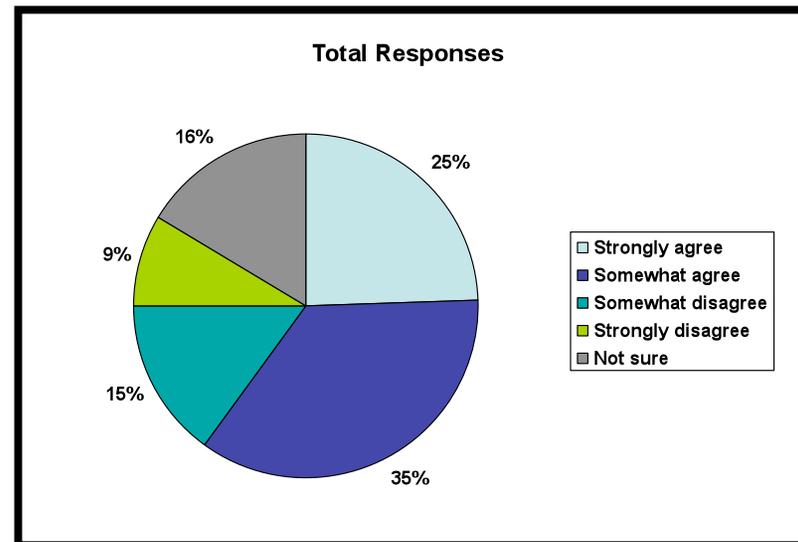
question 12

The Internet changes so frequently that I would like to see my local library offer some type of training classes so the public can keep up with the changes.

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



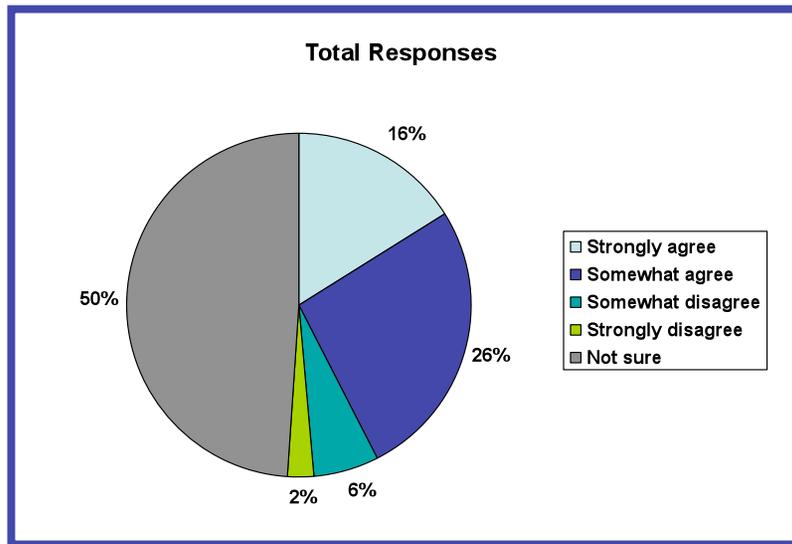
Key Observations:

- 60% of the January survey respondents disagreed or were not sure
- 60% of the March survey respondents agreed
- Looking at the raw data for the March survey, incomes of more than \$50,000 selected somewhat agree most frequently, while incomes of less than \$50,000 selected strongly agree just slightly over somewhat agree.

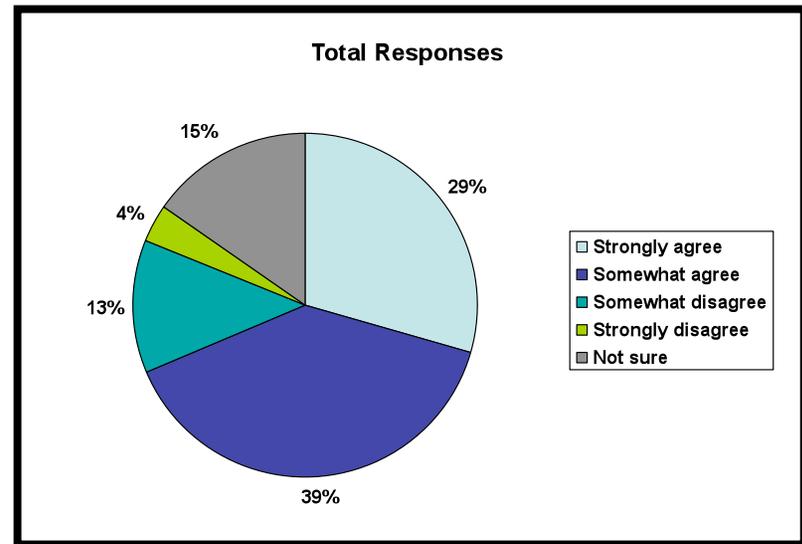
question 13

I would like to see my local library update its services to provide more timely and current information.

