



Distance Learning Section

Association of College & Research Libraries | ALA

Research Committee 2016 Survey Results Analysis

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DLS Research Committee 2016 Survey Results

Preface

In the spring of 2016, the DLS Research Committee solicited responses to an online survey (through SurveyMonkey) via electronic mailing lists to explore the distance library related research interests and potentially connect researchers interested in collaborating. Seventy-nine responses were received during the eight-week window the survey was available.

A response rate ranging between 75% and 87% was recorded for questions regarding research areas. About one-third of respondents indicated that they were currently involved in research related to library services to distance learners and faculty, leaving the majority having not done research in these areas. The most popular topics already researched by survey respondents were

- “Library instruction to distance learners” (35 of 59 respondents (59%), question 12 “extensive” + “some” combined),
- “Use of full-text electronic and web resources” (34 of 68 respondents (50%), question 11 “extensive” + “some” combined).

The topics respondents identified that they were interested in conducting research mostly involved a focus on distance learners and information literacy rather than areas like content and collections. Out of a total of 32 possible topics, the following areas were selected by over 50% of the respondents for each question as “Have not performed research, interested in researching”:

- “Distance Services and student retention” (43 of 59 respondents (73%), question 14)
- “Information seeking behavior of distance students” (39 of 59 respondents (66%), question 14)
- “Distance learners’ attitudes about seeking help- perceptions of library services” (36 of 59 respondents (61%), question 14)
- “Digital literacy and computer skills of distance students” (36 of 59 respondents (61%), question 12)
- “Integrating IL standards into curriculum for distance learners” (36 of 60 respondents (60%), question 12)
- “Use or application of ACRL or other standards for distance learners” (34 of 59 respondents (58%), question 16)
- “User studies as a basis for planning, delivering, and improving services to distance learners” (33 of 59 respondents (56%), question 14)
- “Services to distance learners with disabilities” (32 of 59 respondents, (54%), question 16)

The area respondents were least interested in conducting research was “Authentication/authorization/proxy server issues in remote access to electronic resources” (47 of 67 respondents (70%), question 11).

Although this data was collected using a small sample size, these areas of interest might represent a shift in distance library services research moving away from focusing on collections, content, and technical aspects of providing distance library services to focusing on the role the library has in the experiences and success of distance learners. The most popular research methods used by respondents

were identified as literature reviews (46 of 58 respondents (79%), question 17) and surveys (45 of 58 respondents (78%), question 17).

The data is examined question by question throughout the rest of the report. The Committee plans to connect interested parties with each other after sharing the report with other DLS committees.

Questions 1 and 2 (n = 79)

Name and Email Address

The survey indicated, “Information gathered in this survey will not be distributed publicly and only unidentifiable information will be shared with other Distance Learning Section (DLS) committees” so this personally identifying information will not be shared in this report.

Question 3 (n = 79)

Institution

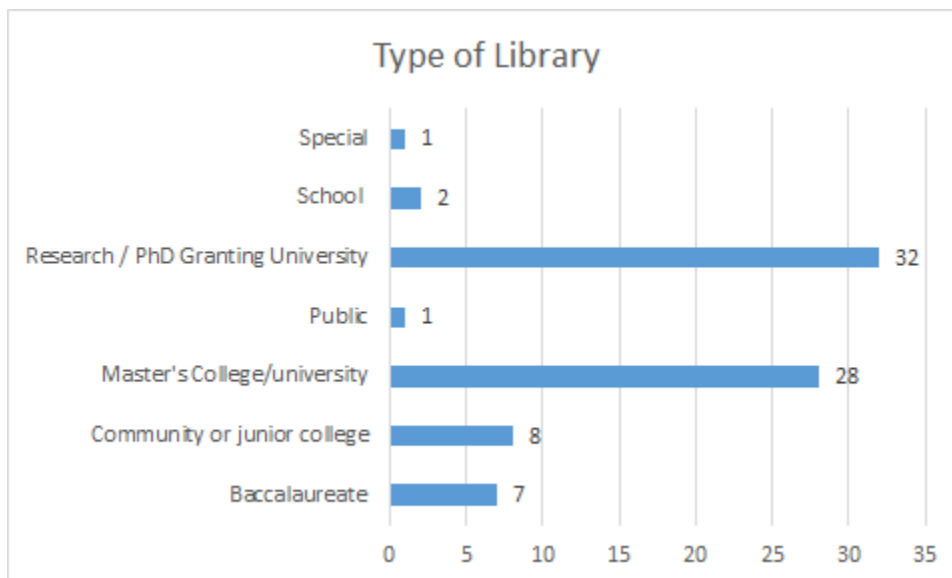
Institution	No. of respondents
Antioch University New England	1
Asbury University	1
Baton Rouge Community College	1
Bergen Community College	1
Berkeley College	1
Brigham Young University	1
Century College	1
Cleveland Community College	1
Cleveland State University	1
College of the Sequoias	1
Colorado Mountain College	1
Concordia	1
Concordia University Portland	1
Concordia University Texas	1
Dolby Elementary	1
Drexel University Libraries	1
East Carolina University	1
Florida Gulf Coast University	1
Florida State University	1
George Mason University	1
George Washington University	1
Goucher College	1
Grand Canyon University	1

