

How Students and Faculty Use Academic Libraries Differently

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As part of the 2005 Colorado Academic Library Impact Study, undergraduate students and faculty from nine colleges and universities were asked to provide information about the services they use at their institution's library. They were also asked about their success in accessing resources through their own library and other libraries.

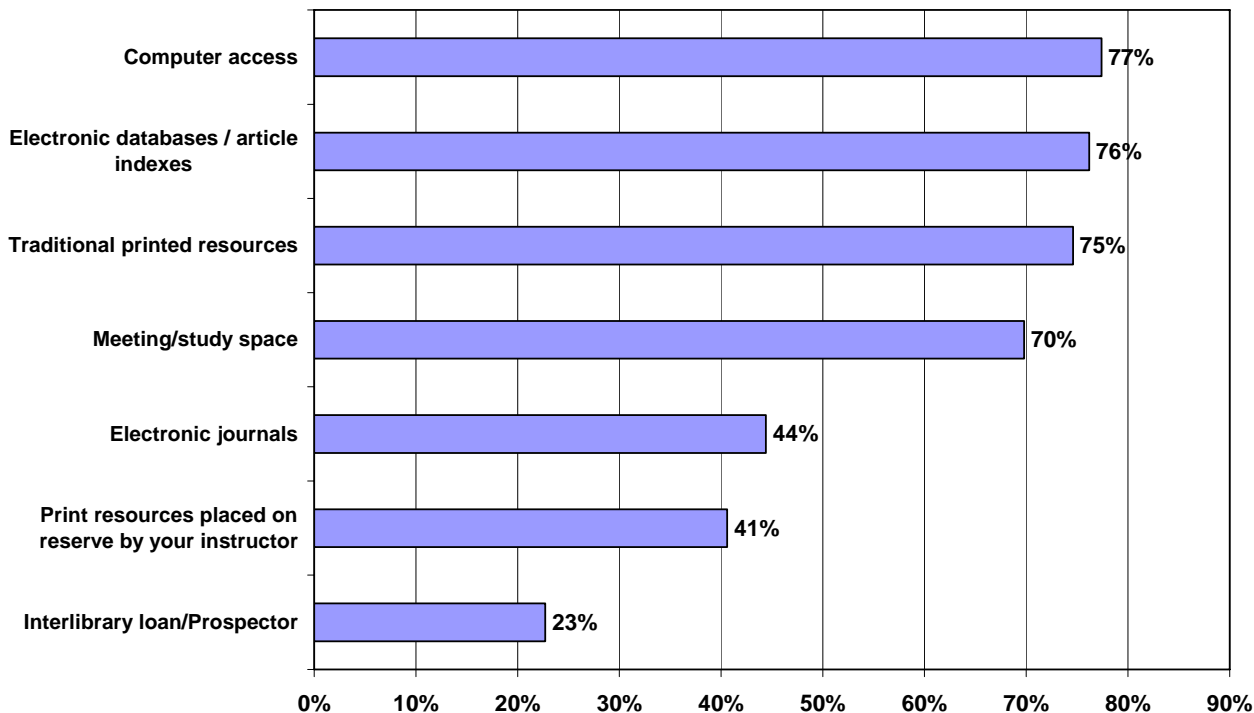
Library Resources

Undergraduate students and faculty were asked to list the library services they had used during the past 12 months. Six services were among the top seven responses from both groups of survey respondents.

Highlights

- Library computer access is utilized by students far more than by faculty.
- The use of interlibrary loan services is much more widespread among faculty members than students.
- Only slightly more than half of surveyed faculty (52%) feel they can usually find the print periodicals they need through their institution's library.

Chart 1: Top Seven Library Resources and Services Used by Undergraduates During the Past Year



Electronic Databases/ Article Indexes – Electronic databases and article indexes were extremely popular among both student and faculty ALIS participants. More than 4 of every 5 faculty members (83%) and 3 of every 4 students (76%) utilized this library resource within the past year, making this the second most frequently cited library resource by both undergraduates and faculty.

