Faculty Survey Report

Survey Respondents

We invited all faculty, 120 people, to participate in a short survey about the library. The number of questions varied depending on a participant's responses to earlier questions. No question was required, and not all respondents answered every question. The survey was open from October 13, 2009 through October 30, 2009.

We received 64 completed responses, a response rate of 53.3%. We received responses from every academic discipline except for one.

Library Users

We recognize that the library is a physical place, but it also is a virtual space. Accessing either one should be considered as visiting the library. Because of that, we included two series of questions, one inquiring about faculty members' visits to our building and one inquiring about their use of the library web site.

Use of Ramaker Library

Over three-quarters of Northwestern faculty respondents visit the library at least monthly; on the other hand, 24% visit the library less often or not at all.
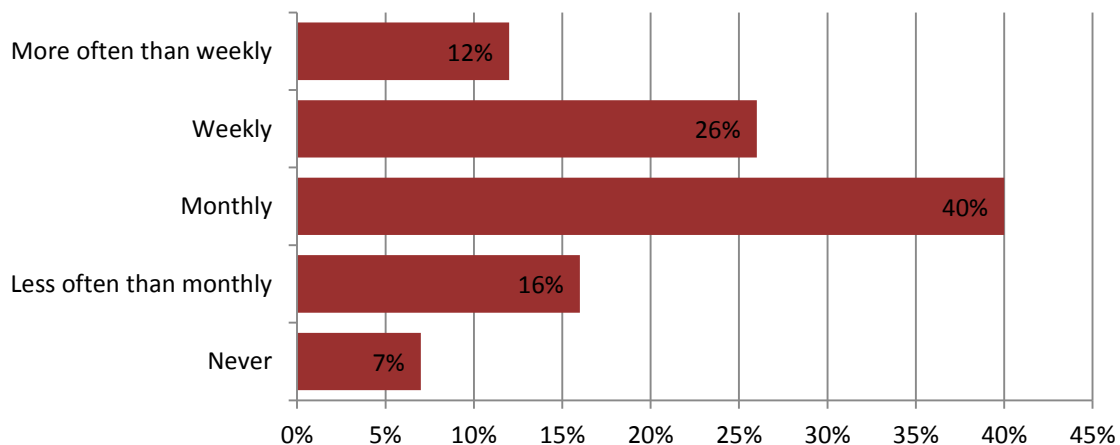
Those who visited less often than monthly were asked why they did not visit more. Reasons varied, but the two most common answers were "I access the library via computer rather than in person" and "I have my own materials." The first response highlights the importance of the library's web presence. Clearly some do not just see the library web site as a service of the library, but as part of the library itself.

The following is a complete list of answers selected for not visiting Ramaker Library more often; 14 faculty members answered this question:

Reason	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents For This Question (14)
I access the library via computer rather than in person	9	64%
I have my own materials	9	64%
I use a different library	1	7%
I am not currently conducting research	3	21%
I usually send a student assistant to do my research	2	14%
The location is inconvenient	2	14%
The librarians are not helpful	0	0%
The library rarely has the materials I need	1	7%
The library is too noisy	0	0%
The library is too quiet	0	0%
The temperature is not comfortable	1	7%
Other	3	21%

The three other reasons given were as follows:[1]
- Time constraints; not wanting to walk any further than I have to.
- I am rarely on campus.
- I haven't really needed anything that I felt the library had that would help.

For respondents who do visit the library monthly or more often, we asked what activities they did when visiting the library. The most common activities, defined as those done monthly or more often, were the following:

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[1] For respondent-supplied answers detailed in this report, some text may be altered to remove identifying characteristics of the respondent. The overall sentiment has been preserved.

| Activity	Number of Respondents Answered Monthly or More Often	Percentage of Total Respondents (58)
Pick up materials	30	52%
Look for a print book for your own research	24	41%
Look for materials for personal interest/ recreation	20	34%
Consult with library staff	18	31%
Look for a print journal article for your own research	16	28%

These results indicate that the library is used by faculty for print materials—particularly books—both for academic and personal reasons.

It's also interesting to note which activities faculty rarely or never perform at the library. Faculty members clearly do not view the library as a place to do work; 58.8% never do work here, and 25.5% work here less than monthly.

Also notable is how often faculty use the library for instruction sessions. Over 70% of respondents arrange instruction sessions for their students at the library.