Harrell Health Sciences Library, Penn State College of Medicine	1
Hillsborough Community College	1
ITT Tech Institute -Hialeah Campus 088	1
Johnson & Wales University	1
Kansas State University Libraries	1
Lafourche Parish Public Library	1
Lamar university	1
Liberty University	1
Miami University Middletown	1
Middle Georgia State University	1
Mississippi College	1
Northwestern State University of Louisiana	1
Nova Southeastern University	2
Oregon State University	1
Palm Beach Atlantic University	1
Park University	1
Rasmussen College	2
Rutgers University	1
Saint Leo University	1
Santa Barbara City College	1
Scott Middle School	1
Simmons College	1
South Dakota State University	1
State Library of Louisiana	1
Stevenson University	1
SUNY Empire State College	1
Thompson Rivers University	1
University of Georgia	1
University of Central Florida	2
University College, University of Maine System	2
University of Arkansas at Little Rock	2

University of Central Oklahoma	1
University of Holy Cross	1
University of Illinois	1
University of Lethbridge	1
University of Maine at Augusta	1
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	1
University of North Florida	1
University of South Florida	1
University of Southern California	2
University of the Cumberlands	1
University of Utah	1
University of West Florida	1
University of Wisconsin - Stout	1
University of Wyoming	1
University of Wisconsin- Oshkosh	1
West Virginia University	1
Western New England University School of Law Library	1
Western Washington University	1
Wichita State University	1

Question 4 (n = 79)

Type of Library



The respondents were mainly from higher education, especially from institutions that grant master's and doctoral degrees. The one special library was a state library.

Several institutions elaborated on their program offerings:

We have a few doctoral programs too but I wouldn't call us "research institution."

We also offer doctoral degrees.

But only one EdD and the rest masters--MBA, Education, Nursing.

SUNY Empire State College noted, "We are completely online (no physical collections or library building) serving all distance learners, many of whom are working adults."

Nova Southeastern College noted that it was a "joint use" library.

Question 5 (n = 79)

State/Province

Canada		Mississippi	1
Alberta	1	Missouri	1
British Columbia	1	North Carolina	2
United States		Nebraska	1
Arizona	1	New Hampshire	1
Arkansas	2	New Jersey	2
California	4	New York	2
Colorado	1	Ohio	2
DC	1	Oklahoma	1
Florida	13	Oregon	2
Georgia	2	Pennsylvania	2
Illinois	1	Rhode Island	1
Kansas	2	South Dakota	1
Kentucky	2	Texas	2
Louisiana	7	Utah	2
Massachusetts	2	Virginia	2
Maine	3	Washington	1
Maryland	2	West Virginia	1
Minnesota	3	Wisconsin	1
		Wyoming	1

The survey was distributed through the following listservs: ACRL Instruction ILI, DLS, FACRL, OFFCAMP, UNIACCESS, ACR-IGLISE, LLA General Listserv, EBSS Listserv, fla-facrl@lists.fsu.edu. The relatively high response rates from Florida and Louisiana may be due to the survey's distribution to state listservs. Other committees may want to keep this in mind when trying to target the reach of their surveys.

Question 6 (n = 55)

Country

Fifty-five respondents answered this question; 24 respondents skipped it. At least two respondents mistook the word country for county. Using the states given by all respondents and changing the counties to countries, it was possible to determine where all respondents were based.

Seventy-seven respondents were from the United States; two were from Canada.

Question 7 (n = 79)

Position Title

The majority of respondents were either some type of public services librarian (29) (reference, instruction, or subject specialist) or were a type of distance education or instructional design librarian (22). Two librarians were a combination of instructional design and reference, but were placed in the distance education/instructional design category. General librarians comprised nine of the survey takers. Eight of the respondents were either directors or assistant directors. Technical services librarians accounted for three survey takers, while two copyright librarians and two outreach librarians took the survey. Finally, there was one respondent who held the title of electronic resources librarian, one Information Competency Librarian, one AVP Academic Support, and one Web Development & Design Librarian.

29 Reference/Instruction/Subject Specialist Librarians
Reference Librarian
Reference/Instruction Librarian
Instruction and Research Services Librarian
Social Sciences and Graduate Outreach Librarian
Reference Manager
Instruction Librarian
Liaison Librarian
Reference/Instruction Librarian
Political Science / International Relations Librarian
Graduate Studies Librarian and Reference/Instruction Librarian
Social Sciences & Graduate Outreach Librarian
Associate Director, Coordinator of Education & Instruction
Research and Instruction Librarian
Education Librarian
Head of Reference; Library Consultant
Reference Librarian
Interim Director of Library Services and Reference Instruction Librarian
Assistant Director of Reference
Public Services Librarian
Research and Instruction Librarian
Research and Instruction Librarian

Performing Arts & Humanities Librarian
Library and Information Science and Research Services Librarian
Social Work Librarian
Reference/Instruction Librarian
Reference & Instruction Librarian
Education Librarian
Social Sciences Librarian
Assistant Director for Library Instruction and Information Literacy

22 Distance Education or Instructional Design Librarians

Distance Education Librarian
Distance Learning Librarian
Extended Campus and Distance Services Librarian
Online Services Librarian
Librarian for Extended Education
Ecampus/Instructional Design Librarian
Virtual Learning Librarian
Instructional Design Librarian
Online Outreach Librarian
Distance Information Services Librarian
Distance Learning Librarian
Education & Instructional Technology Librarian
Reference/Distance Learning Librarian
Distance Learning Librarian
Director of Off-Campus Library Services
Graduate / Distance Learning Librarian
Distance & Document Delivery Librarian
Online Learning Librarian (work closely with instructional designers too)
Distance Education Librarian
Academic Librarian for Off-Campus Library Services