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



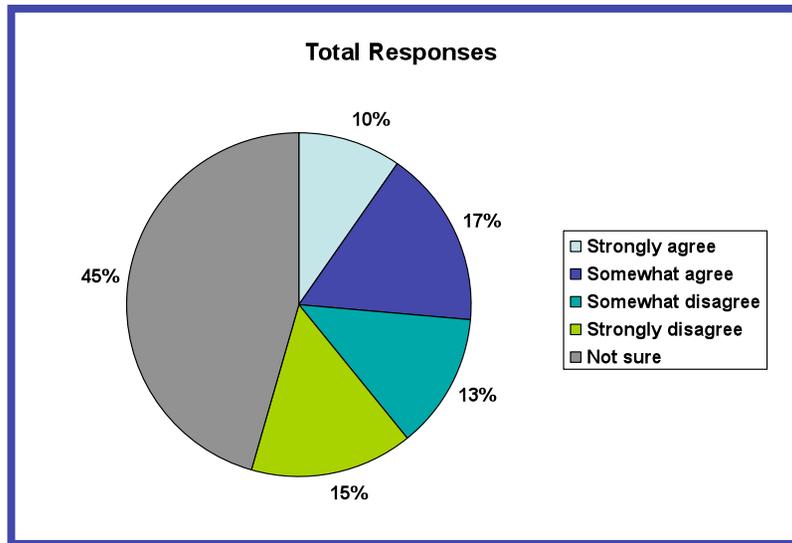
Key Observations:

- The more you use the library the more clear people seem to be about their expectations.

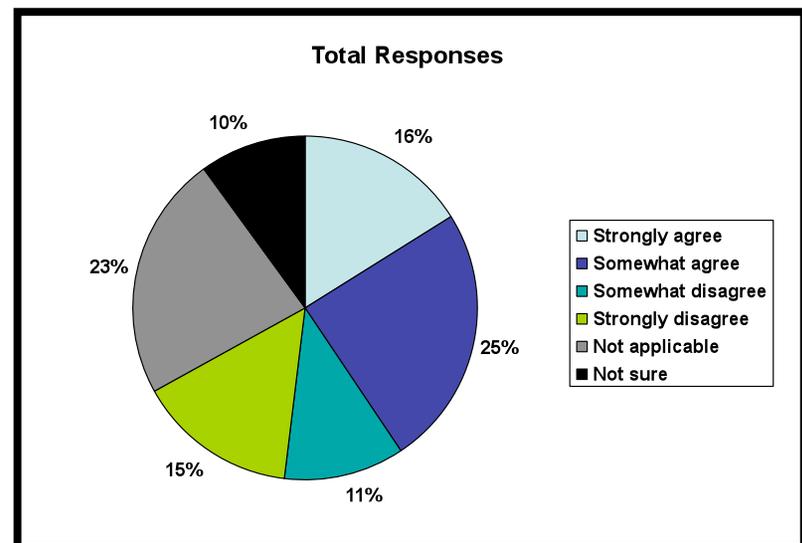
question 14

I would like to see my local library offer more multilingual information and services.

