

**Research Practices Survey
Fall 2005**

This survey explores the experiences and opinions of first-year college students concerning academic research. Its purposes are to (1) study research habits of incoming students, (2) use these findings to develop programs to better support academic research, (3) help faculty develop realistic expectations for first-year student research, and (4) determine what changes occur in research abilities as students progress through their academic careers.

As indicated in the email you received with the link to this survey, your participation is completely voluntary, and there are no penalties if you decide not to participate or if you choose to skip any questions. All of your responses will be kept strictly confidential. This means that at no time will your response to any question be publicly linked with your name or with any other identifying information.

In completing this survey, you are certifying that you have read the email message inviting you to participate and describing the purpose of this survey. In addition, you certify that you are at least 18 years of age. You are giving permission for your responses to be used for research, and you understand that your institution agrees to keep your identity and your responses confidential.

You will need to complete this survey in one session; you cannot save your work. However, it should only take about 15 minutes to complete it. Thank you in advance for sharing your views and experiences.

Your Experiences with Research

For most of the questions below, you will be asked to select the response that best represents your experiences or opinions. A few questions will ask you to “check all that apply.” The last question asks for a brief response in your own words.

1. About how often in the past academic year did you use resources from each of the following kinds of libraries (whether in person or on the Internet) for school assignments, research projects, or other academic purposes?

Response options:

- a. Once a week or more often
- b. Once or twice a month
- c. A few times during the year
- d. I did not use this kind of library in the past academic year.

	a	b	c	d
High school library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public or community library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College or university library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. People use libraries for many reasons. In the past academic year, which of the following was your MOST FREQUENT reason for using a library?

- Recreation or other non-academic purposes (leisure reading, checking out music or videos, checking email, etc.)
- Conducting research for school assignments or projects
- Doing other academic work (studying, doing homework, doing a group project, etc.)
- I did not use a library in the past academic year.
- Other

3. In the past academic year, did a course instructor or librarian talk with one or more of your classes about how to do research?

- Yes
- No

4. How many school assignments, papers, or research projects have you completed in the past academic year that required you to include at least three sources in a Bibliography, References, or Works Cited list?

- None
- One or two
- Three or four
- Five or more

5. Have you used any of the following PRINT sources for research in the past academic year? Check as many as apply.

- Library books
- Encyclopedias, almanacs, dictionaries, etc.
- Academic or research journals
- Newspapers or magazines for the general public

6. Have you used any of the following ONLINE sources for research in the past academic year? Check as many as apply.

- Google, Yahoo Search or other general Internet search engines
- Online journals, magazines, newspapers, or encyclopedias
- Online library catalog
- Online booksellers (such as Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, etc.)
- Online indexes or databases (such as EBSCO, JSTOR, Expanded Academic ASAP, InfoTrac, etc.)
- Google Scholar
- Other

7. In the past academic year, did you use any of the following to organize or manage the information you gathered for your research projects? Check as many as apply.

- Paper folders, files, or note cards
- Electronic folders or files in Word or other format
- Web browser (AOL, Google, etc.)
- Bibliographic management software (Endnote, Refworks, ProCite, etc.)
- Other

8. In the past academic year, when you were given a research project assignment, about how often were you required to use a specific style (such as APA, MLA, Chicago), writers' manual, or other instructions for formatting the sources in your Bibliography or Works Cited list?

- Never/not applicable
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Almost always

9. In the past academic year, when you were working on research assignments, about how often did you seek help or advice from each of the following?

Response options:

- a. Never
- b. Rarely
- c. Sometimes
- d. Often
- e. Almost always

	a	b	c	d	e
Teachers or professors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Librarians	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents or other adult family members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends, classmates, or siblings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing labs, writing centers or help groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help screens, online tutorials or other electronic resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Over the course of the past academic year, about how often did you ask for research help at a library reference desk?

