



Survey of Mn/DOT Employee Knowledge and Use of Mn/DOT Library Services March, 2004

Mn/DOT Library serves a broad spectrum of customers - the general public, city and county engineers, university faculty and students. But, the library exists to serve, and is structured primarily to meet the needs of Mn/DOT employees, especially its professional, technical and managerial staff. In March, 2004, a survey of all Mn/DOT employees was conducted to gather information about who is using the library, what services are being used and how well the library is meeting customer needs.

At the time the survey was conducted, Mn/DOT had approximately 4,850 employees. The survey was conducted using a web-based survey service. A note was sent to all Mn/DOT staff using the department's e-mail system. The survey was completed by 1,170 respondents, or slightly more than 24% of all employees - an unusually high response rate for this type of survey. Responses were received from 39% of the staff in engineering positions and 34% of those in other professional positions. These positions make up the bulk of what have been called "information processing" jobs that can most benefit from using library services.

Responses were received from 41% of employees in Mn/DOT's Central Office, 21% of employees in district offices, and 19% of employees in the Twin Cities Metro Area, but outside the Central Office. Response rates were more balanced when respondents are grouped by years of service with Mn/DOT. Employees with 10 years or fewer with Mn/DOT made up 36% of all respondents, while those with 11 to 20 years, and those with 21 or more, constituted 37% and 26%, respectively. The management and professional staff, for whom library services are primarily structured, make up approximately 33% of all employees but made up nearly 43% of respondents. Throughout this report, this 43% will be referred to as the "target" group.

OVERALL RESULTS

Do Employees Come To the Library?

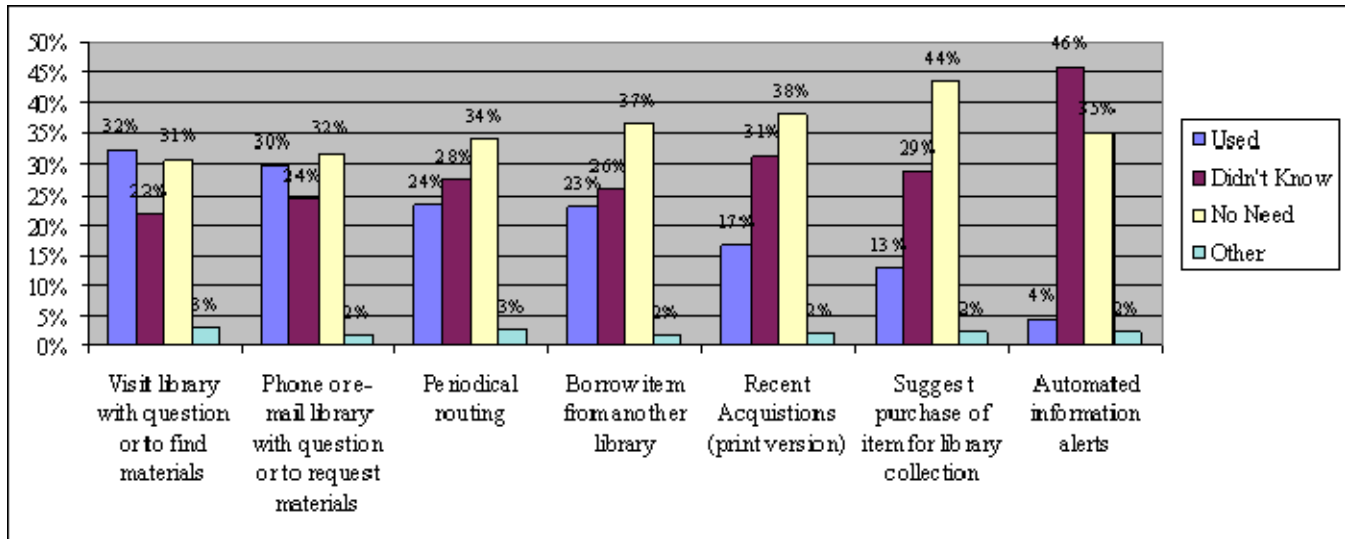
In response to the question, "Have you ever visited Mn/DOT Library?" responses were nearly evenly divided with 49% answering "yes" and 51%, "no." There were two factors that heavily influenced whether or not employees had visited the library. As one would expect, since the library is located in the Central Office, this was the most influential, with 79% of those respondents having visited the library as opposed to only 26% percent of those in district offices. The other influential factor was whether the respondent was within the library's target group, with 75% of those having visited the library, as opposed to just 31% of employees in other occupational groups.

What Library Services Do Employees Use?

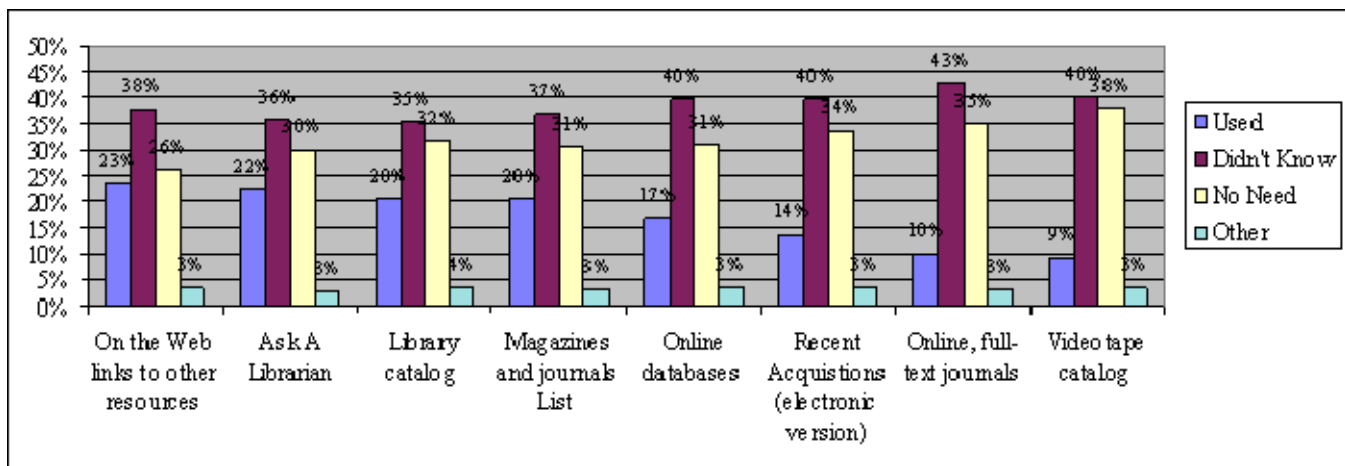
The survey listed 15 services provided by the library and asked respondents if they had made use of the service and, if not, why they had not. A choice of three reasons for not having used each service was provided on the survey form; "Did not know the service was available," "No need to use the service," and "Other." Respondents indicating "Other" were asked to specify a reason for not using the service.

Reasons for not using the services were nearly evenly divided between "Did not know.." and "No need..." with only 2%-4% of respondents, indicating "Other" reasons for not using the various services. In most cases the specified reason for not using a service was due to remoteness of work location from the library. The remaining specified reasons often were variants of "did not know..." or "no need." The following graphs show the percentage of each response for each service.