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



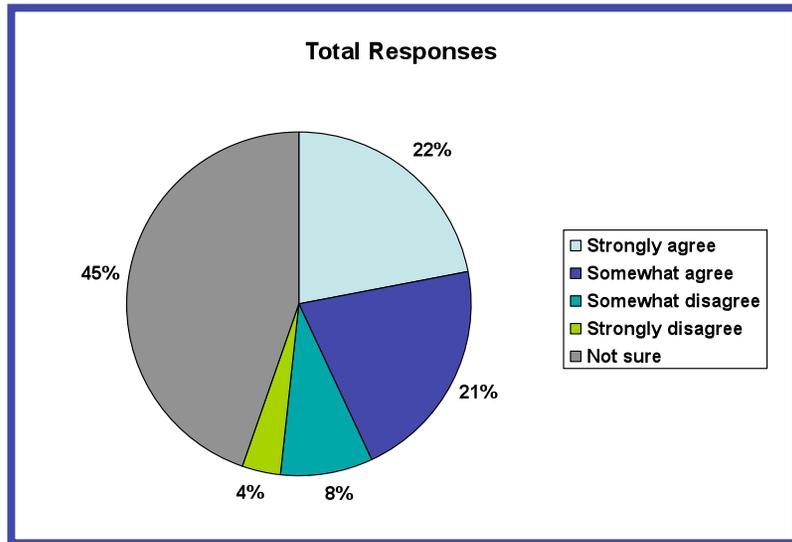
Key Observations:

- Of those who responded to the March 2008 survey, 41% agreed that they'd like to see more multilingual and information services.
- Both survey groups measured very closely on disagreeing. January participants disagreed at 28% and March participants disagreed at 26%.
- The option of not applicable was offered to the March group and not the January group.

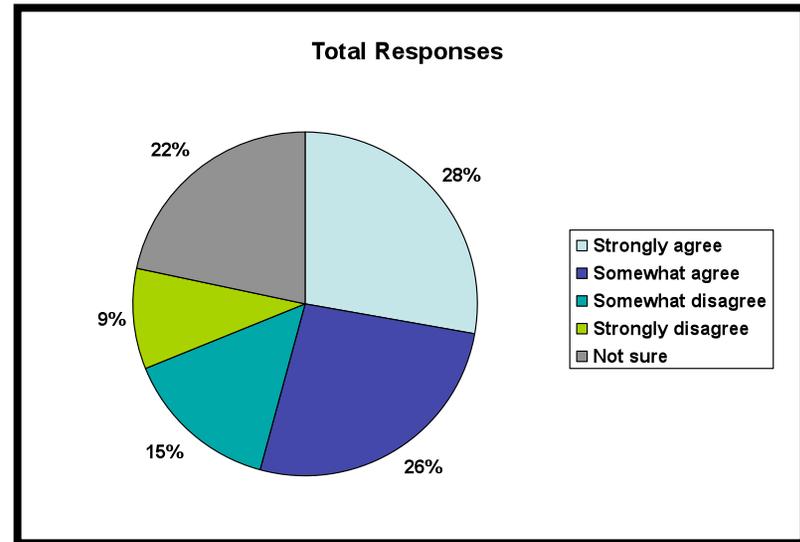
question 15

I would like to see my local library expand the hours it offers for Internet and reference services.

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



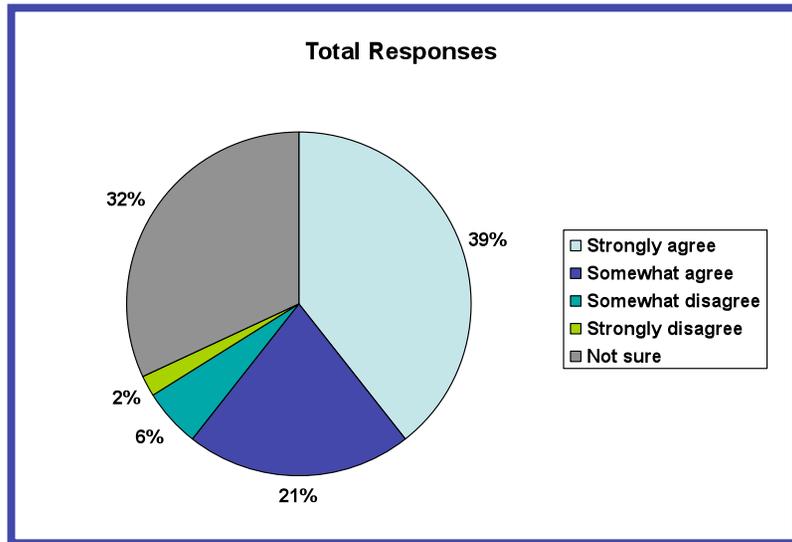
Key Observations:

- Of those who responded to the January survey, 43% agreed, and in March 53% agreed.
- A larger percentage of March participants disagreed (24%) than the January survey participants, but the January participants selected not sure at a much larger rate.