Research Librarian / Online Instruction Designer
Head of Research & Distance Services

9 Librarians (no specific title)

Associate Librarian
Librarian and Assistant Professor
Librarian
Librarian
Librarian
Librarian
Librarian/Administrative
Librarian, School of Justice Studies
Librarian

8 Directors or Assistant Directors

Director of Library Services
Director
Dean of Learning Resources
Associate University Librarian and Sr. Executive Dir. Sherman Library
Assistant Director
Library Director
Director
Director Library Academic Partnerships

3 Technical Services Librarians

Cataloging & Metadata Librarian/Adjunct faculty for online courses at a different college
Technical Services Librarian
Technical Services Librarian

2 Copyright Librarians

Resource Sharing and Copyright Librarian

Collection Development/Copyright

2 Outreach Librarians

Research and Community Engagement Librarian

Student Success Librarian

1 Electronic Resources Librarian

Electronic Resources Librarian

1 Information Competency Librarian

Information Competency Librarian

1 Assistant Vice President, Academic Support

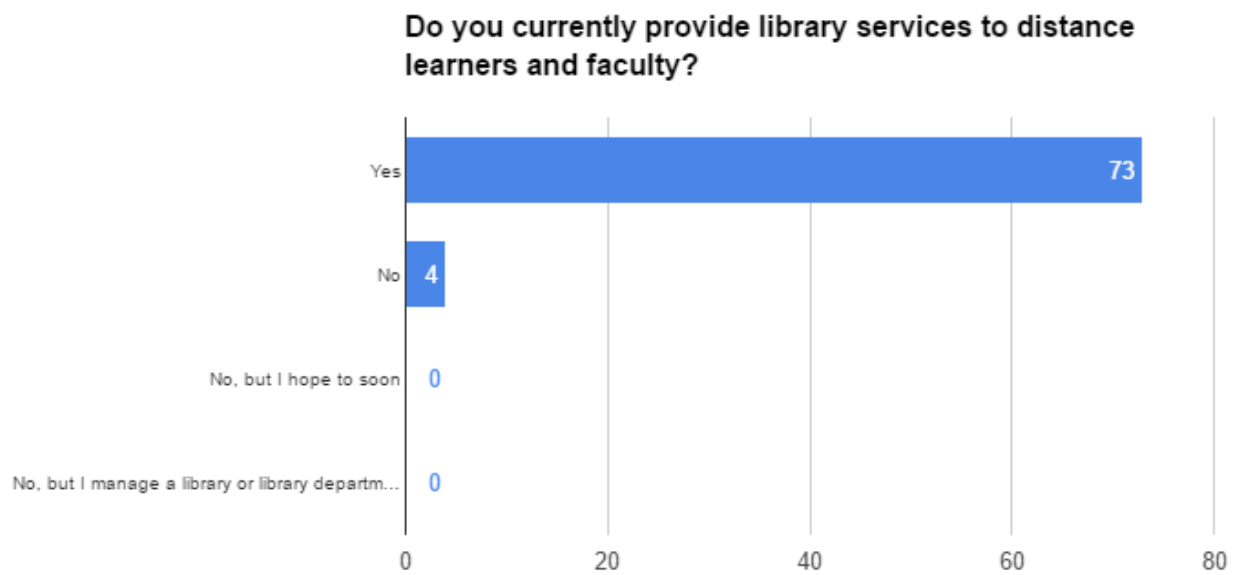
AVP Academic Support

1 Web Development & Design

Web Dev & Design

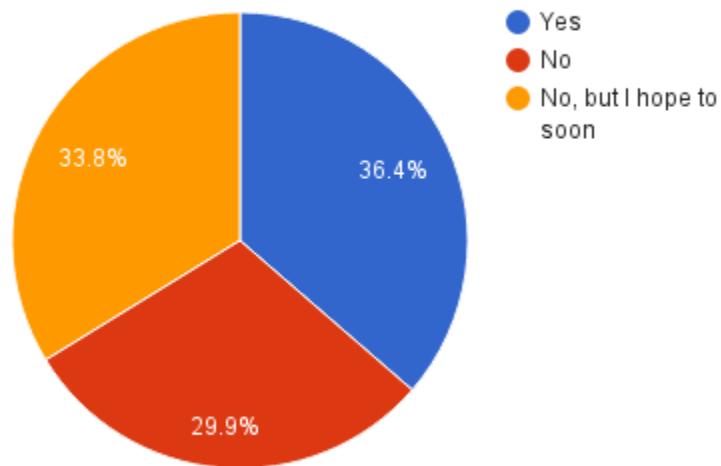
Question 8 (n = 77)**Do you currently provide library services to distance learners and faculty?**

Seventy-seven respondents answered this question, while two did not provide an answer. The majority of respondents already provide library services to distance learners and faculty (73 respondents or 94.8%). Only 5.2% (four total) of respondents do not provide this type of service.



Question 9 (n =77)**Are you currently involved in research related to library services to distance learners and faculty?**

The majority of the respondents (n = 49, 63.6%) were not currently involved in research related to library services to distance learners and faculty; however, 33.8% (n = 26) of these respondents hoped to be doing this type of research in the future. Slightly more than one-third of respondents were already doing this type of research (n = 28, 36.4%).

