HELLO

from the other side

A Stacks Navigation Survey at MSU Libraries

Autumn Faulkner & Emily Sanford -- Michigan State University Libraries -- ALA MW 1.22.17 -- #stacksnav

background

Catalogers from a large academic research library

50,000+ student body

~5500 academic staff

7.6 million unique titles

3.5 million physical volumes

RESEARCH GOALS

how are users finding & identifying items?

are people shelf-browsing?

how are people navigating the stacks?

IRB & INFORMED CONSENT

official statements of purpose, risks, benefits, rights of participants, etc.

TOOLS

Qualtrics
LibSurvey
Google Forms
SurveyMonkey

survey preparation

survey questions

12 questions

- 2 open-ended
- 10 Likert scale or closed-ended

msu.libsurveys.com/exitsurvey

survey process

COMMUNICATION →

inform stakeholders, maintain transparency

SELECTION →

responses solicited in post-circulation transaction

DEPLOYMENT →

incentives, privacy, peak times

RESPONSE RATE →
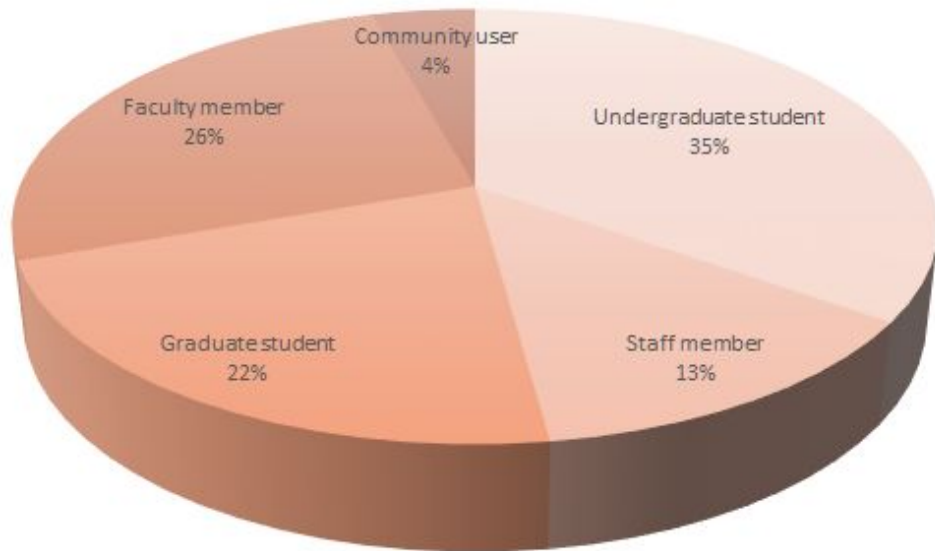
not high, what effect did timing have?

