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# E-book Use & Opinions at UMD

UMD Libraries Library Research and Innovative Practice Forum

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UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARIES

# Justifications for 2012 Study

- Impetus for study: we're acquiring numerous e-book packages.
- Research Questions:
  - Do our users know about these e-book holdings?
  - Are they satisfied with the e-book experience?
  - How are they discovering, accessing, and consuming these e-books?
- Goal: provide guidance on e-books vs. print books for collection managers by format



# 2012 Study Findings

- Results of 2012 survey published in April 2014 issue of portal. Focused on students and faculty in arts & humanities, social sciences, and education (~1,300 responses).
- Notable trends:
  - E-reader ownership did correlate with higher e-book usage
  - General lack of awareness of library e-book holdings (need for more marketing)
  - E-books preferred for reference, style manuals; not preferred for scholarly monographs and literature

# Justifications for 2014 Study

- Why do this again?
  - Gather more data to confirm / challenge previous findings
  - Investigate how perceptions of e-books have changed due to time, growth of our libraries' e-book collections, and changing mobile device landscape.
  - Include other disciplines (especially STEM) to determine how perceptions might be impacted by discipline.
- Ran second survey in fall 2014, this time with participants from entire campus community (~2,000 responses).

# 2014 Study Preliminary Results

- Notable trends:
  - E-readers not in the picture this time (computer>tablet>phone>kindle>nook)
  - Number of users who report an aversion to reading scholarly monographs and edited collections in e-format has declined dramatically
  - Users across all affiliate statuses and academic disciplines reported a preference for reference materials in e-formats
  - Comments from respondents pointed to deficiencies in marketing our materials, as well as problems with discoverability and usability
    - For example, ability to download PDF of e-book is critical

# Future plans

- Conduct further data analysis on data to determine how perceptions and usage of e-books are impacted by variables such as:
  - Affiliate status
  - STEM vs. non-STEM academic discipline
  - Item format (monograph, reference title, etc.)

# 2014 Study Affiliate Status Teaser

- Across all affiliate statuses:
  - Percentage of people who said they don't use e-books went down by 10%
  - Respondents who reported never entering the physical library increased from 5% to 8%
  - Respondents reported using online library resources more frequently than physically entering a campus library
- Heaviest users of physical spaces: undergraduates
- Heaviest users of online resources: faculty and graduate students
- Responses suggested a **significant, weak correlation** between use the physical library spaces, use of online library resources, and use of e-books for academic purposes.



# 2014 Study Non-STEM v. STEM Teaser

- Our early data analysis suggests that generally speaking, affiliate status is a better predictor for use of library resources and preference for format type than academic discipline

# ACRL Discussion Roundtable

- Desire for additional multi-method studies into this topic
  - Need studies in addition to surveys – focus groups, panels, etc.
- Desire for a systematic review of conducted studies into this topic
- We need to create platforms that actually work for all the e-books we acquire
  - Can't rely on vendors to create a platform that will work for anything besides their own content
- E-book advocacy
  - <http://www.macalester.edu/library/changingebooksforlibraries/>

