

Carleton College

## Carleton Digital Commons

---

Staff and Faculty Work

Laurence McKinley Gould Library

---

2010

### Information Research Practices, Fall 2010 – Pretest Summary Results

Jackie Lauer-Glebov

*Carleton College, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.carleton.edu/libr\\_staff\\_faculty](https://digitalcommons.carleton.edu/libr_staff_faculty)



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Lauer-Glebov, Jackie. 2010. "Information Research Practices, Fall 2010 – Pretest Summary Results." , (). Accessed via Staff and Faculty Work. Library. *Carleton Digital Commons* [https://digitalcommons.carleton.edu/libr\\_staff\\_faculty/13](https://digitalcommons.carleton.edu/libr_staff_faculty/13)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Laurence McKinley Gould Library at Carleton Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Staff and Faculty Work by an authorized administrator of Carleton Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons.group@carleton.edu](mailto:digitalcommons.group@carleton.edu).

# INFORMATION RESEARCH PRACTICES

---

## Fall 2010 – Pretest Summary Results

### Your Experiences with Information Research

1. More students used the internet for doing their research for course assignments or research projects rather than going to a library.  
*Percent using each resource at least **once or twice a month, or more frequently.***
  - Internet: 98%
  - High school library: 46%
  - Public or community library: 22%
  - College or university library: 7%
2. Almost 1/5<sup>th</sup> of entering students were not often or ever required to use a specific format for the sources in a bibliography.
  - 68% Almost always
  - 14% Often
  - 7% Sometimes
  - 5% Rarely
  - 6% Never

} 18% (78 students)
3. Entering students are not accustomed to seeking help from librarians.  
*Percent seeking help **almost always or at least often** from these resources for research assignments:*
  - Teachers 65%
  - Peers 50%
  - Parents or other adult family members 26%
  - Internet Help options 18%
  - Librarians 9%
  - Writing center/labs 7%
4. 44% of freshmen never talked with a librarian during their senior year about a research project.
5. Two-thirds of students describe their pace of work on a research assignment as leaving it toward the end (60%) or doing it on the due date (7%).
6. Students' **most frequent** reasons to use the library:
  - Studying, doing homework, or doing group projects (49%)
  - Conducting research for course assignments or projects (25%)
  - Recreation or other non-academic purposes (leisure reading, checking out music or videos. (21%)
  - Other (2%)
  - Did not use a library during senior year. (3%)

## INFORMATION RESEARCH PRACTICES

---

7. One third of entering students did not have either a teacher or librarian talk about using library resources, including internet resources in any class during their senior year.
8. 23% of entering students had fewer than 3 papers or assignments in their senior year that required them to include at least three sources in a **bibliography, references, or works cited** list.
9. Library books were the **print** source used most often by entering students (79%).
10. The top two **online** sources that students use:
  - Internet search engines (91%)
  - Online journals, magazines or newspapers (85%)
11. The top two ways that student **organize** or **manage** the information they gather for research projects:
  - Computer folders or files (e.g., My Documents, Microsoft Word files, etc.) (88%)
  - Paper, folder, files, or note cards (87%)

### Your Attitudes and Beliefs about Information Research

1. The easiest aspects of research: (*% reporting ease*)
  - Developing a list of sources to investigate (76%)
  - Documenting your sources (75%)
  - Writing the paper (74%)
2. The most challenging components of research are: (*% reporting difficulty*)
  - Developing your main argument or thesis statement (36%)
  - Revising your search strategy as necessary (32%)
  - Narrowing your topic (31%)
  - Organizing your materials into a logical and unified structure (30%)
3. Some students indicated that they had **no experience** with these aspects of identifying and retrieve sources:
  - Obtaining materials through inter-library loan 49%
  - Using a print index 36%
  - Using an electronic index (Academic Search Premier, ProQuest Research Library, etc.) 26%
  - Using a library catalog 12% (51 students)
4. Some students indicated that these aspects of identifying and retrieve sources were **somewhat** or **very easy**:
  - Using an Internet search engine 95%
  - Physically locating sources in a library 83%
  - Using a library catalog 72%

## INFORMATION RESEARCH PRACTICES

---

5. Approximately 30% of the entering students indicated having difficulty documenting sources: (*somewhat or very difficult*)
  - Knowing **when** to document a source 29%
  - Knowing **how** to document a source 31%
6. More than 80% of the entering students find it **very easy** or **somewhat easy** to:
  - determine whether a source is appropriate for an academic project 89%
  - decide what information from your sources to integrate into your project 83%
7. Doing research for class assignments is enjoyable(*very much or quite a bit*) for about 38% of the students. The other 62% indicated that they got **some** or **very little** enjoyment out of doing research.
8. Students indicated their level of agreement with these statements: (*strongly or moderately agree*)
  - There is one right way to do research. 12%
  - When two researchers disagree, one of them must be wrong. 5%
  - Successful researchers understand things quickly. 26%
  - Careful researchers can ultimately get to the truth. 68%
  - Good research yields clear results, poor research yields ambiguous results. 65%

### Your Familiarity with Information Research Terms and Strategies

Q43. Which of the following searches would retrieve the **most** results in an online search?