Use of Library Web Site
The web site is clearly a popular way for faculty to access library resources:
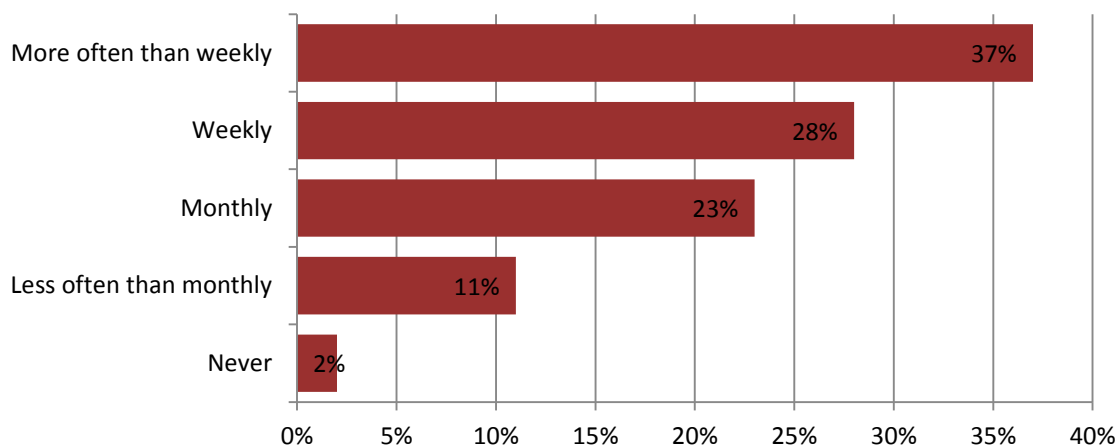
Almost two-thirds of faculty respondents visit the web site weekly or more often. Only 3 respondents visit the web site less than they visit the library in-person. In contrast, 59.6% visit the web site more frequently than they visit the library.

Library Access: In-person and Online
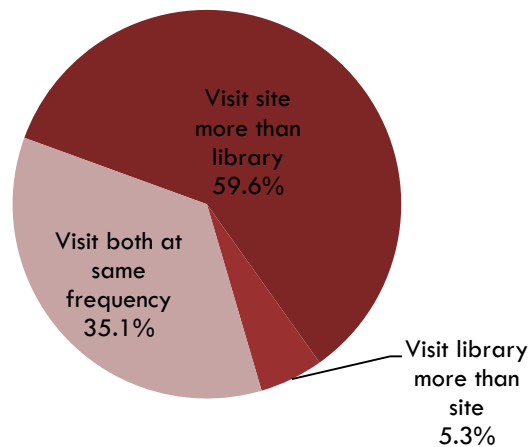
Those who visited the web site less than monthly (7 total respondents) were asked why they did not access it more. The breakdown of reasons follows:

Reason	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents For This Question (7)
I prefer to visit the library in person	0	0%
I have my own materials	5	71%
I use a different library	1	14%
I am not currently conducting research	1	14%
The web site is confusing or not helpful	0	0%
I do not like to use computers	0	0%
The library databases rarely have the materials I needed	1	14%
Other	1	14%

The other reason given was that, on the occasion the respondent needs articles, he or she does use the online databases; otherwise, there is no reason to visit the library's site.

The survey also asked what activities respondents did when visiting the library web site. The most common activities, defined as those done monthly or more, were the following:

Activity	Number of Respondents Answered Monthly or More Often	Percentage of Total Respondents (58)
Search the Ramaker catalog (RaiderLink)	42	72%
Look for full-text electronic journal articles	40	69%
Search an article index database	34	59%
Request materials through interlibrary loan	28	48%
Look for full-text materials (newspapers, e-reference books, etc.)	26	45%

Twenty respondents either never renewed materials online or were not aware they could do; likewise, 17 faculty members either never suggested materials online or were not aware they could.

Action Items:
- → Continue to develop web site, understanding that faculty view it as part of the library, not a separate entity.
- → Better promote activities faculty can perform online, such as book suggestions.
- → Improve book suggestion form.

Services
The survey also questioned faculty about how easy it was for them to do certain activities, regardless of whether they were done in-person or online.