Percent of Respondents Who Have Used "Traditional" Library Services or Reason for Not Using the Service



Percent of Respondents Who Have Used Web-Based Services or Reason for Not Using the Service

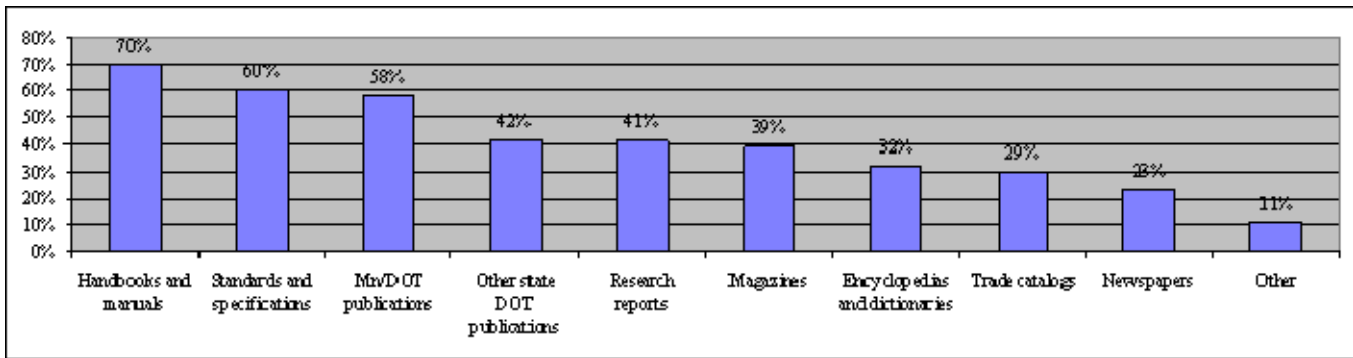


It's interesting to note, although much has been made of the "it's all on the Internet" phenomenon, traditional, primarily print-based services are used by a larger percent of respondents than are those accessible via the Web. However, this may be due to a lack of knowledge that these services are available. On average, only 29% of respondents said they

didn't know about the traditional services, as opposed to 39% who were not aware of the Web-based services provided by the library. Also, an average of only 33% said they had "no need" to use the Web-based services, slightly less than the 36% who said they had "no need" for the traditional services.

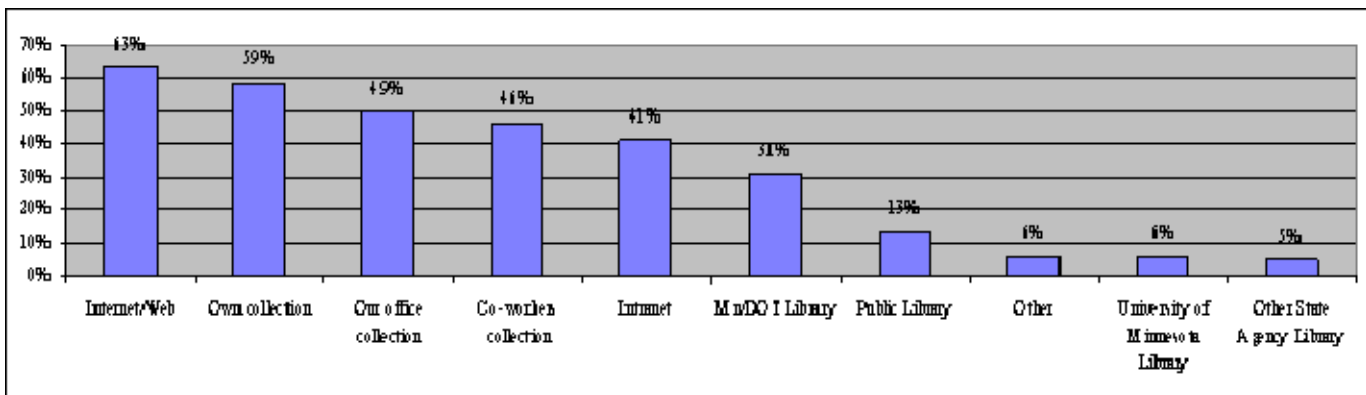
Although no single service was used by more than 32% of respondents, at least one of the services listed was used by 63% of all respondents. Also, at least one of the services had been used by 37% of respondents who had never visited the library. On the other hand, only 9% of respondents who had visited the library had never used any of its services. Only 1% of respondents claimed to have used all of the services listed.

What Kinds of Information Resources Do Respondents Use?



Not surprisingly in an engineering-oriented organization, the most widely used information resources are handbooks, manuals, standards and specifications. What might be surprising is the large number of respondents needing access to Mn/DOT publication, publications of other state DOTs and to research reports. The need for the department to provide for access to a broad spectrum of information resources is evident from the fact that for each type of resource listed in the survey more than 20% of respondents need access to that type of resource to carry out their responsibilities.

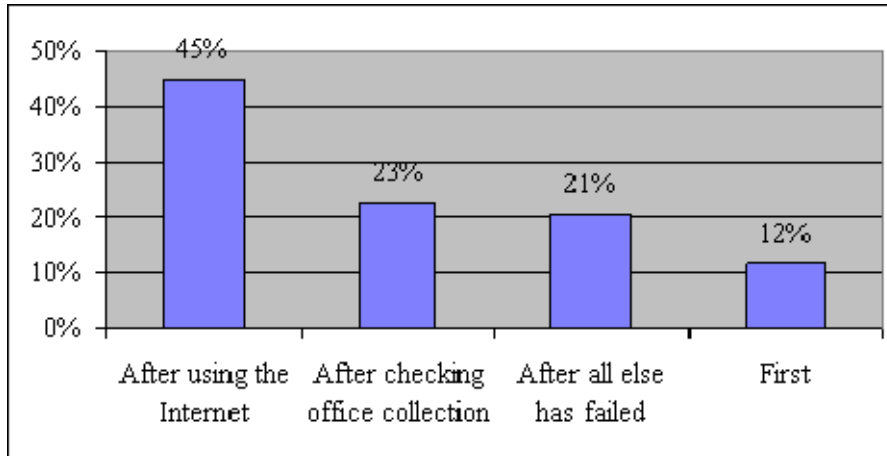
Where Do Respondents Find These Resources?