Count	Percent	
142	34.05%	Movies OR films
159	38.13%	Movies AND films
6	1.44%	Movies NOT films
10	2.40%	Movies INSTEAD OF films
100	23.98%	Don't know
417		Respondents

Q44. Which of the following is the correct way to truncate a search word?

Count	Percent	
29	6.95%	Typing in only the first syllable of the word as a keyword
38	9.11%	Combing search words with "and", "or", or "not"
42	10.07%	Using the * or ! symbol in place of the last few letters of the word
56	13.43%	None of the above
252	60.43%	Don't know
417		Respondents

## INFORMATION RESEARCH PRACTICES

---

**Q45. Situation:** You have retrieved the following information from a library catalog search:

Gothic modernisms/ edited by Andrew Smith and Jeff Wallace.

New York, N.Y.: Palgrave, 2001.

Stacks

PR888. M63 G67 2001

AVAILABLE

xii, 232p. ; 23cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

English fiction - 20th century - History and criticism.

Modernism (Literature) - Great Britain.

Modernism (Literature) - United States.

Gothic revival (Literature)

Smith, Andrew, 1964 -

Wallace, Jeff, 1958 -

**Which of the following would be the most efficient way to find a comprehensive listing of other books in the catalog on this topic?**

**Count    Percent**

7	1.68%	Identifying other books written by the same authors
124	29.74%	Examining the bibliography in the book
61	14.63%	Scanning the shelves where the book is located to see what books are nearby
151	36.21%	Searching again using the subject headings that most closely match your research topic
74	17.75%	Don't know
417		Respondents

**Q46.** When students do research for papers and assignments, it is helpful to distinguish between academic journals and popular magazines.

**Which of the following statements are true? (Check all that apply)**

Count	% Respondents that Checked	
111	26.62%	Academic journal articles provide objective facts; popular magazine articles do not.
336	80.58%	Articles in academic journals usually include a list of references to other scholarly works; articles in popular magazines usually do not.
308	73.86%	The intended audience for academic journals is mainly other scholars; the intended audience for popular magazines is the general public.

## INFORMATION RESEARCH PRACTICES

---

		Authors and editors for academic journals are usually employed in higher education; authors and editors for popular magazines are usually employed by the for-profit media
235	56.35%	
41	9.83%	Don't know
417		Respondents
1031		Responses

**Q47. Situation:** You have found the following entry in the References section of a recent article: Erisman, H.M. (2002). The Cuban Revolution's evolving identity. *Latin American Politics and Society* 44 (1), 145 - 153.

**In what issue of *Latin American Politics and Society* will you find this article?**

Count	Percent	
5	1.20%	Volume 2002, Number 44
312	74.82%	Volume 44, Number 1
3	0.72%	Volume 2, Number 145 - 153
5	1.20%	The issue cannot be determined.
92	22.06%	Don't know
417		Respondents

**Q48.** Indicate whether the item is an entire book, a journal article, or a portion of a book: Jorgenson, Lars W. "Reinterpreting Navajo Rites." *Navajo Culture* 6 (1946): 469 - 78.

Count	Percent	
7	1.69%	Entire book
120	29.06%	Journal article
259	62.71%	Portion of a book
27	6.54%	Don't know
413		Respondents

**Q49.** Indicate whether the item is an entire book, a journal article, or a portion of a book: Allen, Glover Morill. *Bats*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939.

Count	Percent	
322	77.97%	Entire book
67	16.22%	Journal article
5	1.21%	Portion of a book
19	4.60%	Don't know
413		Respondents

## INFORMATION RESEARCH PRACTICES

---

Q50. Indicate whether the item is an entire book, a journal article, or a portion of a book:  
 Tanaka, Kazuko. "The New Feminist Movement in Japan, 1970-1990." In *Japanese Women*,  
 edited by Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow. New York: Feminist Press, 1995.

Count	Percent	
75	18.16%	Entire book
225	54.48%	Journal article
86	20.82%	Portion of a book
27	6.54%	Don't know
413		Respondents

Q51. When you are doing research for papers and assignments, you must distinguish between primary and secondary sources.

**Which of the following statements is *true*?**

Count	Percent	
7	1.69%	Primary sources are more scholarly than secondary sources.
3	0.73%	Primary sources are old, secondary sources are new.
333	80.63%	Primary sources examine first-hand; secondary sources examine the findings of other scholars.
12	2.91%	Primary sources are more appropriate for academic projects than are secondary sources.
29	7.02%	All of the above are equally accurate.
29	7.02%	Don't know
413		Respondents

Q52. Which of the following best describes the difference between peer reviewed journals and other journals?

