# *Sample Library/Technology Survey*

from *Informing Innovation: Tracking Student Interest in Emerging Library Technologies at Ohio University*

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This is a modified and annotated version of the two online survey instruments administered in the 2008 Ohio University Libraries student environmental scan – it is not an exact replica of the original instruments, and if used will therefore not produce results that can be benchmarked to our findings with the same degree of reliability. This sample document outlines a range of question types and subjects that may be useful in surveying local campus library and technology cultures. It is very comprehensive, and at times may appear redundant – instead of a ready-made survey, consider this a long-form template or bank of potential print or online questions that can be modified locally. Items are divided into sections using question headers, which you would not necessarily want to include in an actual survey. The questions in this instrument are geared toward a student respondent base, but could easily be modified to accommodate faculty and staff. Insights are provided in gray boxes throughout to help you consider the implications of certain design choices. If you adapt this sample instrument, keep a few things in mind:

1) Generally-worded questions and answer choices should be tailored to your specific context. Technology-related items should be careful carefully updated to reflect the most current tools, language, and trends.

2) In order to emphasize the importance of language in question neutrality, this revised instrument takes a relatively formal tone. The original instruments were somewhat more accessibly worded, using a more conversational tone at times.

3) There are many ways to inadvertently influence responses by the tone or orientation of a question. It is important to strive for neutrality and balance in both language and response options.

4) Shorter is typically better, and you should be mindful that the longer a survey takes to complete, the fewer responses you will receive. Select only necessary questions.

5) It is *imperative* to ask for review and commentary on a questionnaire after a first draft is created, both to spot errors and to gain different perspectives on the subjects, response choices, and question types you are using. Once a survey is released it cannot be changed in any significant way – an instrument should remain consistent for all participants, or its reliability will be undermined. In addition to peer or team feedback, you should recruit several individuals representative of the sample population to perform a trial run with your questionnaire. Afterwards, debrief them for their impressions of each item and its answer choices. Survey instruments are in general vastly improved by collaborative effort.

6) Likert Scale items (least to most, highest to lowest) typically offer five degrees of rating choices, whereas other types of scales can be more or less detailed. In order to present the broadest array of answer options, many scales included in this sample questionnaire are more detailed than those in the original surveys.

7) If used in their entirety, the array of items presented here would take considerable time to complete. The OU study was broken into two phases in order to allow us to be more comprehensive on each instrument. Brevity should be a goal of any survey, and each question should be carefully evaluated for its value in a local survey.

## *A) Demographic Information*

**1. How old are you?**

- O 17-19
- O 20-22
- O 23-26
- O 27-30
- O 30

★Alternatively, use a drop-down menu to allow respondents to select their exact age. This may require more work to analyze than pre-segmented age

**2. How did you find out about this survey?**

- O Library website
- O Word of mouth
- O Email
- O Flyer
- O Instructor
- O Librarian
- O (Other _____)

★This type of item can inform how future surveys are promoted, and if a non-random sample is collected can help gauge influence or self-selection bias.

**3. What best represents your major or concentration?**

- O Business/Economics
- O Communications/Media Studies
- O Education
- O Engineering
- O Fine Arts/Design/Architecture
- O Humanities
- O Health Sciences
- O Physical Sciences
- O Computer Science
- O Social Sciences
- O Undecided
- O (Other _____)

★Options must be carefully worded to reflect departments/ majors at your institution, If an 'other' category is included that allows open-ended input, it is likely that a wide and problematic range of responses will be submitted.

**4. Which of the following best describes you?**

- O First-Year Undergrad
- O Second-Year Undergrad
- O Third-Year Undergrad
- O Fourth-Year Undergraduate
- O Fifth-year Undergraduate
- O Master's Student
- O PhD Student
- O Medical Student
- O Non-Degree
- O (Other _____)

★You can be general or specific with this type of item, depending on the depth of analysis you want to perform. It's easier to combine detailed response categories than to extract them after the fact. Depending on your research scope and purpose, you can also add a separate question to establish transfer student status.

**5. What is your gender?**

- O Male
- O Female
- O (I'd prefer not to say.)

★While it may seem like a given, you should consider the benefits of including a gender item carefully, as it may alienate respondents who have alternative gender identities or who prefer to keep this type of information private. Depending on what it adds to your analysis, you can add a neutral/anonymous item to the response choices, omit it entirely, or make gender an optional variable.

## B) Library Use and Evaluation

**1. On average, how often do you physically visit the library during the regular (quarter/semester)?**

- ○ Never
- ○ Once a year
- ○ Once per quarter/semester
- ○ Monthly
- ○ Weekly
- ○ Several times per week
- ○ Daily
- ○ Several times a day

*The next two items pose an interesting problem, as student library use often fluctuates over the semester. Many only use libraries during finals week, or near an assignment due date. Provide a wide range of response options or specify "on average."