In spite of the fact that 63% of respondents have used library services, only 27% say they usually find the information resources they use in the library. Employees use first the resources closest at hand. With the exception of the Intranet, which is just as close to each employee as the Internet, the source most frequently cited as the usual source where needed information is

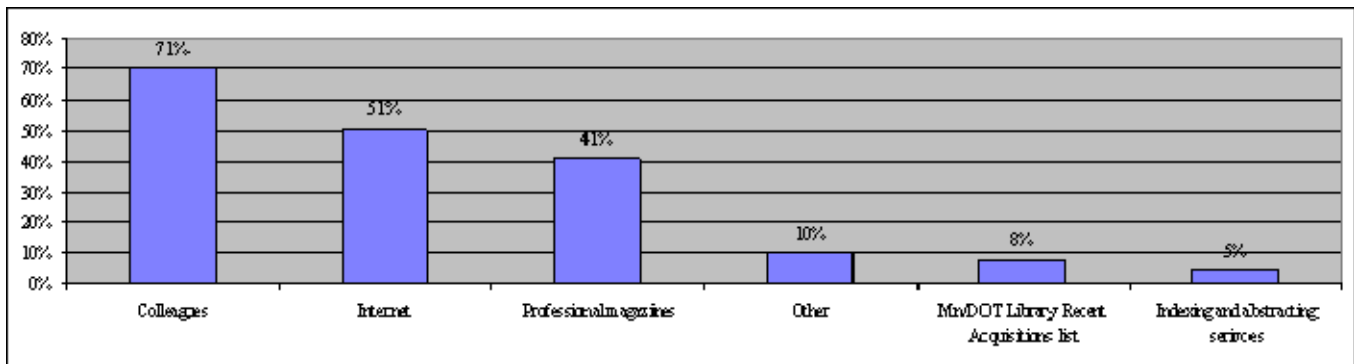
found declines with distance from the employee. Most likely, this is a reflection of where the employee looks and in what sequence as much as any other factor. This is reinforced by responses to the next question.

When Employees Are Looking for Information, When Do They Use Mn/DOT Library?



Similar surveys have shown that, for most employees, a library is not the first place turned to when looking for information. This holds true for Mn/DOT Library.

Where Do Respondents Most Often Learn of New Resources in Their Field?

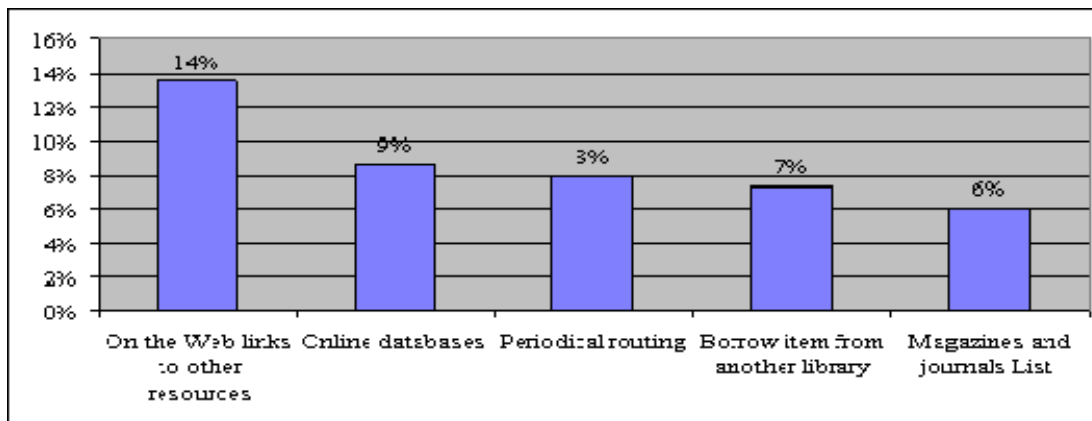


Likewise, the library is not the most frequent source of information about new publications. Other studies have shown that especially among engineers, personal contacts are most often used for learning of useful resources, with the Internet and professional magazines also providing useful tips. However since the library's recent acquisitions list is distributed to less than 10% of employees, that 8% of respondents listed it as their most frequent source for learning of new publications shows it is providing a useful service. Also, the fact that more than ten times as many respondents rely on the Internet to learn of new information as use indexing and abstracting services goes a long way to explaining the lack of such services serving the fields of engineering and transportation.

Do Employees Understand When They Are Using Resources Provided by Mn/DOT Library?

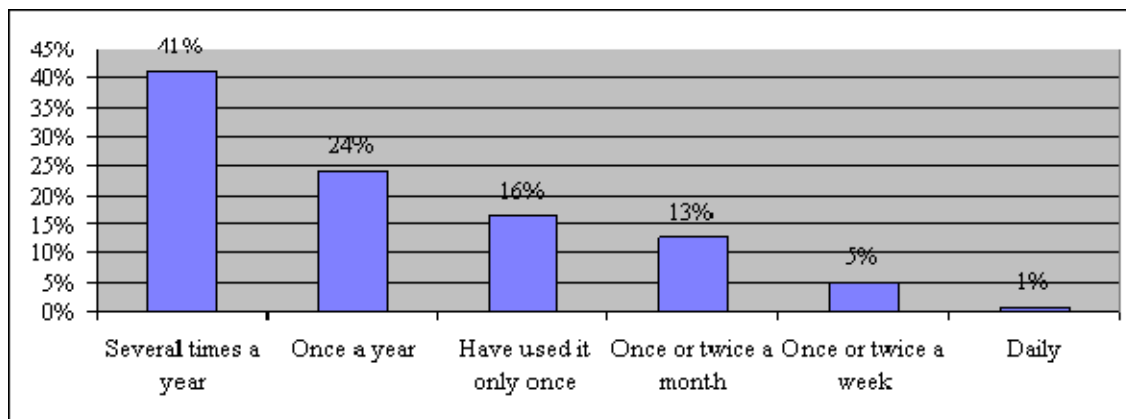
Responses to the question "Have you ever used the library or its services?" were just as equally divided as to the question "Have you ever visited Mn/DOT Library?" with 48% responding "yes" and 52% responding "no." However, fully 28% of those who responded "no" to this question had earlier responded that they had used one or more of the 15 services listed on the survey. The most likely explanation for this is that employees do not understand that these services are being provided by the library.

Top Five Services Used by Respondents Who Said They Had Not Used Library Services



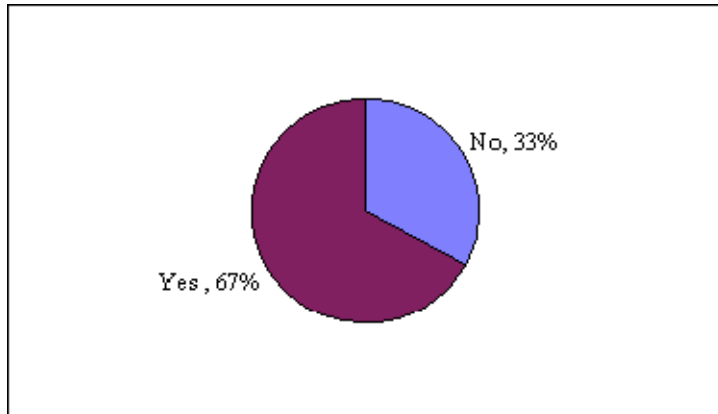
It is understandable that employees might not realize the role the library played in providing "On the Web" links and online databases. It is more difficult figuring out this disjuncture relating to routing of periodicals and borrowing materials from other libraries.

How Frequently Do Employees Use Mn/DOT Library?