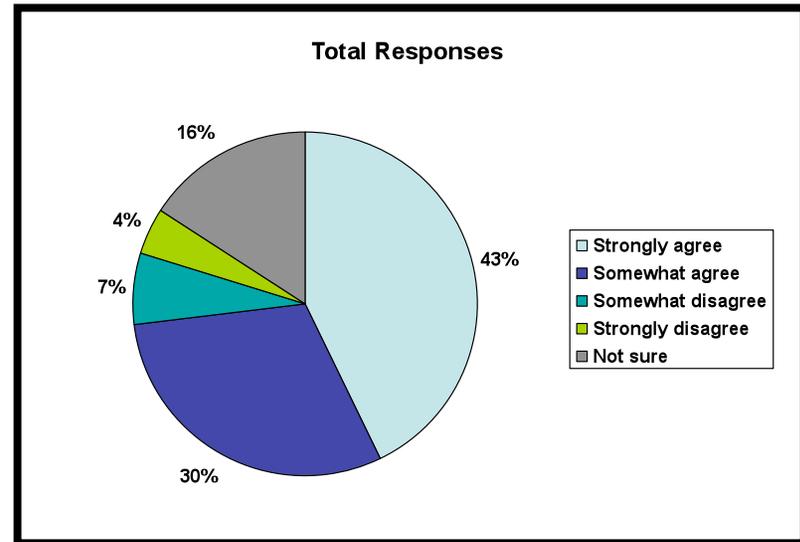
question 16

I would like to see my local library expand their online services to allow the public to be able to access them over the Internet.

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



Key Observations:

- There tends to be a good amount of support from both surveys that demonstrates people would like more online services.
- Looking at the raw data, across all demographics survey participants responded STRONGLY AGREE most frequently.

question 17

What types of library services would you like to be able to access through the Internet from home?

Types of Library Services	Percentage
Access to full-text articles and newspapers	71.9%
Access to self-help manuals – such as car repair guides	51.9%
Downloadable audiobooks	49.2%
Downloadable e-books	48.8%
Access to online preparation tests (for example SAT or GRE preparation)	40.7%
One-on-one information assistance	39.4%
Instant messaging	15.4%
Other	8.0%
Not sure	7.6%

The January survey only asked participants if they wanted more online services available from the library via the Internet. They were not asked what kinds of services they wanted.

In an attempt to understand the kinds of online services people wanted, we added a list of options to see what kinds of services people would want to the March Survey.

As you can see from the chart, access to articles and newspapers and self-help manuals came out at the top.

“Other” responses included: genealogy, access to professional journals & research publications, access to more online databases, music downloads, access to music history/scores/etc, access to English/foreign language learning resources, financial resources, and other subject specific types of resources.

question 18

When running into problems while searching for information, would you prefer to chat online with a librarian at any time of the day, chat on the phone with a librarian during the library's hours, ask your questions to a librarian through e-mail, or ask a librarian in person?

Preference for Communication	Percentage
Ask a librarian in person	32.8%
Chat online with a librarian at any time of day	23.2%
Ask your questions to a librarian through e-mail	23.0%
Chat on the phone with a librarian during library's hours	12.2%
Not sure	7.7%
Other	1.1%

Key Observations:

- Looking at the raw data:
 - Across all ages, asking a librarian was selected most.
 - For 18-29, chat online was selected as the second preferred method of communication.
 - For 30-65+, e-mail was selected as the second preferred method of communication.

A similar question was asked of the participants of the January email survey. The question was *After using AskNow service, would you say you prefer to use online chat, email, the telephone or ask a librarian in person when looking for information?* While a majority were not sure, email was the preferred method with online chat coming in third with this group.