- Five or more times
- Three or four times
- Once or twice
- Never

11. Which of the following best describes the way you pace your work on a research assignment?

- I do most of the work soon after an assignment is given.
- I divide the work pretty equally across the available time
- I do a little work soon after an assignment is given, but do most of it toward the end
- I do all of the work just before or on the due date

Your Attitudes and Beliefs About Research

12. How challenging are the different components of research for you? Please rate the difficulty of each of the following activities in your experience as a researcher, using the scale below:

- a. *Very easy* ("I can usually do this easily without assistance from an instructor, librarian, or peer tutor")
- b. *Somewhat easy* ("I can usually do this with some initial assistance")
- c. *Somewhat difficult* ("I need a fair amount of help to do this, but I can manage")
- d. *Very difficult* ("This is hard for me even when I've received help")
- e. *No experience* ("I have not had any assignments requiring this kind of activity")

	a	b	c	d	e
Narrowing your topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing a list of sources to investigate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Revising your search strategy as necessary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing your main argument or thesis statement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing the paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Documenting your sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. How challenging is it for you to obtain sources? Please rate the difficulty of each of the following activities in your experience as a researcher, using the same scale:

	a	b	c	d	e
Searching library catalogs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finding articles with an electronic index	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finding information using the Internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physically locating sources in a library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining materials through interlibrary loan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. How challenging is it for you to use sources? Please rate the difficulty of each of the following activities in your experience as a researcher, using the same scale:

	a	b	c	d	e
Determining whether a source is appropriate for an academic project	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning new information from a source	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deciding what information from your sources to integrate into your project	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowing <i>when</i> to document a source	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowing <i>how</i> to document a source	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. In general, how much do you enjoy doing research?

- Very little Some Quite a bit Very much

16. Which aspect of the research process do you enjoy MOST?

- Narrowing your topic
- Developing a list of sources to investigate
- Searching library catalogs
- Finding articles with an electronic index
- Finding information using the Internet
- Revising your search strategy as necessary
- Physically locating sources in a library
- Obtaining materials through interlibrary loan
- Determining whether a source is appropriate for an academic project
- Learning new information from the sources you obtain
- Deciding what information from your sources to integrate into your project
- Developing your main argument or thesis statement
- Writing the paper
- Knowing when or how to document a source
- Actually documenting your sources
- I don't enjoy any aspects of the research process

17. Which aspect of the research process do you enjoy LEAST?

- Narrowing your topic or research questions
- Developing a list of sources to investigate
- Searching for sources
- Revising your search strategy as necessary
- Physically obtaining sources
- Learning new information from the sources you obtain
- Determining whether a source is appropriate for an academic project
- Identifying the main argument of a source
- Deciding what information from your sources to integrate into your project
- Developing your main argument or thesis statement
- Writing the paper
- Knowing when or how to document a source
- Actually documenting your sources
- I enjoy all aspects of the research process

18. People have different beliefs about the research process. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following belief statements:

Response options:

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Agree
- d. Strongly agree

	a	b	c	d
For any given research project, there is usually one best way to conduct the research.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good researchers don't need help from librarians.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even high-quality research findings can be refuted by subsequent research.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The most useful research resources are those that make sense the first time you read them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If researchers are sufficiently persistent, they can find the answers to almost all their research questions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Successful researchers find and understand source material quickly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good research yields clear results; poor research yields ambiguous results.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People need instruction in order to become skillful researchers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Your Familiarity with Research Terms and Strategies

In this portion of the questionnaire, some of the terms and concepts will be familiar to you, but others will not. Please respond as accurately as you can, and feel free to use the "don't know" response wherever appropriate.

19. Which of the following searches would retrieve the MOST results in an online search?

- movies OR films
- movies AND films
- movies NOT films
- movies INSTEAD OF films
- Don't know

20. Which of the following is the appropriate way to truncate a search word?

- Placing quotation marks around the stem of the word
- Combining search words with "and," "or," or "not"
- Adding * or ! to the stem of the word
- None of the above
- Don't know

21. You retrieve 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, 232 p. ; 23 cm.

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?

- Identifying other books written by the same authors
- Examining the bibliography in the book
- Scanning the shelves where the book is located to see what books are nearby
- Searching again using the subject headings that most closely match your research topic
- Don't know

22. Researchers must distinguish between *academic journals* and *popular magazines*. Which of the following statements is LEAST ACCURATE?

- Academic journal articles provide objective facts; popular magazine articles do not.
- Articles in academic journals usually include a list of references to other scholarly works; articles in popular magazines usually do not.
- The intended audience for academic journals is mainly other scholars; the intended audience for popular magazines is the general public.
- 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.
- Don't know

23. You retrieve the following information from a database search:

TI: The Cuban Revolution's Evolving Identity

AU: Erisman, H Michael

SO: *Latin American Politics and Society*, 2002, 44, 1, 145-153

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

- Volume 2002, Number 44
- Volume 44, Number 1
- Volume 1, Number 145-153
- The issue cannot be determined from the information provided

24. References to published materials appear in a variety of formats. For each of the following, indicate whether the item is an entire book, a journal article, or a portion of a book.