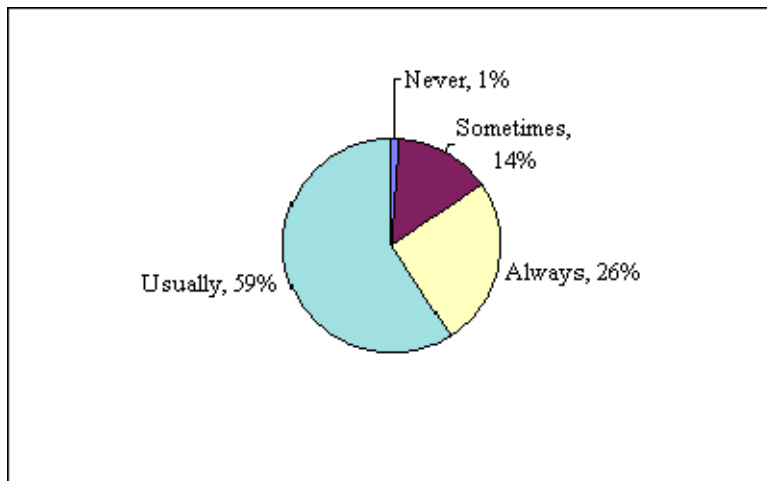


A factor that shows up in many studies of library use is the Pareto Principle. This "80/20 rule" states that 20% of employees will account for 80% of use. In this case, employees using the library once or twice a month or more frequently constitute approximately 20% of all employees and account for approximately 80% of use.

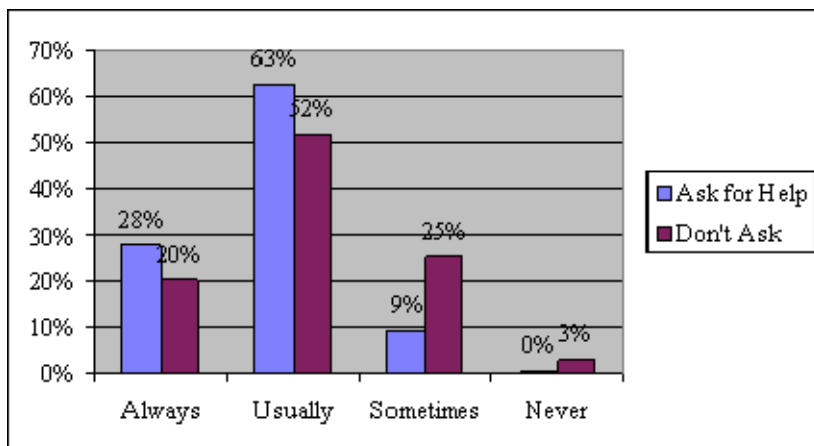
When Employees Use Mn/DOT Library Do They Ask for Librarians' Help?



When Employees Use Mn/DOT Library How Often Do They Get What They Need?

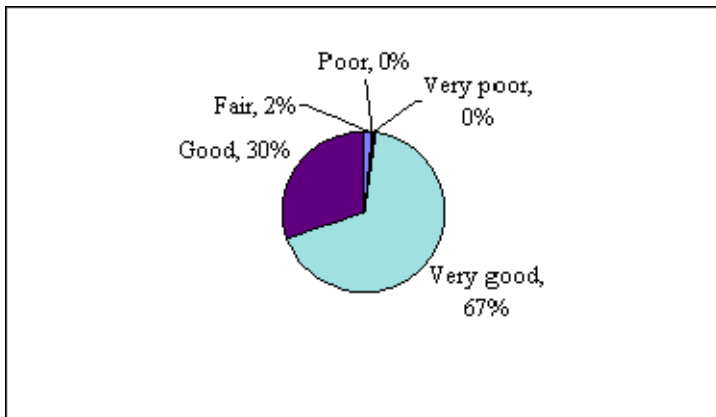


Does Asking for Librarians' Help Effect How Often Employees Get What They Need?



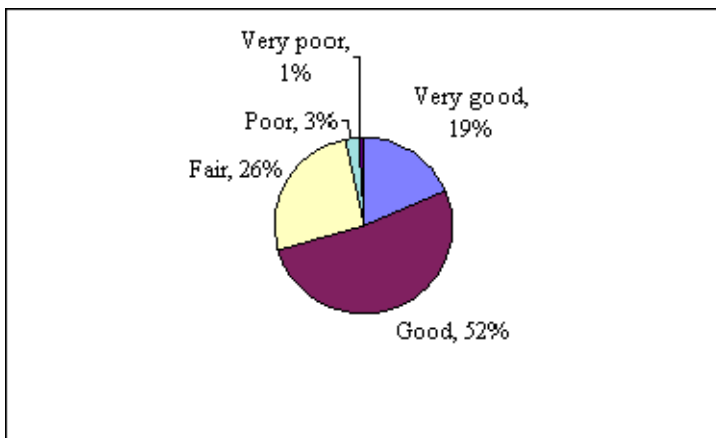
The graph above compares the relative success of employees who ask for help from a librarian when they are using the library versus those who don't. The results show that those who don't ask for help are quite successful at finding what they need, with 72% usually or always getting what is needed. But, these numbers rise to 91% among those who involve a librarian in their search. Also, 3% of those who don't ask for help from a librarian report they never find what is needed. Among those who seek help, this number falls to near zero.

How Do Employees Who Ask for Help Rate the Help They Receive?



As would be expected, with most employees who have asked for help being successful in finding what is needed and with a near zero failure rate, employees rated the help received very highly. Unfortunately, employees are not as impressed with the library collections, as the following graph shows.

How Do Employees Rate Mn/DOT Library's Collections?



What Are The Best and Worst Features of Mn/DOT Library

The last two questions on the survey asked respondents what they considered the best feature and the worst feature of the library.

Words Most Commonly Used to Describe:

Best Feature		Worst Feature	
Frequency		Frequency	
69	Staff, Staffed, Librarians, People	17	Use, Used, Using
54	Help(s), Helpful, Helpfulness, Helping	16	Resource(s)
34	Library, Libraries	15	Material(s)
29	Need(s), Needed, Needing	13	Necessary, Need(s), Needed
27	Available, Availability	12	Find, Finding
26	Access, Accessible Accessibility	12	Know, Knowing, Knowledge
24	Info, Information, Informative	11	Located, Location
24	Resource(s)	11	Time, Timeliness
22	Service(s)	10	Collection(s)
20	Research, Researching	9	Lack
20	Get, Getting, Obtain, Obtaining	8	Engineer, Engineering

Obviously, employees using library services appreciate the helpfulness of the library staff and the availability of and access to information resources. It is a little tougher to gather from this list, what customers consider the worst feature of Mn/DOT Library. Typical negative comments include:

Website is complicated to use especially when I don't use it very often. I couldn't figure out how to check out items over the website or if I couldn't. Too much info on some pages.

The only time I tried to use it I thought it was difficult to negotiate and a waste of time to try and find what I was looking for.

The location building parking and access to the place.

The limited scope of material available here.

The limit on how many requests they can make from the University's library for more popular periodicals.

The librarians on duty do not usually have an engineering background and can have a difficulty understanding what we are looking for.

The fact that it is not located directly in my building.

The collection is geared to helping the civil engineer.

Resources are not always most current.

Out-of-date materials

On occasion timeliness.