status/affiliation @ MSU

survey results

library usage
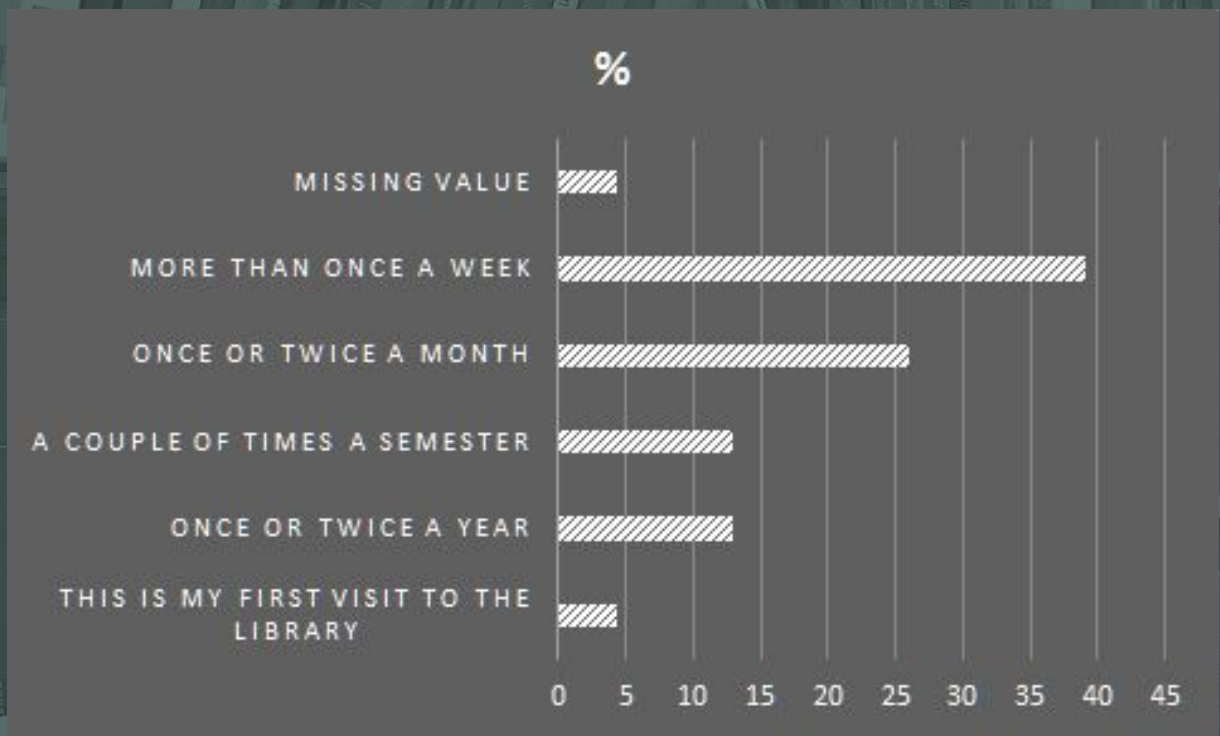
survey results

checkout rate

%

Category	
MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK	████████████████████ (~30)
ONCE A MONTH	███ (~4)
ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH	████████████ (~22)
A COUPLE OF TIMES A SEMESTER	███████ (~13)
ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR	███████ (~13)
THIS IS MY FIRST TIME CHECKING THINGS OUT	███████ (~13)

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
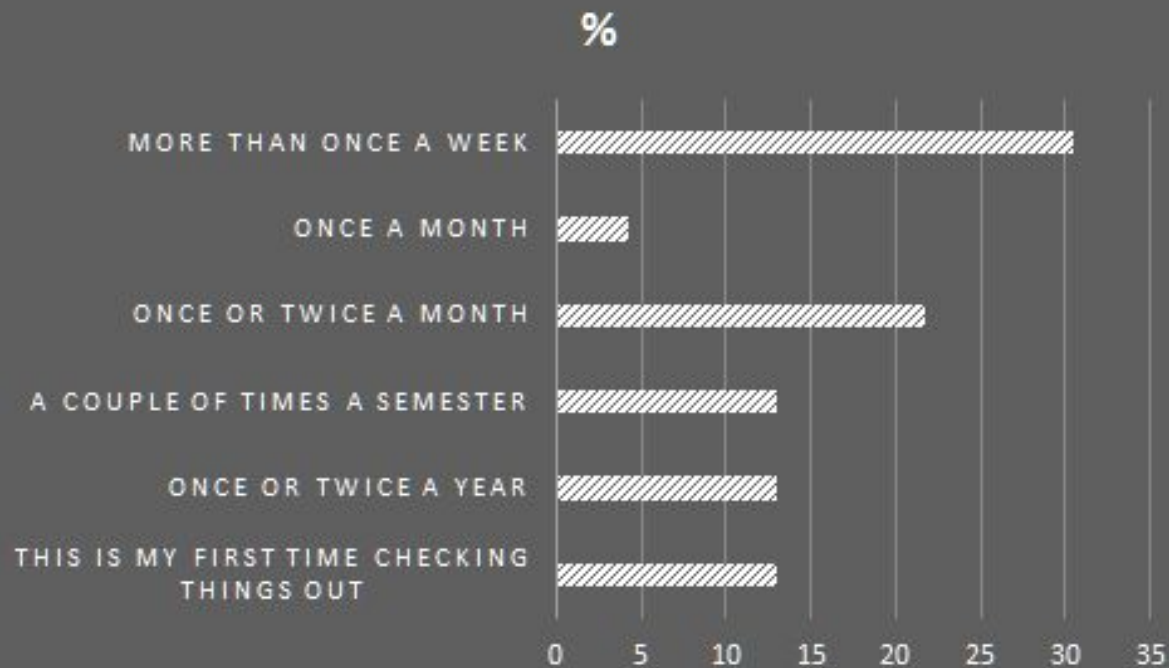
survey results