Count	Percent	
22	5.33%	A journal that publishes reviews of other articles.
211	51.09%	A journal that publishes articles that have been approved by other scholars.
23	5.57%	A journal that includes only articles written collaboratively by peers.
8	1.94%	A journal that includes references for each article it publishes.
149	36.08%	Don't know
413		Respondents

## INFORMATION RESEARCH PRACTICES

---

Q53. In a scholarly article or research paper, a **citation** is:

Count	Percent	
31	7.51%	A direct quotation from someone else's work
242	58.60%	Source information for any ideas or text from someone else's written work
16	3.87%	The physical location of a source (book, journal, etc.)
116	28.09%	All of the above
8	1.94%	Don't know
413		Respondents

Q54. In a class assignment or paper, a citation is **not** required when:

Count	Percent	
10	2.42%	You are paraphrasing, rather than quoting, a source
3	0.73%	More than one source says the same thing
319	77.24%	You are describing your own feelings or analysis
68	16.46%	All of the above
13	3.15%	Don't know
413		Respondents

Q55. Among the challenges of research is determining whether a source is scholarly. Below is a list of source characteristics.

For each characteristic, if this were the only information you had about a source, what conclusion would you draw about whether the source is likely to be scholarly?

**If a source . . .** Is available online

Count	Percent	
6	1.46%	More likely to be scholarly
228	55.34%	Less likely to be scholarly
9	2.18%	Not at all scholarly
169	41.02%	Cannot be determined
412		Respondents

**If a source . . .** Is translated from another language

Count	Percent	
59	14.32%	More likely to be scholarly
75	18.20%	Less likely to be scholarly
5	1.21%	Not at all scholarly
273	66.26%	Cannot be determined
412		Respondents



## INFORMATION RESEARCH PRACTICES

---

For each characteristic, if this were the only information you had about a source, what conclusion would you draw about whether the source is likely to be scholarly?

**If a source . . .** Is published in a peer-reviewed journal

Count	Percent	
317	76.94%	More likely to be scholarly
62	15.05%	Less likely to be scholarly
4	0.97%	Not at all scholarly
29	7.04%	Cannot be determined
412		Respondents

**If a source . . .** Is posted on a political blog

Count	Percent	
20	4.85%	More likely to be scholarly
212	51.46%	Less likely to be scholarly
134	32.52%	Not at all scholarly
46	11.17%	Cannot be determined
412		Respondents

**If a source . . .** Has a lengthy list of references

Count	Percent	
365	88.59%	More likely to be scholarly
7	1.70%	Less likely to be scholarly
1	0.24%	Not at all scholarly
39	9.47%	Cannot be determined
412		Respondents

**If a source . . .** Is long

Count	Percent	
25	6.07%	More likely to be scholarly
17	4.13%	Less likely to be scholarly
10	2.43%	Not at all scholarly
360	87.38%	Cannot be determined
412		Respondents

**If a source . . .** Was published by a university press

Count	Percent	
382	92.72%	More likely to be scholarly
8	1.94%	Less likely to be scholarly
2	0.49%	Not at all scholarly
20	4.85%	Cannot be determined
412		Respondents

## INFORMATION RESEARCH PRACTICES

---

**If a source . . .** Was published in the last ten years

Count	Percent	
45	10.92%	More likely to be scholarly
28	6.80%	Less likely to be scholarly
5	1.21%	Not at all scholarly
334	81.07%	Cannot be determined
412		Respondents

**If a source . . .** Is an article in *Time*, *Newsweek*, or *US News & World Report*

Count	Percent	
209	50.73%	More likely to be scholarly
133	32.28%	Less likely to be scholarly
31	7.52%	Not at all scholarly
39	9.47%	Cannot be determined
412		Respondents

**Q64. Situation:** You are required to write a research paper for your American History class examining the roles of women in the American Civil War. You find the following article on Wikipedia.

**Which of the following references is/are *not* scholarly? (Check all that apply)**

Count	Respondent %	
43	10.44%	Edwards, L.F. (1980). <i>Scarlett doesn't live here anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War era</i> . Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
47	11.41%	Heidler, D.S. & Heidler, J.T. (Eds.) (2000). <i>Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social and Military History</i> (Vols. 1 - 5). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
69	16.75%	<a href="http://www.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/hearts/">Hearts at Home: Southern Women in the Civil War. (1997). Diaries, letters, photographs, and papers in the Special Collections of the University of Virginia Library. Retrieved July 1, 2010 from http://www.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/hearts/</a>
43	10.44%	Schultz, J.E. (2002). Seldom Thanked, Never Praised, and Scarcely Recognized: Gender and Racism in Civil War hospitals. <i>Civil War History</i> 48, 220 - 236.
209	50.73%	<a href="http://www.cnn.com/2009/LIVING/06/12/mf.civil.war/index.html">Johnson, E. (2009). Seven Civil War stories your teacher never told you. CNN.com. Retrieved July 2, 2010 from http://www.cnn.com/2009/LIVING/06/12/mf.civil.war/index.html</a>
79	19.17%	All of the above are scholarly
73	17.72%	Don't know
412		Respondents
563		Responses

## INFORMATION RESEARCH PRACTICES

---

Q65. Suppose you have more relevant sources than you can use in a class assignment. Assuming it's not 2 a.m. with the assignment due in the morning, which of the following is the **best way** to determine whether to use a particular source?

<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
9	2.18%	Whether the source is a print or internet source
35	8.50%	How recently the source was published
6	1.46%	How easily you can get the source
181	43.93%	Whether the author is an expert in the field
181	43.93%	All of the above are equally valid criteria for choosing among sources.
412		Respondents