Activity	Very easy/ Easy	Neutral	Difficult/ Very difficult	Not applicable/ Never done	Not familiar with this option
Request a book for Ramaker to purchase	33	8	1	9	5
Search the library catalog for books and journals	49	3	0	4	0
Find a book	49	3	0	3	0
Request a book not available at Ramaker (interlibrary loan)	40	7	1	7	1
Find references to journal articles	37	12	1	4	2
Find electronic journals	35	14	2	4	0
Find a journal in the library	32	17	2	4	1
Get journal articles not available through Ramaker (interlibrary loan)	35	6	2	11	2
Place items on reserve	33	8	1	11	3
Find information about Ramaker Library	38	10	0	8	0
Use the library web site	46	5	1	3	0
Contact the library staff	47	1	0	5	1
Manage your library account	28	9	2	7	10
Be informed about new acquisitions, programs, library changes	42	11	0	2	1

For the most part, faculty respondents seem pleased with the ease of library services; they found most activities easy to do. A few things stand out from these results:

- A significant number of faculty not aware of how they can manage library accounts. Further, it is one activity that a number of respondents were not willing to term "easy" to do.
- Finding a journal at the library also did not capture as many "easy" or "very easy" responses; 30% of respondents were neutral about this activity.
- Almost 25% of faculty respondents have never requested that Ramaker purchase a certain title or were not aware this was an option.

The survey also asked how satisfied faculty was with different aspects of Ramaker Library:

Aspect	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatis- fied	Very dissatis- fied
Interlibrary loan	27	18	11	0	0
Reserves	14	23	18	0	0
Course instruction	14	20	22	0	0
Library staff	27	22	4	1	0
Collections	2	24	20	9	1
Web site	13	33	9	1	0
Policies	9	34	13	0	0
Library hours	8	32	14	2	0
Computer availability	7	21	26	2	0

Since survey respondents were largely satisfied, the areas where there was dissatisfaction stand out:

- More faculty members felt neutral or dissatisfied about our collections than felt satisfied.
- Similarly, as many faculty respondents felt neutral or dissatisfied about our computer availability as felt satisfied. It may be reasonable to surmise that, given the significant number of faculty respondents who use library instruction services, a good deal of any faculty dissatisfaction may have to do with the limited number of computers in the lab.
- A substantial number of faculty felt neither satisfied nor dissatisfied about course instruction.

Specific Products & Services

Ramaker has recently launched some new products and services, and we wanted to gather faculty responses to them.

LibGuides

LibGuides, a new online service Ramaker added this past year, are subject- and course-specific guides to research. Librarians gather information about the best resources in these areas and compile the information in the online guides; an example is available at http://nwciowa.libguides.com/psychology.

When asked about their familiarity with LibGuides, 56 faculty members responded as follows:
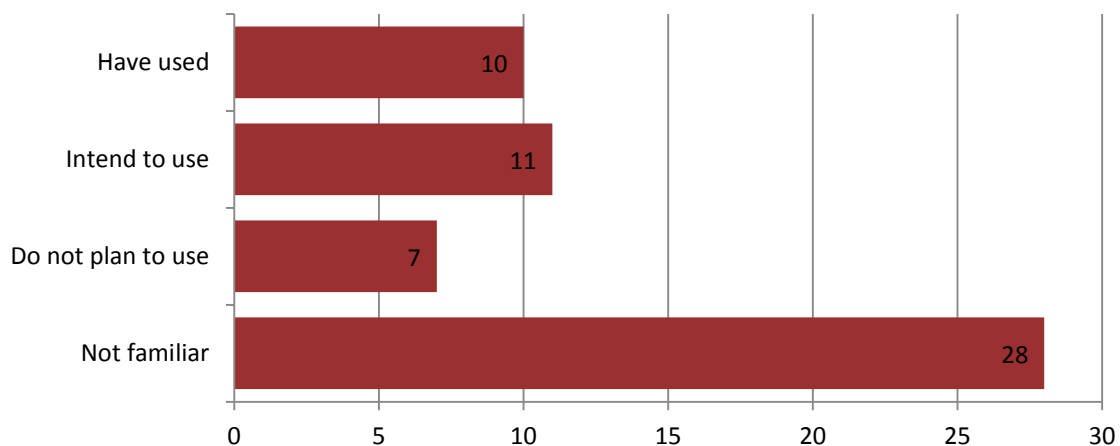
Of the 10 respondents who have used LibGuides, 90% of them find them helpful or very helpful. Statistics compiled about the use of LibGuides support this finding.

Currently, 25 LibGuides are available for use. In November 2009, those guides received 4,375 views.

Databases

Databases are searchable online collections of article citations, some of which include full-text articles. The library subscribes to many databases that contain scholarly publications, such as Academic Search Premier and PsycArticles.