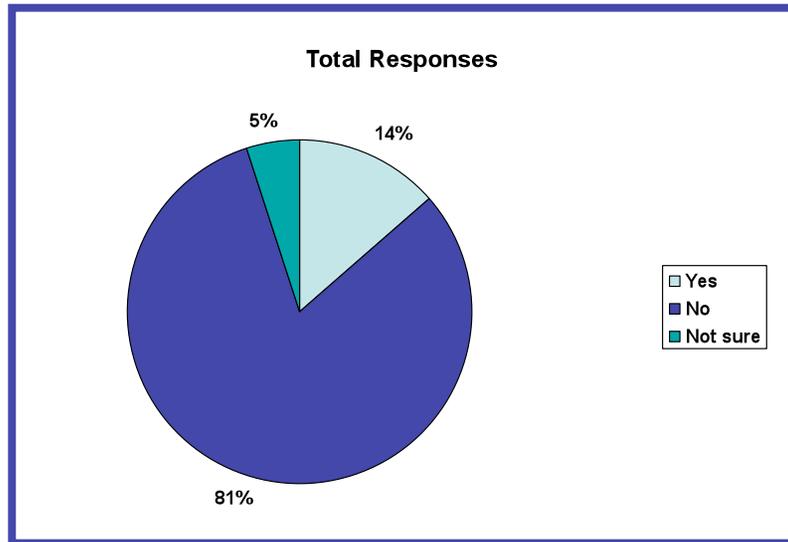


Preference for Communication	Percentage
Not sure	56.7%
E-mail	23.6%
Online Chat	10.4%
Ask a librarian in person	8.1%
Telephone	1.2%

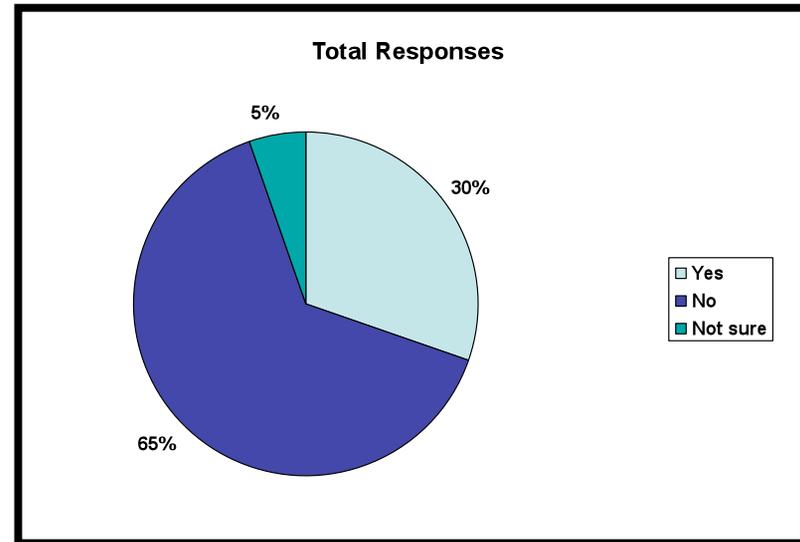
question 19

Have you heard of AskNow, the interactive reference service, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through your local library's Web site, which allows a librarian to communicate with you through an Internet chat to help you find information you are looking for about a specific topic?

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



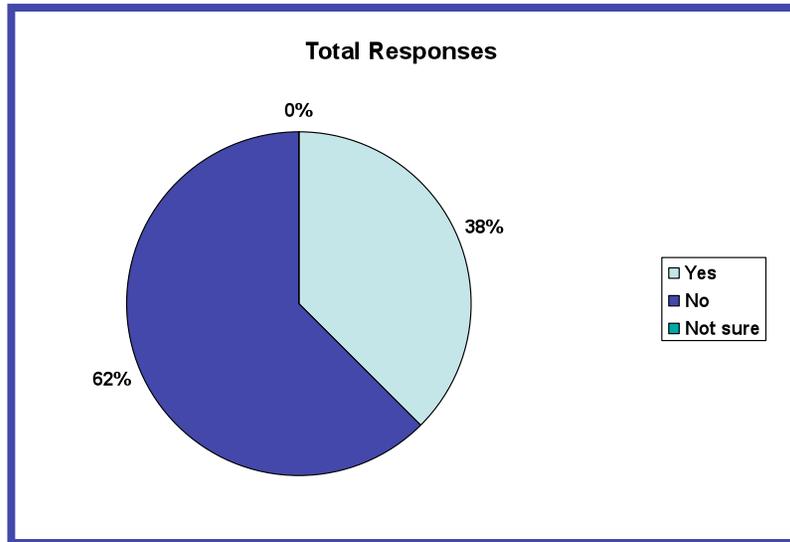
Key Observations:

- More than 60% of both survey groups are not aware of AskNow. The March survey participants in libraries were only 16% more aware than the January email survey group.
- AskNow is not a major resource for these two sample groups.