Response options:

- a. Entire book
- b. Journal article
- c. Portion of a book
- d. Don't know

	a	b	c	d
(1) Jorgenson, Lars W. "Reinterpreting Navajo Rites." <u>Navajo Culture</u> 6 (1946): 469-78.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(2) Allen, Glover Morrill. <u>Bats</u> . Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(3) Tanaka, Kazuko. "The New Feminist Movement in Japan, 1970-1990." <u>Japanese Women</u> . Ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow. New York: Feminist Press, 1995. 343-352.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. Researchers must distinguish between *primary* and *secondary* sources. Which of the following statements is MOST ACCURATE?

- Primary sources are more scholarly than secondary sources.
- Primary sources are old; secondary sources are new.
- Primary sources examine subjects first-hand; secondary sources examine the findings of other scholars.
- Primary sources are more appropriate for academic projects than are secondary sources.
- All of the above are equally accurate.
- Don't know

26. Which of the following is likely to yield the most comprehensive list of relevant scholarly articles for a research project?

- a. Searching an electronic index or database in a specific academic field (History, Biology, Music, etc.)
- b. Using a general Internet search engine like Google or Yahoo
- c. Paging through print volumes of an academic journal in a specific academic field
- d. Searching the library catalog
- e. All of the above are equally effective
- f. Don't know

27. A “peer-reviewed” or “refereed” journal is BEST described as:

- A journal that publishes reviews of other articles
- A journal that publishes articles that have been approved by other scholars
- A journal that includes only articles written collaboratively by peers
- A journal that includes references for each article it publishes
- Don't know

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

- A direct quotation from someone else's written work
- Source information for any ideas or text borrowed from someone else's written work
- The physical location of a research resource (book, journal, etc.)
- All of the above
- Don't know

29. A citation is NOT required when:

- You are paraphrasing, rather than quoting, a source
- More than one source says the same thing
- You are describing your own findings or analysis
- All of the above
- Don't know

Your Approach to Evaluating Sources

30. 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?

Response options:

- a. Scholarly
- b. Non-scholarly
- c. Either
- d. Don't know

If a source...

	a	b	c	d
Is available online	○	○	○	○
Is written by a journalist	○	○	○	○
Is published in a peer-reviewed journal	○	○	○	○
Is posted on a blog	○	○	○	○

Was recently published	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has a lengthy list of references	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Was published by a university press	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Was published in <i>Time</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> or <i>US News & World Report</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. You are required to write a paper for your American History class examining the roles of women in the American Civil War. An initial search turns up the following sources. Which one would be the LEAST appropriate for your paper?

- Edwards, L. F. (2000). *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era*. Urbana , IL: University of Illinois Press. 271 pp.
- Heidler, D. S. and Heidler, J. T. (2000). *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO. 5 volumes, 2733 pp.
- Schultz, J. E. (2002). "Seldom Thanked, Never Praised, and Scarcely Recognized: Gender and Racism in Civil War Hospitals." *Civil War History* 48 (3): 220-236.
- Wilson, B. A. (1999). "Women in the Civil War." Available at <http://userpages.aug.com/captbarb/femvets2.html>

32. On what basis did you select your response to the preceding question?

- Whether the source is likely to be scholarly
- How recently the source was published
- Whether the source was a print or Internet source
- The amount of information the source is likely to provide, as indicated by the number of pages

33. When you are doing research for a project or paper, which of the following source characteristics is MOST important to you?

- How easily you can get the source
- How relevant the source is to your topic
- Whether the source is scholarly
- How recently the source was published
- Whether the source is available electronically
- Whether the author is widely known

34. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

35. What is your ethnicity? Check as many as apply.

- White/Caucasian
- African American/Black
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian American/Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Other

36. Is there anything else about your research practices or attitudes that you would like your course instructors or campus librarians to know, or something specific you are hoping to learn about doing high-quality academic research? If so, please write a brief statement below:

Thank you very much for taking time to complete this questionnaire!