catalog usage

PERCENT

NEVER	
ONCE A WEEK OR MORE	
ONCE A MONTH	
ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH	
A COUPLE OF TIMES A SEMESTER	
ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR	

0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70
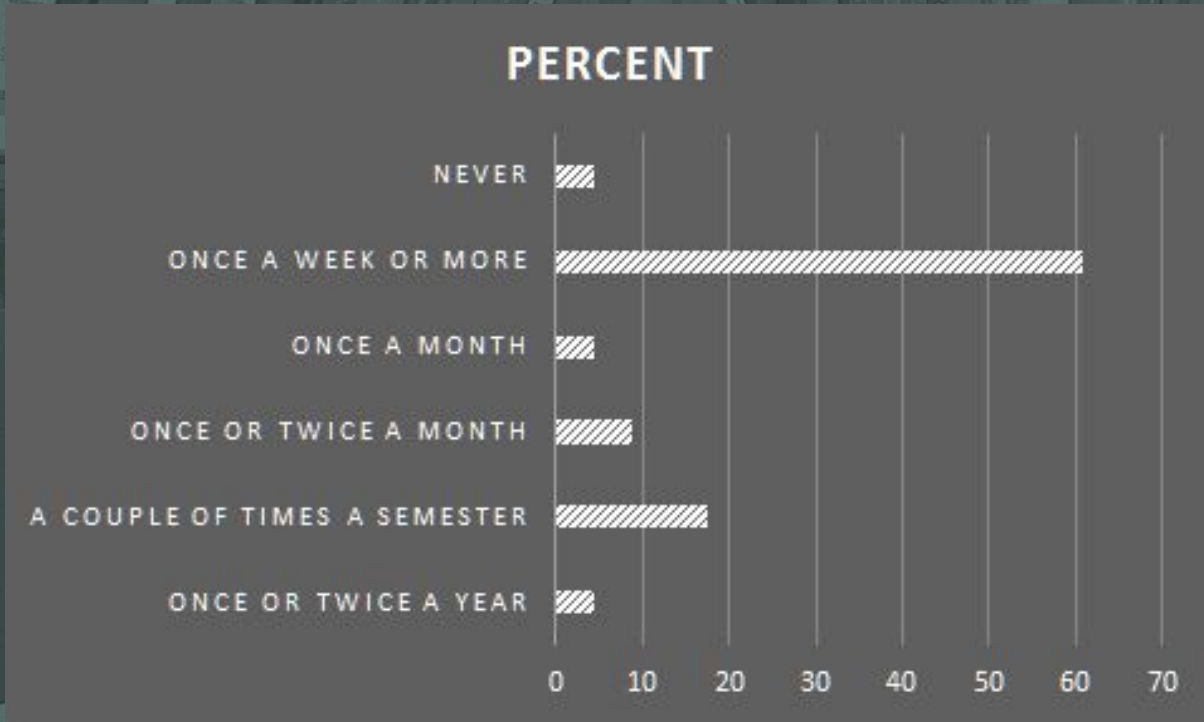
survey results

using call #s to locate to locate my item(s) was intuitive.