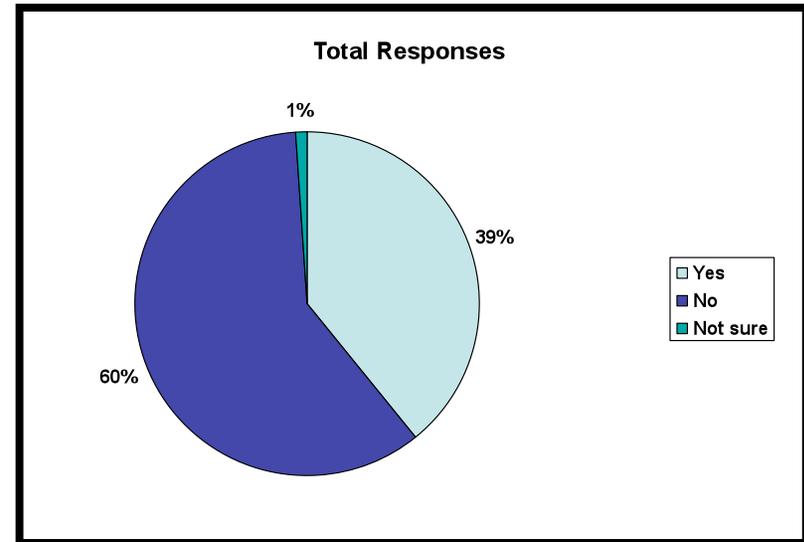
question 20

Have you used AskNow, the interactive reference service?

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



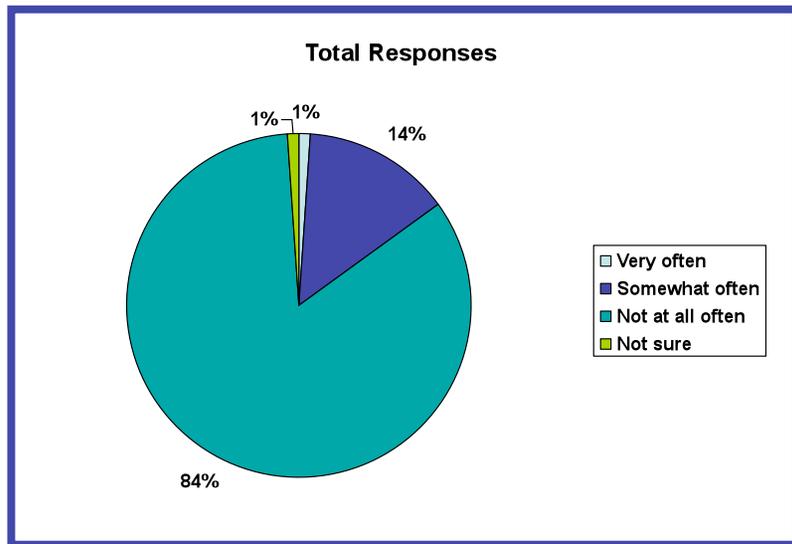
Key Observations:

- The results of both surveys are amazingly similar. Of those who are familiar with it, a majority have not used it.

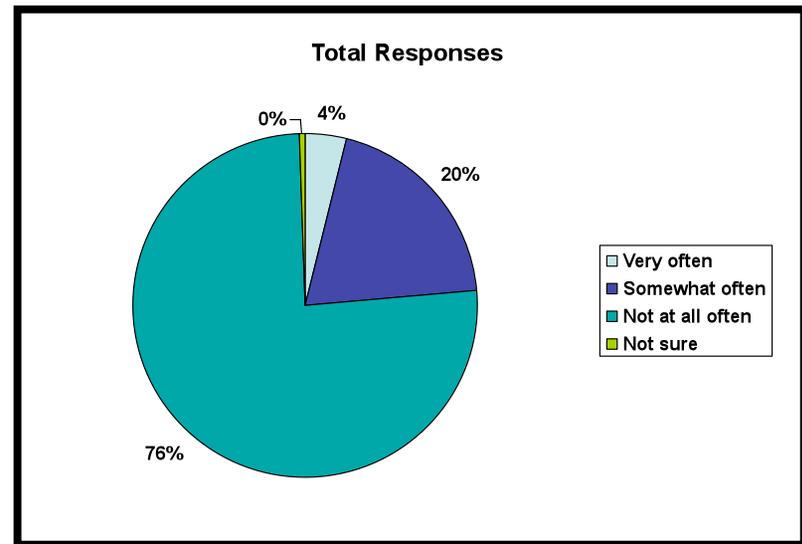
question 21

How often do you use AskNow?