**2. How often do you visit the library website during the regular (quarter/ semester)?**

- ○ Never
- ○ Once a year
- ○ Once per quarter/semester
- ○ Monthly
- ○ Weekly
- ○ Several times per week
- ○ Daily
- ○ Several times a day

**3. How many of the following options do you think the library currently offers? Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Group study rooms
- ☐ Full-text articles online
- ☐ Talk with a librarian via IM or chat
- ☐ Research and library help classes
- ☐ Online tutorials
- ☐ Online article databases
- ☐ Research guides for different subject areas
- ☐ Talk with a librarian in person
- ☐ Scanners and multimedia software
- ☐ Cameras for checkout
- ☐ Request items from other libraries
- ☐ Full-text books online
- ☐ Call a librarian via Skype
- ☐ EBSCO article search
- ☐ Library news blog
- ☐ Online book/DVD renewals
- ☐ Get help writing a paper
- ☐ Movie viewing rooms
- ☐ Online library catalog
- ☐ DVDs for checkout
- ☐ Laptops for checkout
- ☐ [Etc., customize locally]

*This item can speak volumes about library awareness, and you may want to include only options currently available in your system to avoid giving false impressions. Customize answer choices to reflect local terminology, and consider placement directly before the general open-ended commentary item to gauge user reactions.

**4. How often do you use the library website to do the following?**

| | Never | Once a year | Once per quarter/ semester | Monthly | Weekly | Several times a week | Daily | Several times a day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ask a librarian for help or advice | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Use research guides and tutorials | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Find e-books | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Search for articles | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Search for books and journals | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Access online reserves | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**5. When you are at the library, how often do you engage in the following?**

| | Never | Once a year | Once per quarter/ semester | Monthly | Weekly | Several times a week | Daily | Several times a day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Use library computers | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use your laptop | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Do research for an assignment | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Search for items in the catalog | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use the library website to find articles | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use the Cafe | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Ask a librarian for help | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Check out DVDs | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Check out books/ journals | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use a group study room | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Study alone | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Study with friends | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Pull an all-nighter | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Socialize | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Sleep | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Listen to music | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |

**6. When you use a COMPUTER in the library [alt., a library computer], how often do you do the following?**

| | Never | Once a year | Once per quarter/ semester | Monthly | Weekly | Several times a week | Daily | Several times a day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Find books/articles | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use Blackboard | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Check Facebook or MySpace | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use graphics software (Photoshop) | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use presentation software (PowerPoint) | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use word processing software (Word) | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use the library website | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Check email | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use IM | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Play video games | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Watch online videos/DVDs | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |

## C) Information Use and Evaluation

**1. How likely are you to use each of the following to START your research for an assignment?**

| | N/A – I don't use this resource. | Extremely unlikely | Unlikely | Somewhat likely | Likely | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Google | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Wikipedia | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Library catalog | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Article database | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Google Scholar | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Ask friends/family | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Ask my instructor | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Ask a librarian | O | O | O | O | O | O |

**2. How easy is it to use the following to FIND resources for assignments?**

| | N/A – I don't use this resource. | Extremely difficult | Difficult | Neither hard nor easy | Easy | Extremely easy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Google | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Wikipedia | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Library catalog | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Article database | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Google Scholar | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Ask friends/family | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Ask my instructor | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Ask a librarian | O | O | O | O | O | O |

**3. What is the overall QUALITY of information you find using the following?**

| | N/A – I don't use this resource. | Very low | Low | Fair | High | Very high |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Google | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Wikipedia | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Library catalog | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Article database | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Google Scholar | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Ask friends/family | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Ask my instructor | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Ask a librarian | O | O | O | O | O | O |

## D) Technology/Library Technology Use and Evaluation

**1. How many hours per week do you spend online?**

- ○ Less than 5
- ○ 6-10
- ○ 11-20
- ○ 21-30
- ○ 31-40
- ○ More than 40

> ✶ Again, you could use a drop-down menu here to allow respondents to indicate an exact number. For this type of item, however, it is easier to estimate a general range and analyze responses using broader categories.

**2. How much of this time is spent on school-related activities?**

- ○ 0%
- ○ 1-25%
- ○ 26-50%
- ○ 51-75%
- ○ 100%

> ✶ We found that this was a very useful in determining relative levels of library/information need and research activity among respondents.

**3. What kind of Internet connection do you have at home?**

- ○ Dial-up
- ○ Broadband
- ○ High-Speed wireless
- ○ High-speed wired
- ○ None
- ○ Not sure

**4. Which of the following best describes you?**

- ○ I usually avoid using new technologies.
- ○ I generally take a while to use technologies.
- ○ I use new technologies at the same time other people do.
- ○ I tend to use new technologies somewhat before others do.
- ○ I usually use new technologies before anyone else.

> ✶This question can be a revealing and interesting way to analyze respondents, but it can be challenging to convey what is meant by "technology." You might want to specify "new technology tools and web applications," or list examples.