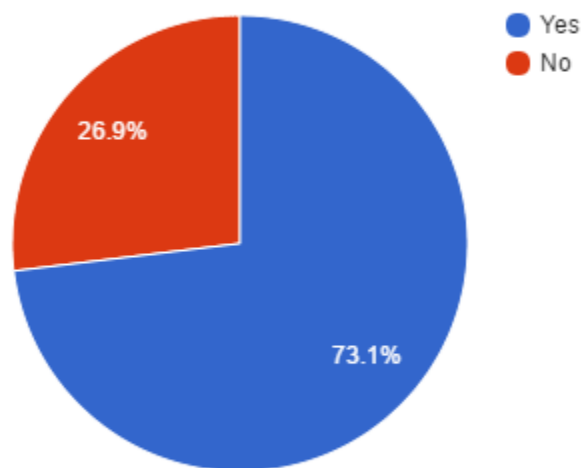
Are you currently involved in research related to library services to distance learners and faculty?

Question 10 (n = 78)

Would you be interested in collaboration with a researcher/librarian who is interested in similar research or work?

There were a total of 78 responses. Out of those responses 57 (73.08%) responded “Yes” they would be interested in collaborating with a researcher/librarian who is interested in similar research or work, 21 (26.92%) of the respondents said “No.” This question could be used in conjunction with questions 11–16, which focused on research interest, and questions 1 and 2 (identifying and contact information) to connect librarians or researchers who are focused on distance library services.

**Would you be interested in collaboration with a researcher/
librarian who is interested in similar research or work?**

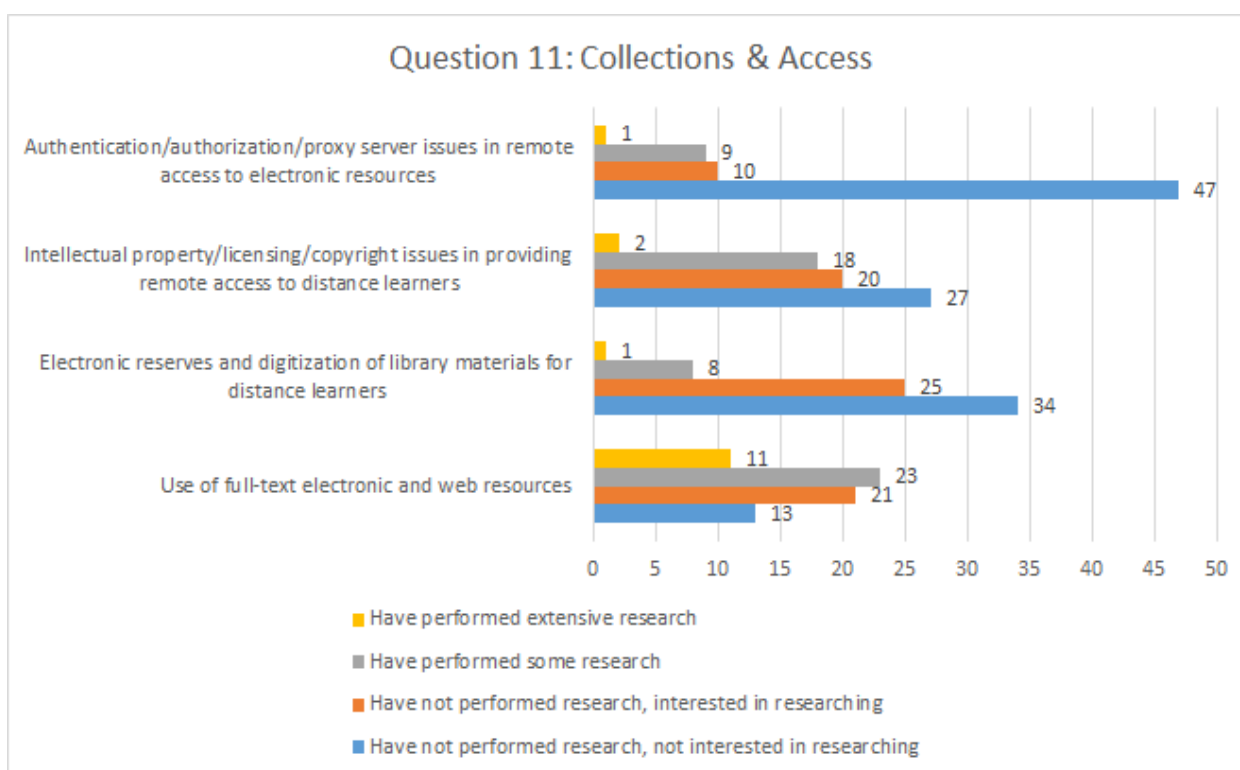


Question 11 (n = 68)

Please indicate your level of research experience and your level of interest in the following subjects.

A total of 68 respondents answered question 11 regarding research experience and interest related to collections; one respondent only responded to the second two items. Compared to other research areas, respondents had limited interest in researching these topics. This was especially true for authentication issues—only 10 respondents (15%) had conducted research in this area, and 47 respondents (69%) had no interest in researching the topic.