Not enough materials that are necessary for the preparation for the Professional Engineer's Exam.

Not enough hard copies of references that employees might need. I've been on waiting lists to get something for too long sometimes.

Not enough good material.

Not enough college type Civil Engr. textbooks

Not easy to use. Would like an introductory to where things are... how to find things....

I sometimes wonder how current the printed material for materials research are.

Limited resources in hardcopy.

Lack of professional resources in some areas. Needs to improve overall collection.

Lack of interest (or dollars?) in building collection in planning and management fields.

It is in a different building from my work location. It is accessible to me only by electronic means.

I have not been able (time constraints) to learn to use the library to find the information I need.

I had a hard time trying to find the information I needed about two years ago and I tried the website about a year ago but it was still difficult to find what I wanted.

Hard to use.

Don't know where it is located.

Does not have much in-house material pertinent to environmental field that I work with.

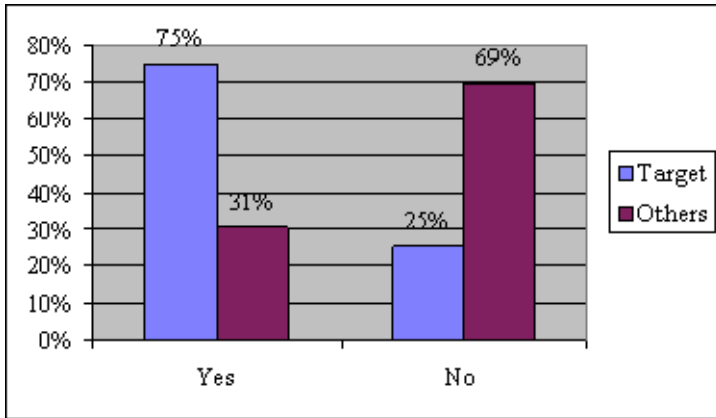
Distance and lack of knowledge on what is available.

RESPONDENT GROUPS

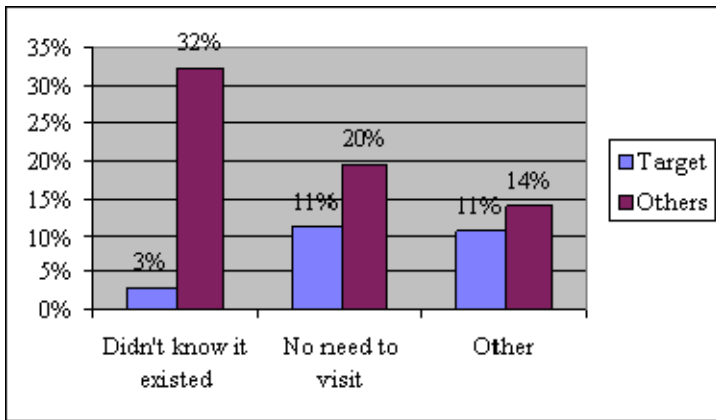
As mentioned earlier, employees in management and professional positions, due to the information intensive nature of these positions, are the group of employees that are the "target" for library services. Comparing responses from individuals in this group with those of other employees gives an indication of whether or not the library is meeting their needs.

Do "Target" Employees Use the Library More Frequently Than Others?

Responses to "Have you ever visited Mn/DOT library?"



Responses to "If you have not visited the library, why not?"

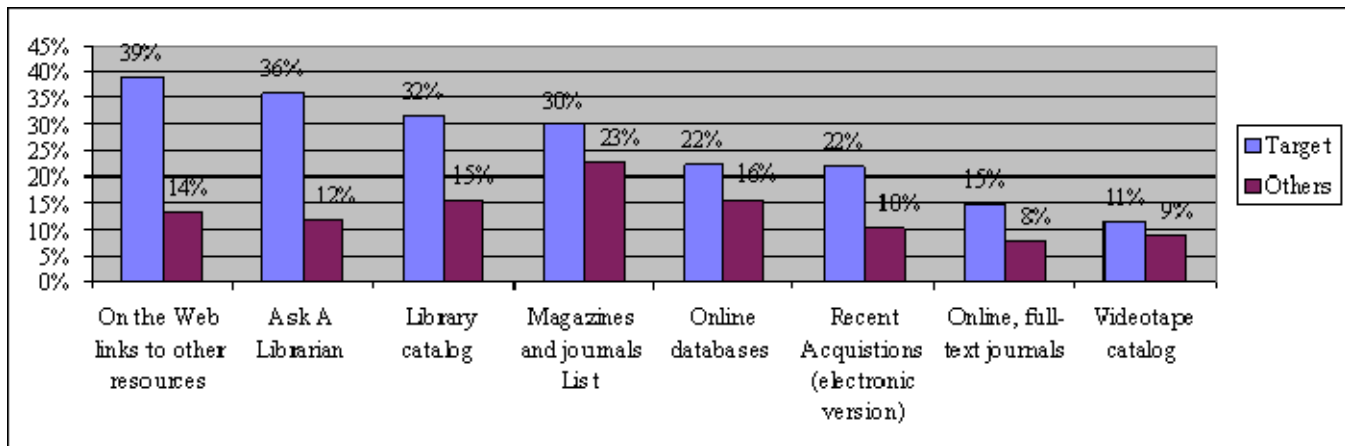
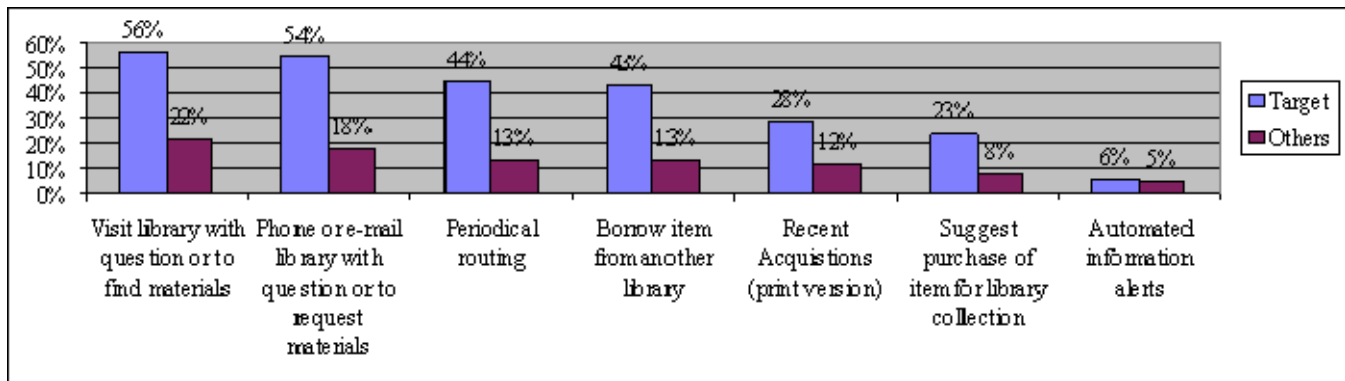


That only about 3% of respondents within the target group responded they didn't know the library exists as opposed to approximately ten times that percentage in other jobs, suggests that at least a portion of the library's marketing efforts have been successful. On the other hand, that more than one in ten in the target group sees "no need to visit" the library suggests that a significant portion of that group might not have been reached by the library. Another way of looking at this is that among those employees not in the target group, nearly half who had not visited the library did not know it existed as opposed to only slightly more than one in ten among those in the target group, as shown below.