**5. When you are researching, studying, or completing assignments, how often you do the following at the SAME TIME?**

| | Never | Infrequently | Sometimes | Usually | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facebook, MySpace, etc. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Instant messaging | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Online gaming | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Text messaging | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Mobile phone | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Other (please specify): _____ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**6. How frequently do you do the following?**

| | Never | Once a year | Once per quarter/ semester | Monthly | Weekly | Several times a week | Daily | Several times a day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Text message | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Instant message | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Play online games | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Play games on a console (PS3, XBOX 360, Wii, etc.) | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Play handheld games (PSP, Nintendo DS, etc.) | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Download music or videos | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Listen to podcasts | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Watch videos on YouTube | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use Skype or other web calling program | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use Facebook, MySpace, etc. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Post to a blog | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Comment on a blog | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Read a blog | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Edit a Wikipedia article | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Read Wikipedia articles | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Receive search alerts | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |

**7. IF you own a mobile phone, how frequently do you use it to do the following? (If you don't own a mobile phone, skip ahead to item #x.)**

| | Never | Once a year | Once per quarter/ semester | Monthly | Weekly | Several times a week | Daily | Several times a day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Text message | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Instant message | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Use a search engine | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Send email | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Download music | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Play games | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Listen to podcasts | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Watch videos | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Read e-books | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| Check Facebook, etc. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |

**8. IF you own a mobile phone, how likely would you be to use the following TEXT/SMS library services?**

| | I own a cell, but I don't text. | Extremely unlikely | Unlikely | Fairly likely | Likely | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ask a librarian a question | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Send a call number from the catalog | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Receive renewal or overdue notices | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Renew library materials | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**9. For each of the following gaming devices, select the phrase that best describes you.**

| | Don't own it, don't care. | Used to own it. | Own it. | Wish I owned it. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nintendo Wii | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Nintendo DS | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Gameboy | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| XBOX | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| XBOX 360 | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sony PS1 | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sony PS2 | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sony PS3 | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| PSP | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Oldschool Nintendo, Sega or Atari system | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**10. For each of these web tools and social sites, select the phrase that best describes you.**

| | Never heard of it. | Never use it. | Used to use it. | Using it less lately. | Using it more lately. | Use it all the time. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facebook | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| MySpace | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Friendster | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Bebo | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| LinkedIn | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Second Life | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Delicious | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Skype | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Twitter | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Zotero | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Other: _____ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**11. Which of the following Google tools do you currently use? Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Search
- ☐ Gmail
- ☐ Book search
- ☐ Documents
- ☐ Reader
- ☐ Labs
- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Calendar
- ☐ Groups
- ☐ Scholar
- ☐ Personalized home page (iGoogle)
- ☐ Search alerts
- ☐ News
- ☐ Video
- ☐ Image search
- ☐ Talk
- ☐ Other: _____

**12. Which of the following do you own? Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Laptop computer
- ☐ Desktop computer
- ☐ PDA
- ☐ Portable media player (iPod)
- ☐ Digital camera
- ☐ Digital video recorder
- ☐ [Etc., customize]

**13. What web browser do you prefer?**

- ○ Mozilla Firefox
- ○ Internet Explorer
- ○ Safari
- ○ Opera
- ○ Not sure
- ○ No preference
- ○ Other: _____

**14. Do you customize your web browser with add-ons, extensions, and/or toolbars?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Not sure

**15. If they were available, would you use library web browser extensions and search toolbars?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ (Maybe)

**Why or why not?**

☆ The following two items are alternate ways to gauge library receptivity to a number of tools and technologies. It is important to suggest potential uses of each technology in a library setting, so that respondents have a talk-based understanding of what the question is getting at. Asking why or why not provides invaluable feedback into how students use (library) technology in personal learning environments. Including “maybe” or “might use” is a difficult answer type to interpret, but it can help indicate a student’s perception of potential use for the item in question.

**16. How likely would you be to use the following library services in [your learning management system]?**

| | My classes don't use [the LMS] | Extremely unlikely | Unlikely | Fairly likely | Likely | Extremely likely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ask a librarian chat | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Article search box | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Library/ research tutorials | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Catalog search box | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**17. Which of the following have you used in your classes or coursework? Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Blogs
- ☐ Wikis
- ☐ Podcasts
- ☐ Webcasts
- ☐ Online screencast tutorials
- ☐ Virtual worlds (Second Life, etc.)

**18. Have you ever taken an online course or courses at [your institution]? Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Yes, it was entirely online.
- ☐ Yes, but it met face-to-face as well.
- ☐ Neither

## E) Open-Ended Library Evaluation

**1. What do you MOST appreciate about [your campus library]?**

*This type of open-ended item can bring important personal insight to mostly closed-form surveys. It is important to offer respondents the chance to describe their own library experience, rather than pre-defining all answer categories. An alternative wording could be to ask about the library's 'best' aspects, etc.

**2. What do you LEAST appreciate about [your campus library]?**

*Specifying your library by name will generate significantly different responses than asking for user impressions of libraries in general. General insights on library impressions can be interesting, but specific feedback on your institution gives the best practical insight.

**3. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?**

*This type of item allows the respondent to speak to whatever might be on their mind, and is excellent for gathering unexpected insights and feedback as well as heartfelt praise or criticism. This item generally functions well towards the end of a survey, as other questions can inspire a comment or realization that arises from the educational effect of the survey instrument itself.

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