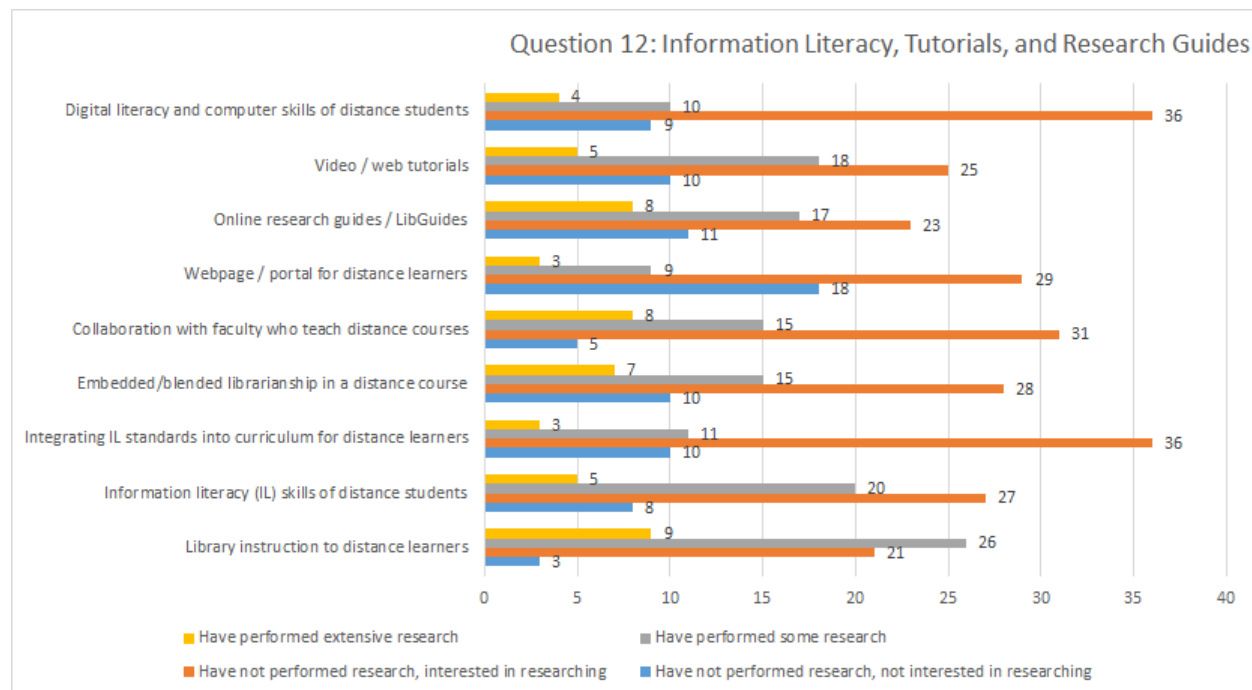
Respondents were most interested in investigating how distance students use full-text electronic and web resources—34 respondents (50%) had conducted research in this area and another 22 (32%) were interested in doing so.



Question 12 (n = 58-60)

Please indicate your level of research experience and your level of interest in the following subjects.

Question 12 focused on instruction and learning objects for distance learners. Sixty respondents answered the question, with two respondents completing only part of the question. There was a high level of interest for research related to these topics. Library instruction to distance users was the most-researched subtopic, with 35 of 59 respondents (59%) having performed “some” or “extensive” research.



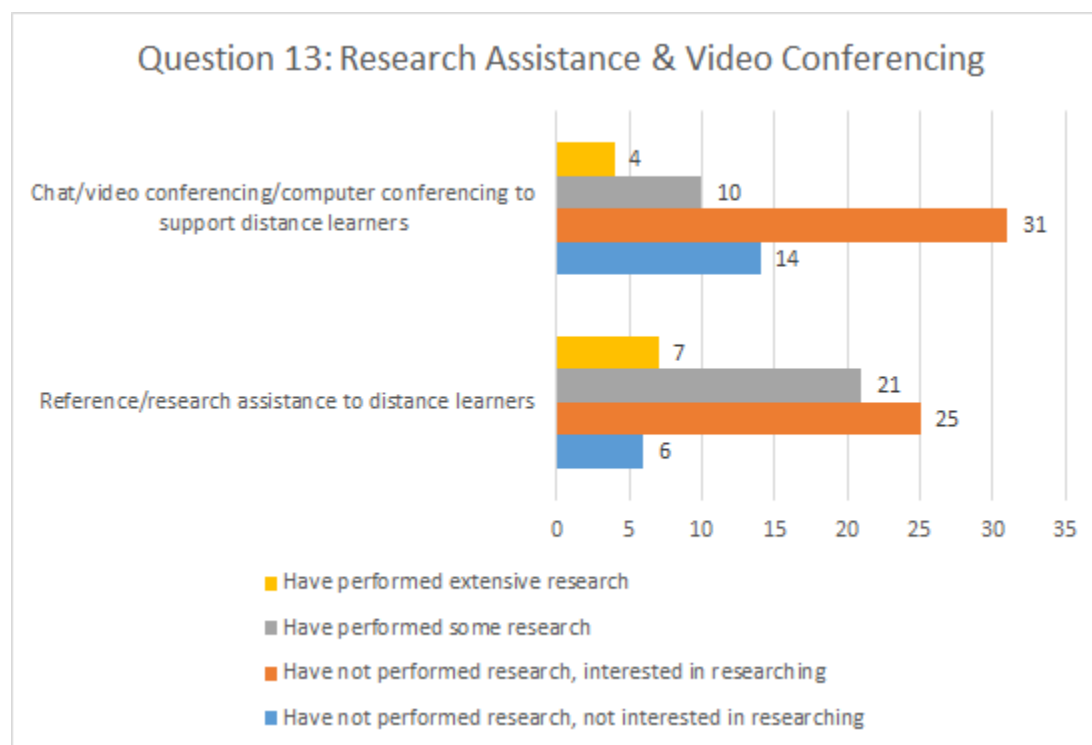
Questions 13 & 14 (n =59)

Please indicate your level of research experience and your level of interest in the following subjects.