January 2008 Survey



March 2008 Survey



Key Observations:

- Those who are familiar with it are not using AskNow.
- It has not become a regularly used resource for either of the two sample groups across all demographics.

The following slides show the results of 7 questions that were asked on the January 2008 email survey, but not on the March 2008 web survey. The rationale for leaving off a few questions was to accommodate additional questions that we wanted to ask library users.



january 2008 email survey

1

When you are searching for information on the Internet, which search engine do you typically use?

Search Engine	Percentage
Google/Google Groups	92%
Yahoo Search	42.1%
MSN/Live	16.1%
Other	11.7%
WhitePages.com	6.6%
AOL Search	3.9%
Altavista	3.7%
411.Com	1.4%
Hot Bot	1.3%
Not sure	.2%
I do not search for information on the Internet	.1%

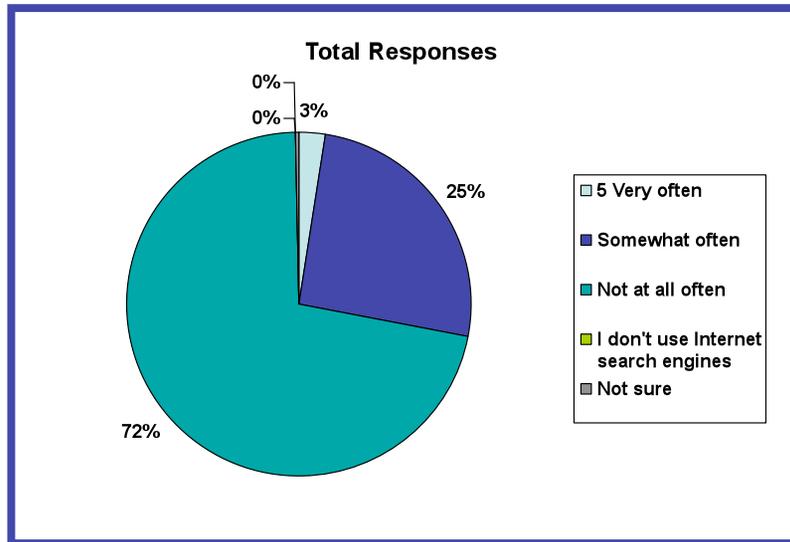
Key Observations:

- The results are not surprising. Google is the search engine of choice. Looking at the raw data, this was true for all demographics.

january 2008 email survey

2

How often do you have trouble finding what you are looking for using Internet search engines?



Key Observations:

- More than 70% of the responses point to the fact that people are able to find the information they want using Internet search engines most of the time. Looking at the raw data, NOT AT ALL OFTEN was the most selected response among all demographics.

january 2008 email survey

3

What do you do when you are using Internet search engines and you can't find what you are looking for?

What I do	Percentage
I use the Internet to search for local library resources available	24.3%
Other	15.5%
I visit a local or regional newspaper's Web site to explore	14.8%
I consult an expert	14.5%
I visit a local, college/university's library to explore	12.2%
I visit my local, public library to explore their resources	10.8%
Not sure	7.9%

Key Observations:

- While this was a question that fewer people responded to (191/706), the majority that did answer did go to local library resources.
- “Other” included: Alter search parameters and keep looking, give up the search, discuss with others, visit bookstores, check books, depends on the information desired, and search major newspapers online. No one mentioned, I ask a librarian.

january 2008 email survey

4

Statement A: AskNow is generally the first place I turn to find information online.

Statement B: I use AskNow, but it is generally not the first place I turn to find information online. Statement C: I generally do not use AskNow to find information online.