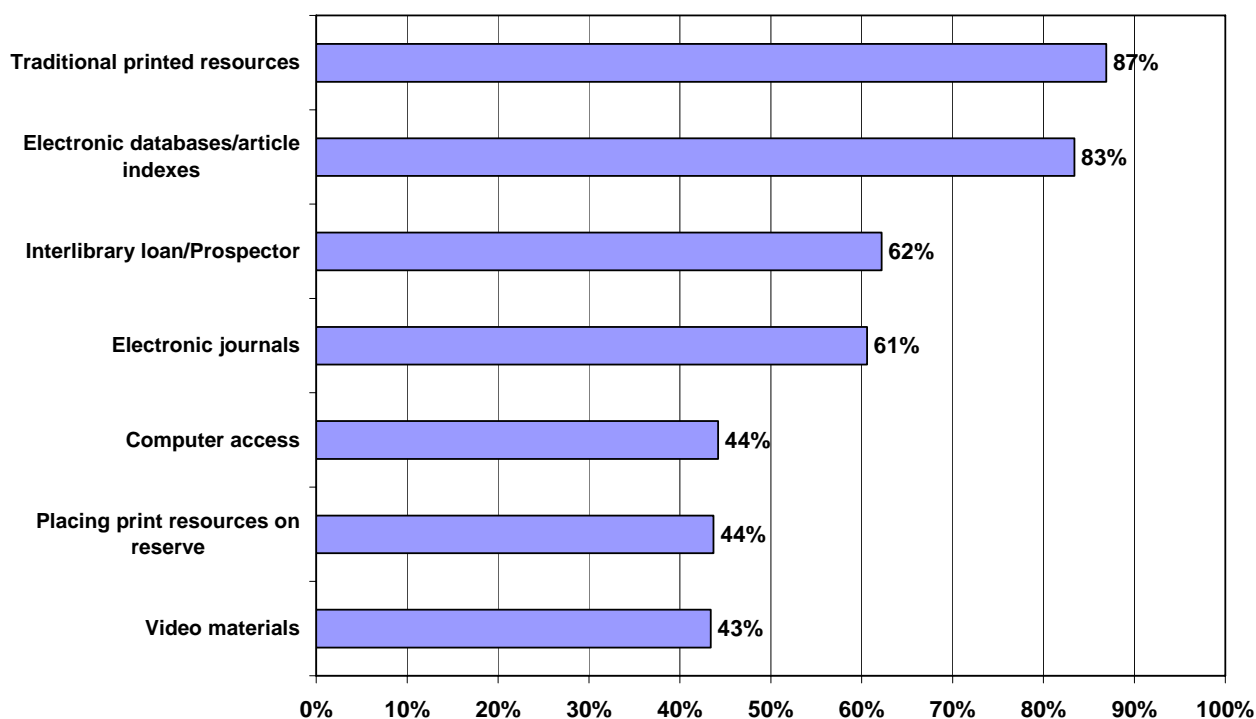
Print Resources -- Print resources were also widely utilized by both groups of respondents. Cited by nearly 9 of every 10 faculty members (87%), this was the most frequently listed library service among instructors. Three of every four undergrads (75%) reported having used library print materials during the preceding 12 months, making it the third most popular response among students.



Computer Access – More than 3 of every 4 undergraduates (77%) reported using computer access at their institution's library, making this the most frequently listed service among students. By contrast, less than half (44%) of surveyed faculty reported utilizing computer access at the library.

Electronic Journals – Access to e-journals represented another difference in usage patterns between the two groups of survey participants. More than 3 of every 5 faculty members (61%) indicated having used electronic journals available through the library, while less than half of students (44%) did so.

Chart 2: Top Seven Library Resources and Services Used by Faculty During the Past Year



Interlibrary Loan/Prospector – Perhaps the most dramatic difference between faculty and student library usage patterns concerned ILL and the Prospector system, which was used by more than 3 of every 5 faculty participants (62%) but less than a quarter of surveyed undergrads (23%).

Print Reserves – Not surprisingly, survey figures concerning print reserves were similar for the two survey groups. Forty-four percent of faculty members reported placing print resources on reserve at their institution’s library, while 41 percent of students said that they had used print reserves at their library.

Website Usage

Certain uses of library websites – such as searching the library’s home catalog and searching for journal articles via online databases – were very popular with both students and faculty participants in the ALIS (Charts 3 and 4). Faculty members, however, appear to more regularly expand their information searches to include the collections of other libraries, something their students are less apt tend to do. Additionally, surveyed faculty reported requesting interlibrary loans through their library’s website more than twice as often as undergrads.