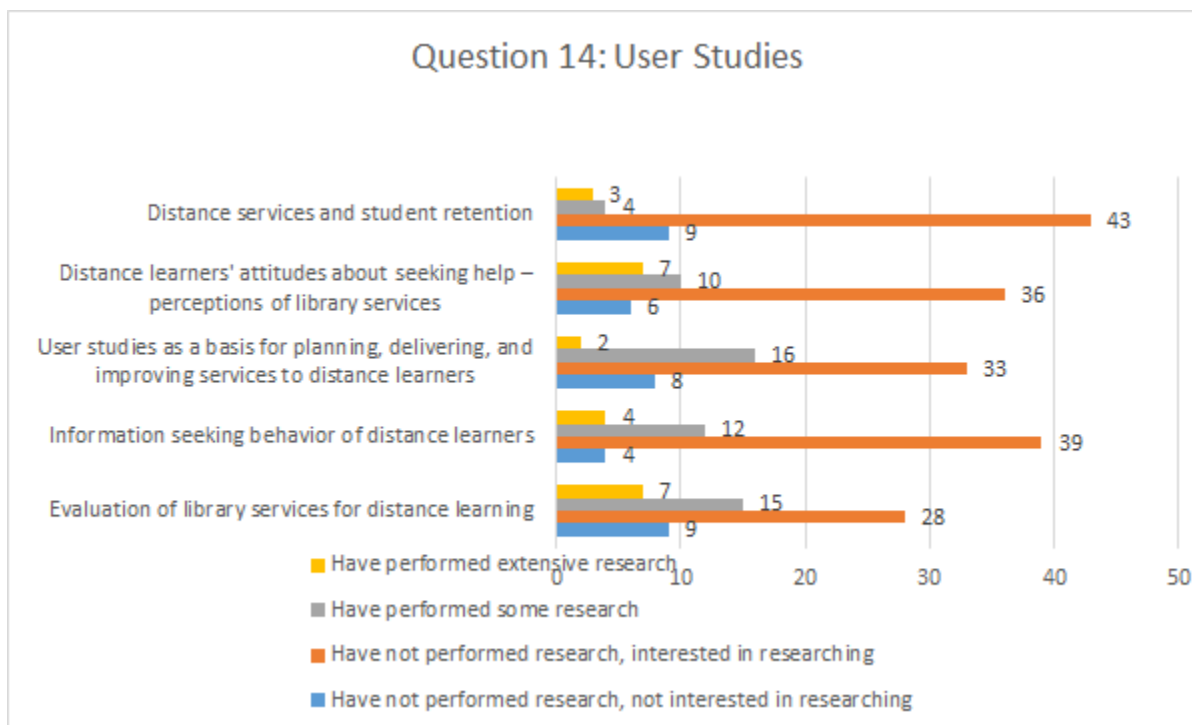
A total of 79 respondents answered some of the survey. Before analyzing the following results, it should be noted that 20 out of the 79 total respondents skipped this question, significantly reducing the sample size and generalizability of this data.

When asked to indicate their level of research experience and level of interest in the following subjects," a plurality of respondents indicated that they "Have not performed research, interested in researching" for all categories and represented an outright majority of respondents for five out of seven of the categories across both questions.

Question 13 focused on research assistance and video conferencing. The data indicate that more research has been pursued with regards to Reference/Research assistance (45.76% indicated "some" or "extensive" research) than Chat/Video/Computer Conferencing (23.33%). However, 51.67% of respondents expressed interest in conducting research related to Chat/Video/Computer Conferencing support.