Reasons for not visiting library among those who hadn't



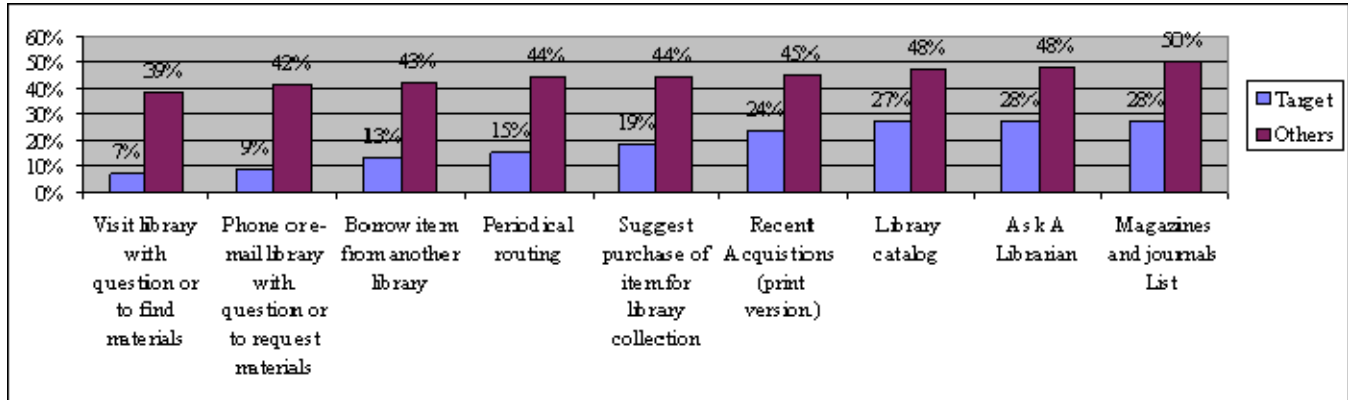
Use of Library Services by Employee Group



For nearly all services, between two and three times the percentage of employees in the target group use the service as do employees in other jobs. Additional evidence of the impact of library marketing efforts is reflected in the percentage of each group using the automated information alert service. This service is generally not promoted in marketing efforts, but is, instead, suggested to employees on a case by case basis when appropriate. Or in other words, there is

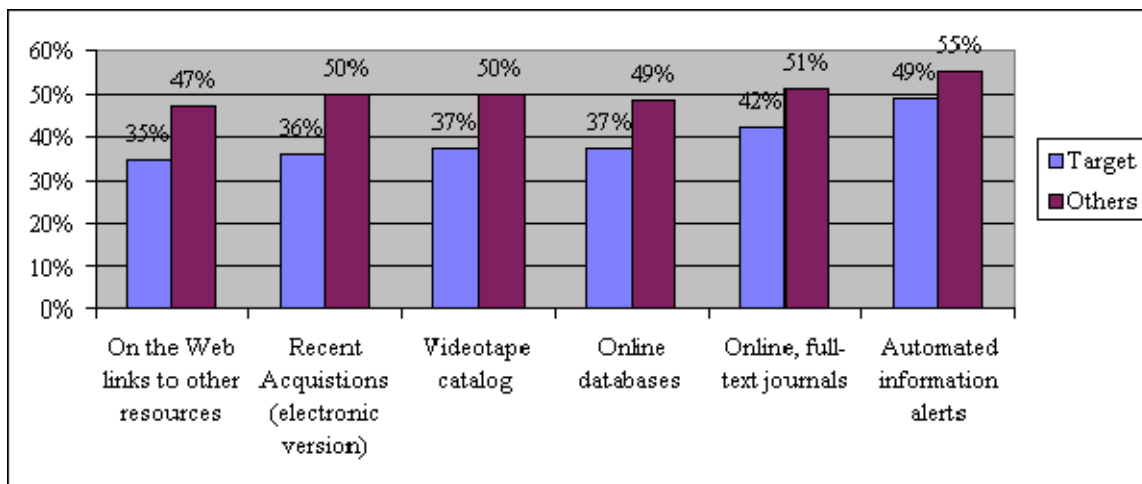
little, if any difference between employee groups for those services that are not promoted. On the other hand, a considerable difference in use exists between the groups for those services that are, with anywhere from double to triple the use by employees in the library's target group.

Percent of Respondents Who Didn't Know Service Is Available by Employee Group - Part 1



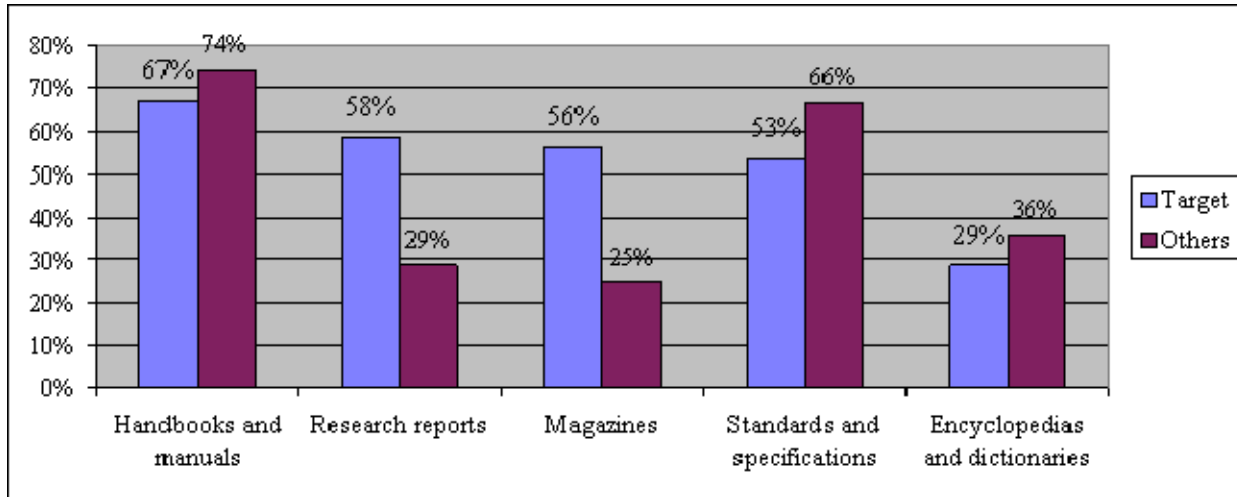
The relatively small variability in knowledge about these specific services, ranging between 39% and 50%, for those in the non-target group as opposed to the broad range, 7% to 28%, among the target group also suggests that library promotional messages are reaching the employees for whom they are intended. However, that same broad range suggests some messages have been more successful than others. This is reinforced by the responses for other services, as shown below.