Statement about AskNow	Percentage
Statement C: I generally do not use AskNow to find information online	76.5%
Statement B: I use AskNow, but it is generally not the first place I turn to find information online	19.8%
Not sure	3.2%
Statement A: AskNow is generally the first place I turn to find information online	.5%

Key Observations:

•As with the other questions regarding AskNow usage, the January email survey participants do not tend to use AskNow to find information online.

january 2008 email survey

5

What sources have you searched or used before you chose to use AskNow?

Sources	Percentage
Internet search engines	98.3%
Local college/university library resources	35.1%
Local library resources	30.2%
Read an article on the topic	22.3%
Consulted an expert on the topic	9.9%

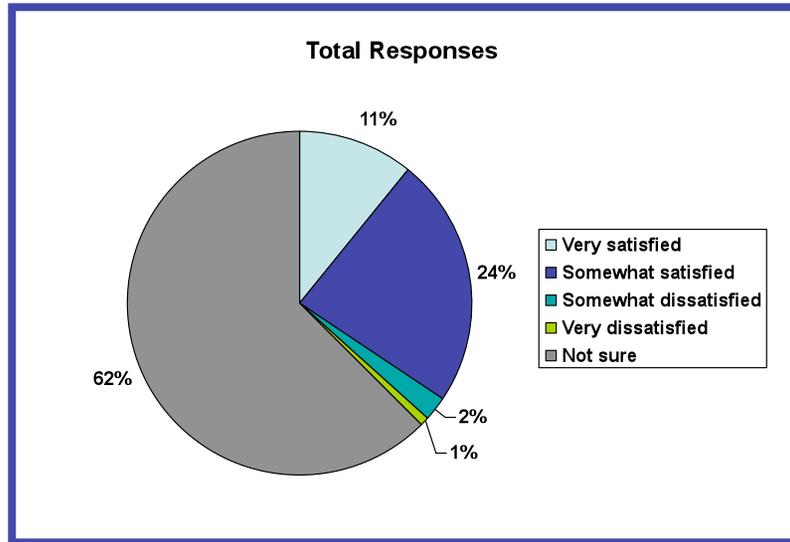
note: 19 responses were received for this question.

Key Observations:

- Libraries are not the first sources for searching for information. By the time a user is using online reference, they have already been searching, making it that much more important for 1) good reference interview, and 2) we are experts in finding the dark data that the user could not find.

january 2008 email survey 6 & 7

How satisfied are you with the results of using AskNow?



Key Observations:

- Most of the respondents had not used AskNow, so the high response of NOT SURE is not surprising.

Why were you not satisfied with the results of using AskNow Service?

The responses received were not sure and other.

key observations

The two Zogby surveys provide good information for libraries to consider as we continue to shape our services to meet the needs of our users. This sample reinforces some of the questions libraries have already been thinking about.

A few things to consider:

1. Searching for information begins with a broad casting of the net with search engines like Google.
 - How can libraries make their resources a part of a search that is broad vs. making users figure out which pond (database or specific resource) to fish in?
2. When users do choose to use library resources, they expect for us to have *specialized info to supplement information to what is found on the Internet or Do-it-yourself information*.
 - Reinforces our need to be very aware of community interests in collection development.
 - By the time most users are asking libraries for help, they have already been searching. Staff must be experts in all of the “dark” or non-Google searched information spaces.
 - Participants cited do-it-yourself information as an important resource, but it also seems to relate to the idea that they would also like to be able to do/find information themselves. How easy do we make this process?
3. Generally people are satisfied with what they find at their local library when they are searching for information. When they are dissatisfied, it is because there were not enough resources available.
 - Are people not finding resources because they are not there or because it is not clear what is available? How can libraries make their resources/services more explicit?
4. There is support for the library to *offer more online services to the public to access them over the Internet*. More access to resources (full-text articles, self -help guides, downloadable audio and ebooks, test prep) is highly supported. There seemed to be less interest in immediate assistance from a person online. AskNow, California’s current online reference service, is not part of most people’s information seeking behavior.
 - How can we connect people to the librarians and other information experts in a way that delights people and becomes viral (spreads rapidly as a service by word or mouth)?

notes

THE WHO

Both surveys were completed by Zogby International.

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COPIES OF REPORTS AND DATA

If you would like a copy of the raw data or reports submitted by Zogby International, please send an email message to Stacey Aldrich at saldrich@library.ca.gov.

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