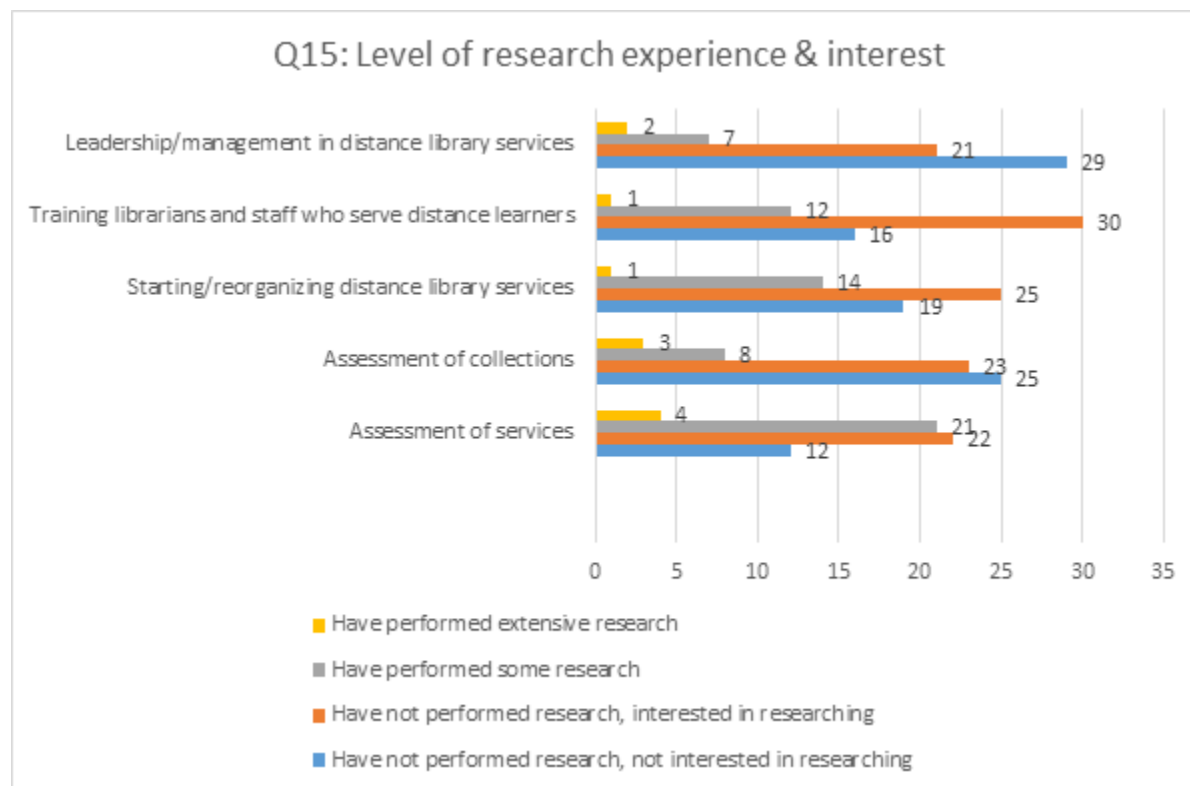
Question 14 focused on user studies. Data indicate that one of the most attractive areas of research concerning user studies is "Information seeking behavior of distance learners." On this subject, only 8.33% of respondents indicated they were not interested in researching— the lowest rate among all categories. Another highly attractive research area is "Distance services and student retention." This topic had the highest overall percentage of respondents (71.67%) indicating that they have not performed research, but are interested in researching the topic. This topic highlights potential areas for research since relatively few respondents indicated that they had performed "some" or "extensive" research in the area (6.67% and 5.00%, respectively).



Question 15 (n = 59)

Please indicate your level of research experience and your level of interest in the following subjects.

A total of 79 respondents answered some of the survey. Before analyzing the following results, it should be noted that 20 out of the 79 total respondents skipped this question, significantly reducing the sample size and generalizability of this data.



Question 15 continued to gauge research experience and interest in various topics related to distance librarianship. When combining responses for “Extensive research” and “Some research,” the most popular topic was “Assessment of services,” which 25 respondents selected (42% of respondents performed some or extensive research in this area). It was a popular topic, with another 22 respondents indicating they were interested in researching it (37%), and a smaller group of 12 indicating no interest in researching the topic (20%).

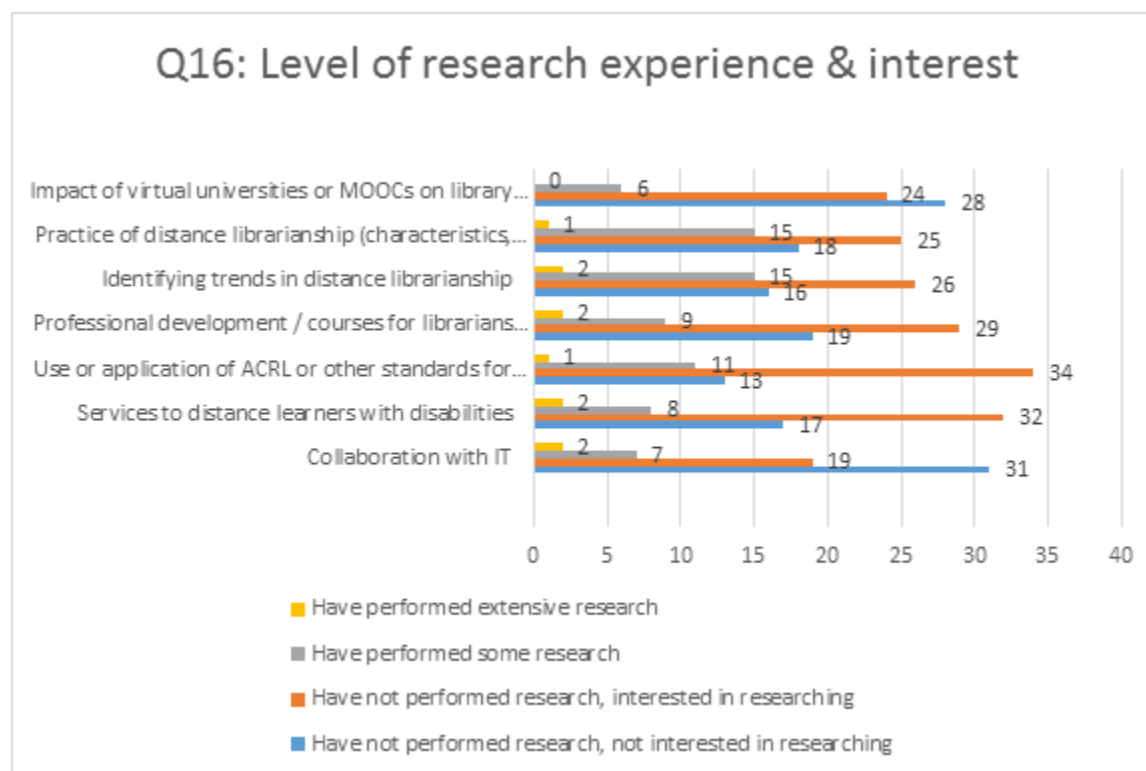
The highest level of interest for future research was in “Training librarians and staff who serve distance librarians,” with just over half of the respondents selecting this option (30 out of 59). On the other end of the spectrum, nearly half of respondents indicated no interest in researching “Leadership/management in distance library services” (29 out of 59); and 25 out of 59 respondents responded with no interest in “Assessment of collections.” However, a fair amount of respondents indicated interest in all of these categories, with the lowest interest level in “Leadership/Management in distance library services” (21 of 59 had not performed research but were interested in researching). Given these relatively close numbers for some of the topics (35% interested in “Leadership/Management” but 49% uninterested) in such a small group, the results may not be statistically significant and are not unexpected: researchers are encouraged to pursue topics that appeal to them, and this data shows that the respondents’ interests were quite varied.