Percent of Respondents Who Didn't Know Service Is Available by Employee Group - Part 2



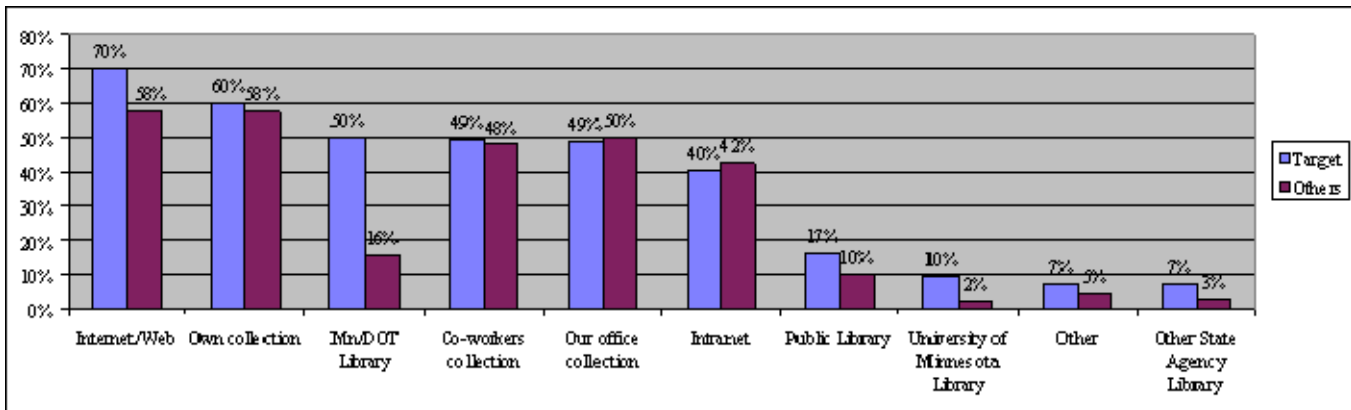
Compared to the variability in knowledge of the availability of the services shown in the "Part 1" graph, there is very little variability for these services. This suggests the library needs to promote these services more effectively.

Differences in Types of Material Used by Employee Groups



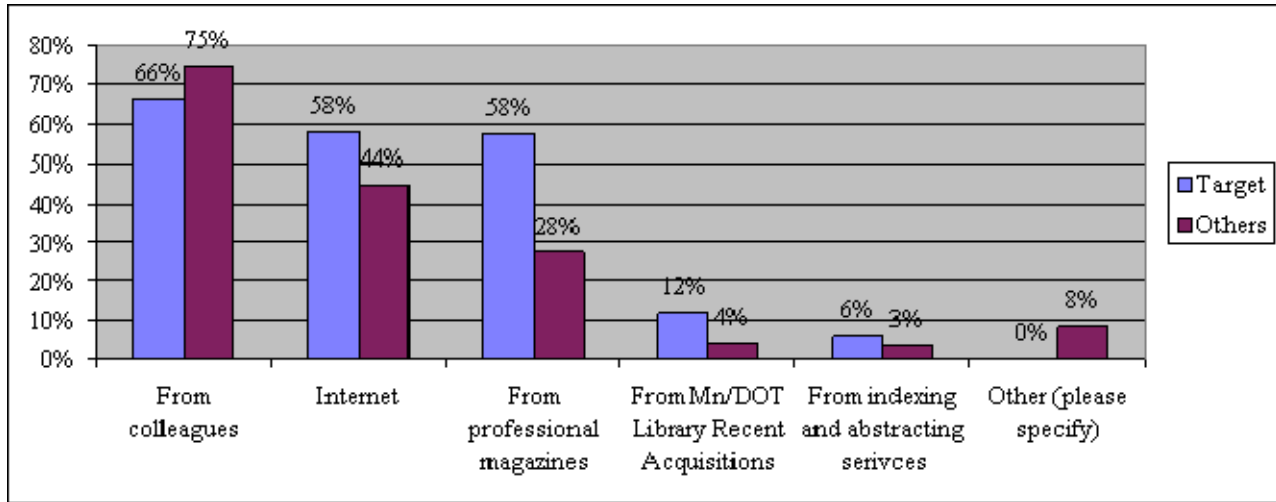
Although most employees in the target group need access to handbooks, manuals, standards and specifications, even larger percentages of other employees use these materials. A larger percentage of non-target employees also need access to encyclopedias and dictionaries, as well. However, the largest differences are in the target group's need of access to research reports and magazines, the type of resources that constitute the largest portions of Mn/DOT Library collections.

Differences in Where Employee Groups Usually Find Needed Resources



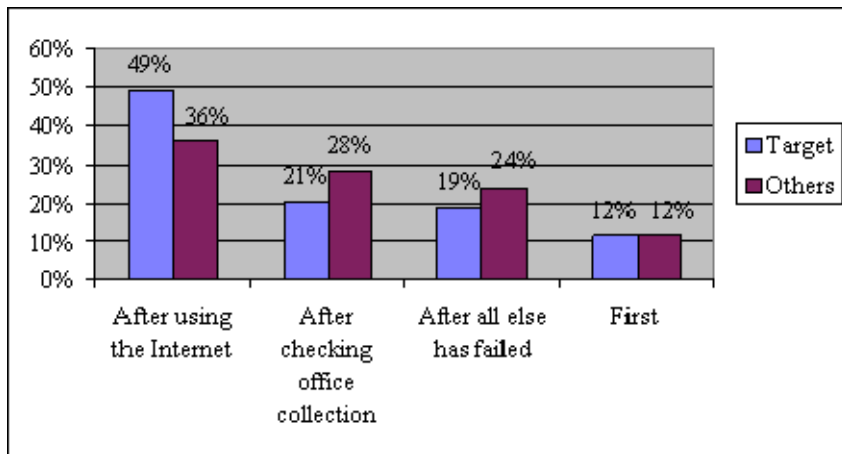
Employees in both groups depend equally on their own collections, coworkers and office collections. However, target group employees are slightly more dependent on the Internet and much more dependent on libraries of all types, but especially Mn/DOT Library for meeting their resource needs than are other employees.

Differences in Where Employees Learn of New Resources

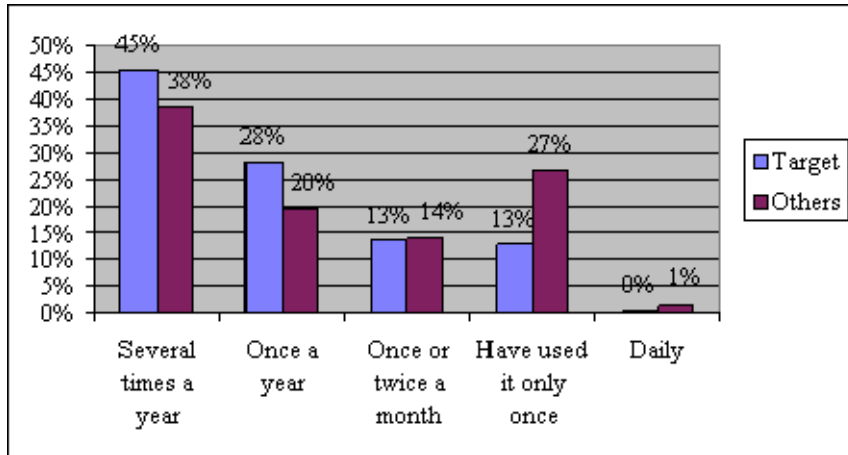


Just as in the graph showing types of materials used, this chart reflects the larger dependence of the target group on magazines to meet their information needs.