Chart 3: Top Seven Uses of Library Website by Undergraduates

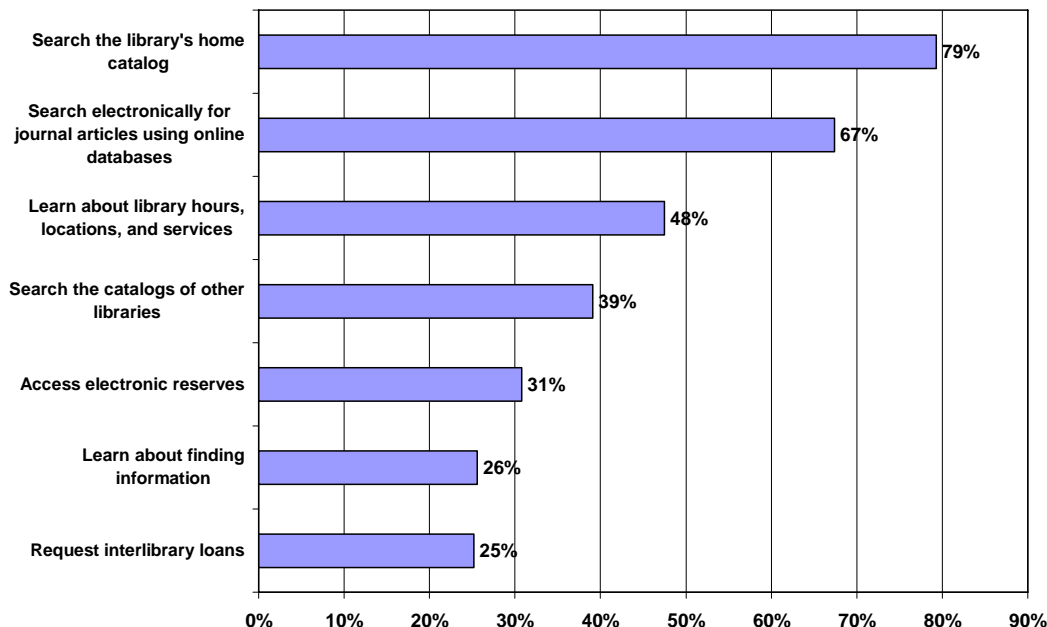
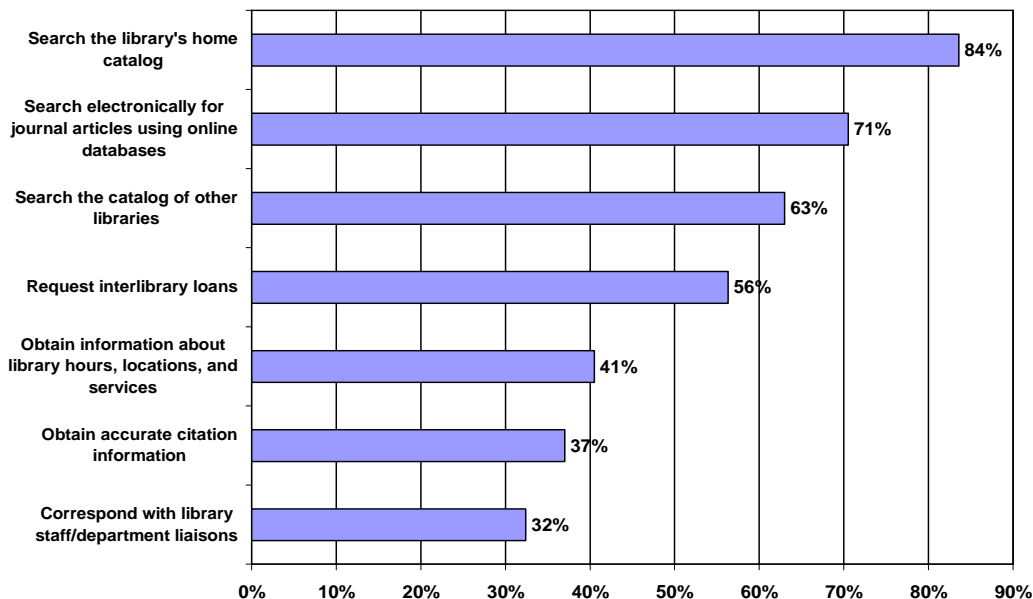


Chart 4: Top Seven Uses of Library Website by Faculty



Availability of Resources

Generally speaking, both undergraduates and faculty members appeared to be confident about finding needed print materials and accessing electronic resources at their institutions' libraries. Students, however, were more likely to feel this way than their instructors. Nearly 9 of every 10 students indicated that they could usually find needed books (89%) and print periodicals (88%) at their library, and an even greater proportion (93%) reported that they can usually access needed electronic resources through their library (Table 1).

Table 1: Attitudes of Undergraduates about Availability of Materials/Resources

	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
Can usually find needed books at my library.	89%	11%
print periodicals at my library.	88%	12%
electronic resources through my library.	93%	7%
materials at other libraries.	58%	42%

While surveyed faculty didn't share this sentiment as frequently as their students, nearly two-thirds (66%) felt that they usually found needed print volumes at their library, and more than 4 of every 5 (84%) could usually access need electronic resources (Table 2).



The responses to this portion of the survey reinforce the idea that faculty members are far more likely than their students to extend their searches for materials to other institutions. The results also reveal significant concerns about the continuing availability of scholarly journals, with only a slim majority (52%) of faculty respondents expressing confidence in their ability to find needed print periodicals at their library. Resource sharing efforts appear to be helping to meet the needs of many faculty, as almost 3 out of 4 (73%) report success in finding needed resources at other libraries.

Table 2: Attitudes of Faculty about Availability of Materials/Resources

	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
Can usually find needed books at my library.	66%	34%
print periodicals at my library.	52%	48%
electronic resources through my library.	84%	16%
needed materials at other libraries.	73%	27%

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