Question 16 (n = 58-59)

Please indicate your level of research experience and your level of interest in the following subjects.

A total of 79 respondents answered some of the survey. Before analyzing the following results, it should be noted that 20 out of the 79 total respondents skipped this question, significantly reducing the sample size and generalizability of this data.

Answered, 58-59; skipped, 19-20



In question 16, the most extensively researched topics were “Collaboration with IT,” “Services to distance learners with disabilities,” “Professional development/courses for librarians working with distance learners,” and “Identifying trends in librarianship,” all with two responses each for “Have performed extensive research.”

Some research was performed in “Identifying trends in distance librarianship” and “Practice of distance librarianship” with 15 responses in the affirmative, followed by 11 responses indicating some research performed in “Use or application of ACRL or other standards for distance learners.”

High levels of interest seem evident in researching “Use or application of ACRL or other standards for distance learners,” with 57% of respondents (34 of 59 respondents) indicating they had not performed research in the area but were interested in researching it. Close behind were the topics of “Services to distance learners with disabilities” at 54% (32 of 59 respondents) and “Professional development/courses for librarians working with distance learners” at 49% (29 of 59 respondents).

The least researched topic in this section was “Impact of virtual universities or MOOCs on library services of distance learning,” which zero respondents had researched extensively and six had

researched some (10%). (There were only 58 total responses to the MOOC topic.) Additionally, this topic was not popular with those who had not researched it: 28 respondents indicated no interest in researching it (48%). Slightly fewer respondents who had not researched it indicated an interest in researching it (41%, or 24 of 58 respondents).

The topic of “Collaboration with IT” appeared to hold the least amount of interest in this section, with nine respondents indicating they had researched it on some level (15%), 19 had not researched but were interested (32%), and 31 had not researched nor were they interested in this topic (52%).

Additionally, question 16 provided an open-ended question for respondents to include research areas they were pursuing but were not listed. There were 13 submissions for this category which are presented in the following table. Some respondents elaborated in more detail on topics that had been in the survey, while others submitted topics not in the survey. A qualitative analysis was attempted using natural theme coding, however the small quantity of responses prevented any useful coding schema or extrapolation. Topics such as distance education, information literacy instruction and digital scholarship are key areas that have been noted. There is a group of librarians that are looking to collaborate on any additional projects including distance services.

Question 16 Free text responses

If your research area is not listed above, please list it here:
Under disabilities, I am starting some research on students on the autism spectrum.
I am currently researching how the library can play a role in creating learning objects to support faculty in the facilitation of group work in online courses. Also, the phenomenon of library anxiety and how it may affect online learners.
At my institution, we do not separate out distance learners from others (generally speaking). Because our LMS is very heavily used by all faculty, many faculty teach both f2f and online, due to space constraints we have many 'hybrid' classes (f2f once a week, online the rest), and our physical library spaces are very small, so many on-campus students only use the libraries 'from a distance'. We find that the distinction between distance and f2f is shrinking.
1st generation distance ed students - library use/perception/needs Discovery services and distance ed students Ethnographic research methods with distance learners Ebook use among distance ed students - how can we track this? Badging
We have focused most recently on assessment of distance service marketing. Will have a paper coming out (hopefully) this year and did a poster at ALA. My responses to this survey are on behalf of the K-State Libraries Distance Education Team including myself, [name removed], and [name removed]. We are very interested in collaborating with other institutions do [sic] conduct further research in these areas.
Comparisons of information literacy assignments in distance courses versus face-to-face courses- same number and quality?
Digital scholarship instruction at a distance--related to digital literacy but not the same. Increasingly important area for academic librarians.
I surveyed our distance campus instructors (twice) to find out their use of and raise awareness of library services. Most didn't realize that we could webinar to guest lecture re: library resources. I've tried to raise this awareness to little avail

Accessibility
Librarians and Open Education
I am also interested in digital scholarship (digital humanities, in particular) and distance/online learning.
Instructional design (interested in researching)
More than information literacy, I have been researching visual literacy library instruction and would be interested in making connections with that for distance learners.

Question 17 (n = 58)

Choose all

The 58 responses identified prevalent research methods. The top three methods used are literature review, surveys, and analysis of university/library statistics.