Differences in When Employees in Each Group Turn to the Library When Seeking Information

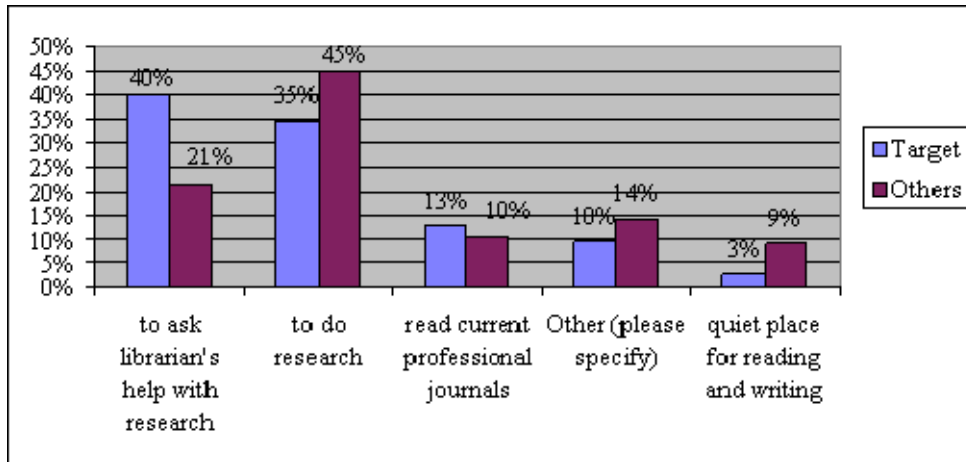


Differences in Frequency of Use of the Library by Employee Group



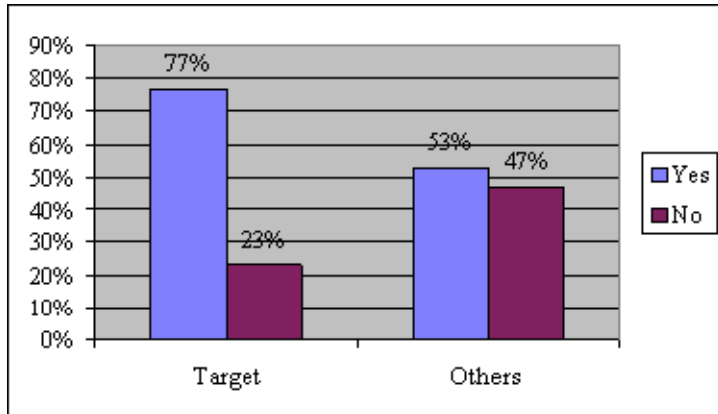
Compared to the response to most other questions on the survey, there are only minor differences between the two groups in frequency of use and when they use the library when needing information.

Differences in Employee Groups in Reasons for Using the Library

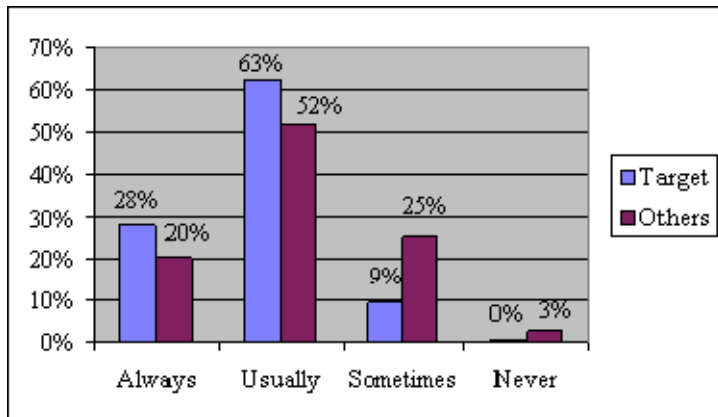


The largest difference between the two groups is in the percentage of target group employees who usually use the library to ask for help with research - nearly twice as often as non-target employees.

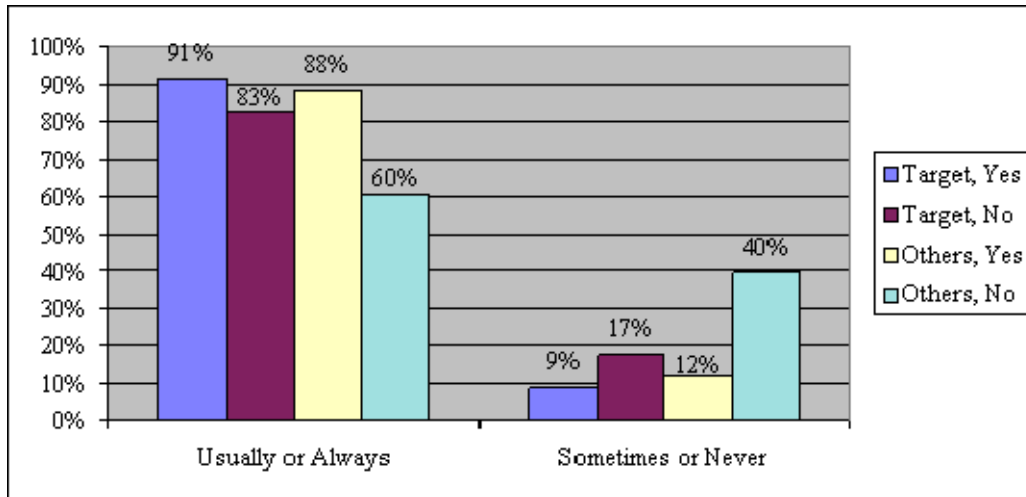
Difference in Employee Groups in Asking for Librarian's Help When Using the Library



Difference in How Frequently Employee Groups Locate Needed Information When Using the Library



There are considerable differences between the group when it comes to asking for help when using the library with professionals and managers asking for help nearly 50% more often than others. Also, target group members are more successful in finding needed information with 91% of them responding they always or usually got the needed information as opposed to 72% in other positions. That, of course raises the question of what influence the librarian's help plays in this increased level of success. The graph below shows the percentage in each group and frequency of success by whether or not the respondent used the assistance provided by librarians.



Only 60% of employees in the non-target group reported they usually or always located needed information if they did not ask for help from librarians as opposed to 83% of employees in the target group. Among those in the non-target group who did not ask for help, 40% responded that they never or only sometimes located needed information. Among the non-target employees who did seek help from librarians, only 12%, or 70% fewer, reported they never or only sometimes found the needed information. Of the target group employees, 47% fewer of those who asked for help than those who did not, reported finding needed information never or sometimes.

There was virtually no difference between the two groups in their rating of the help received from librarians when using the library or of the collections in their field of interest.