

| 238 Online, Graduate Students at Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas USA | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 61 men 173 women 4 not reported | 98 < 29 years 93 < 45 years 45 >45 years 2 unknown | 183 reside at least 50 miles from University | 228 English first language | 166 enrolled in one of 4 ESU degree programs: Business (4%) IDT (11%) HPER (8%) Ed Leadership (9%) SLIM (38%) | Reason for choosing distance Education 178 convenience 180 fit of schedule 102 quality of program | Computer technology used in last two weeks 232 Internet 200 Facebook 235 Email |

| | |
|--|---|
| Library Usage | 154 (65%) never attend a library orientation 129 (54%) never ask a librarian for assistance |
| Who provides assistance? | 94 (39%) course professors 38 (16%) classmates 38 (16%) practicing professional in the field 14 (16%) librarians 4 (2%) parents 50 (21%) do not ask for assistance |
| How do students find sources? | 92 (39%) accidentally encountering pages of interest 168 (71%) follow links to pages that pique interest 157 (66%) use "official" search terms or tags 133 (56%) found records or pages matching general, natural language terms (common sense, everyday language) 79 (33%) find specific pages or records using controlled terms or attributers (terms established by the Library of Congress) 2 (1%) never browsed electronic resources when doing a research assignment. |
| Where do online students go for course related research? | 31 (37%) active search behavior (solo and assisted) 47 (55%) passive search behavior 7 (8%) no search behavior |
| Barriers online students face when accessing information for academic assignments | 25 (46%) internal barriers 26 (47%) external barriers 4 (7%) no barriers |
| Student's perception of their connection to library services | 12 (15%) belonging to university community 39 (50%) some connection 18 (23%) awareness of library services 9 (12%) preference for online resources |

Findings from survey and interview are summarized in five hypothetical explanations for low- or non-use of library resources or librarian assistance.

- Low- and non-use of library resources and/or librarians' services is primarily the result of using only information provided by the instructor.
- Low- and non-use of library resources and/or librarians' services is related to a combination of internal and external barriers that online students experience.
- When undertaking an academic assignment, online students are influenced by their feelings, or lack thereof, of connectedness to the university or to the university library.
- Online students who successfully complete course assignments and projects, although undirected to do so, are independently watching and alert, and dynamically scrutinizing Internet-based sources.
- The natural propensity of humans recognized by Bates (2002) to collect information passively through absorption or actively through sampling and selection, a generic human behavior, from primarily the face-to-face environment has evolved into a different human propensity, a new brain-based activity making it mentally possible for human beings to assemble information while engaged in the online environment. More research is needed to determine the effectiveness of this activity in scholarly assignments.

Publication

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Rapid growth in the amount and types of available online information elevates the issue of library usage to that of a new imperative for today’s society.

A growing body of research indicates that low- and non-use of college and university libraries and services of librarians exists.

Student’s study habits are changing as they overuse Google and misuse scholarly databases.



Theoretical Framework

Marcia J. Bates (2002) theory of information seeking and searching was used to examine findings in this study.

- 1) The natural propensity of humans is to acquire information passively through elaborative social networks.
- 2) Information seekers encounter difficulty in accessing online information resources due to lack of information literacy skills.
- 3) Lack of effective supports during online information seeking cuts down on the need for active information seeking in libraries.
- 4) Human beings adopt the principle of least effort in seeking and searching for information.

Bates’ view that the natural propensities of human beings to collect information passively through absorption from the environment or actively through sampling and selection provide the point for derivation and the evolution of a new theoretical model of online, graduate students’ academic information seeking behaviors.

Study Methodology

Qualitative inquiry sought to determine online graduate students’:

- 1) General use of computer technology;
- 2) Use or non-use of the library and/or services of the librarian;
- 3) Patterns and practices in undertaking assignments;
- 4) Strategies for finding sources of information and asking for help;
- 5) Challenges and roadblocks in accessing academic information for assignments; and,
- 6) Connection to the university library.

Figure 1. Dow Research Team Online Graduate Student Information Seeking Model

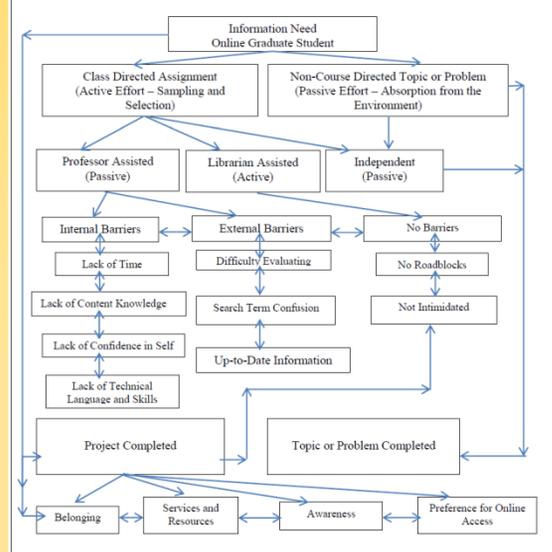


Figure 2. Modes of Information Seeking Derived from Bates’ Modes (2002)

| | Active | Passive | Dynamic |
|------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Directed | Searching (a) | Monitoring (b) | Scrutinizing (e) |
| Undirected | Browsing (c) | Being Aware (d) | Being Alert (f) |

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