Call number usage	%
Strongly disagree.	0
Disagree	8.7
Neither agree or disagree	13
Agree	39.1
Strongly Agree	34.8
What is a call number?	0

survey results

usage of navigational aids

Digital signs	Frequency	%
No	14	60.9
Yes	9	39.1

Call # tape	Frequency	%
No	10	43.5
Yes	13	56.5

survey results

overall how difficult/easy were the items to locate?

Difficulty level	%
Very difficult	4.3
Difficult	8.7
Neutral	17.4
Easy	17.4
Very easy	52.2

survey results

did you find everything you were looking for today?

Found everything?	Frequency	%
Kind of	1	4.3
No	3	13
Yes	19	82.6

survey results

Discovery	%
Shelf browsing	26.09
Searching - library computer	21.74
Searching - personal device	17.39
Searching - prior to arrival @ library	69.57
Browsing through items next to my item	21.74
Had library staff member assistance	4.35
Other	4.35

most
popular
discovery
method

tell us about the most challenging part of your search (open-ended)

NO ISSUE

- "It's really easy and the staff on the first floor real is really helpful and nice."
- "None!"
- "Nothing it was very easy and helpful."

tell us about the most challenging part of your search (open-ended)

BROWSING/IDENTIFICATION ISSUES

- "No real challenge, I simply grab an English language book on a subject that appears interesting."
- "Reading the text to make sure the date of the information I found was from the period of interest."
- "Not your fault, by any means. The author wrote 600 plays, and you have about half a dozen editions of his 'complete' works."

survey results

tell us about the most challenging part of your search (open-ended)

CALL NUMBER ISSUES
- "Finding the book within the shelfs [sic]."
- "I wasn't really sure how the call number system worked, so I did a little research online to figure it out. After that, it was simple enough."
- "Identifying the correct row/bookshelf"

survey results

tell us about the most challenging part of your search (open-ended)

NAVIGATION ISSUES

- "...I normally use the "map it" feature online to find my book, but neither it nor the digital signs had been updated to reflect the move. If those had been updated, I would have said it was very easy to find my book (it's almost always very easy)"
- "Some of the call numbers were moved to the basement."
- "It was very easy, but finding a library map with the call numbers was the most difficult."

tell us about the most challenging part of your search (open-ended)

NAVIGATION ISSUES

- "I asked at circulation just to make sure whether the BF's had moved yet or not."

- "I could not easily find the early Q call numbers (I think Q-QD) because the location wasn't listen on the digital signs. I did find it eventually by looking at the sign on the inside of the elevator with all of the call numbers listed next to their locations."

tell us about the most challenging part of your search (open-ended)

MECHANICAL/PHYSICAL ISSUES

- "Trying to open the moving shelves to the section I needed (I had to click "Reset" which I hadn't realized existed before)."
- "The book was listed as "Available" in the online catalog, but was not on the shelves."
- "Getting the shelves in Basement West to move (but a lovely library staff person helped)."
- "Books in the wrong places"

what we learned

NEEDS →

more research, larger sample, maybe a field study?

PROBLEMS →

time/resources vs. data-driven decisions

NEXT TIME →

involve a statistician from the beginning!

references

Barclay, D. A. (2010). The myth of browsing. *American Libraries, 41*(6/7), 52-54.

Hahn, J., & Zitron, L. (2011). How first-year students navigate the stacks: Implications for improving wayfinding. *Reference & User Services Quarterly, 51*(1), 28.

Massis, B. E. (2011). "serendipitous" browsing versus library space. *New Library World, 112*(3/4), 178-182. doi:10.1108/03074801111117078

Ridley, D. R., & Christopher Newport University. (1995). *University library browsing: A study illustrating a methodology.* Distributed by ERIC Clearinghouse.

Vaver, A., & Mott, R. (2010). Serendipity through browsing. *American Libraries, 41*(8), 6.

Wagner, V. H. (2008). Phantom use: Quantifying in-library browsing of circulating materials. *Journal of Access Services, 5*(1-2), 173-179. doi:10.1080/15367960802206177

questions? get in touch!

autumn@msu.edu | esanford@msu.edu