When asked about their familiarity with databases, faculty responded as follows:
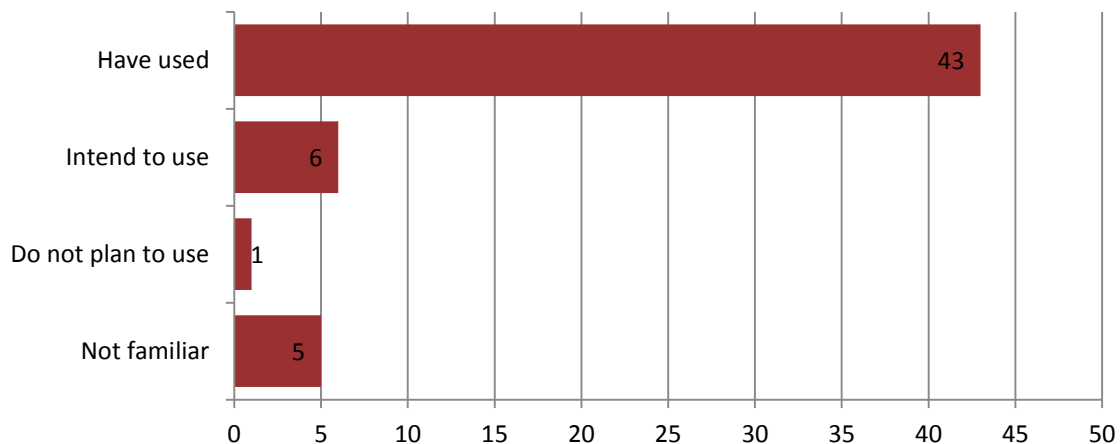
Clearly, most faculty members are aware of these products and have used them. Since databases have been part of the library collection for a number of years, it is somewhat surprising that 5 respondents, almost 10%, are not familiar with databases.

Also notable is that 86% of faculty respondents find databases helpful or very helpful. These are clearly important resources to have as part of the library collection.

We did ask about other databases that faculty would find helpful for themselves and their students. Suggestions offered were Springer, Ingenta, Nature Journal, Science Direct, and Elsevier. Not all of these are databases; rather, some are journal publishers whose journals are indexed or available in various databases.

Find It @ Ramaker / WebBridge

Find It @ Ramaker, also known as WebBridge, is a link resolving tool. It makes it easier to determine whether patrons of Ramaker Library have access to a journal article they find in a database. Rather than having to look up the journal title to see if it's available, the link resolver displays active links to the article, if available, or displays a link to request the article via interlibrary loan.

When asked about their familiarity with Find It @ Ramaker, faculty responded as follows:
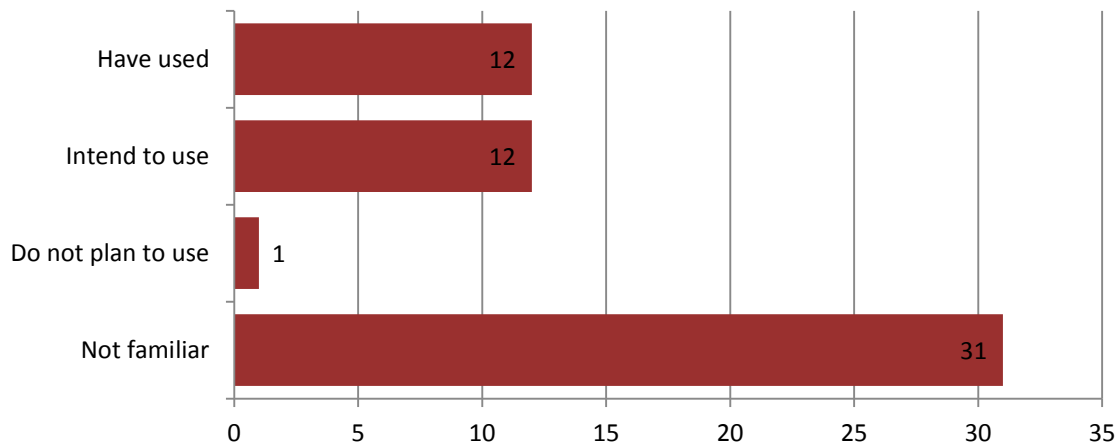
Those who are familiar with the tool and have used it find it helpful; in fact, most of them (58%) find it very helpful.

Special Collections

Ramaker Library holds a number of special collections, and we asked faculty if they ever used them. A number of respondents skipped this question; the 41 who answered have used the following collections:
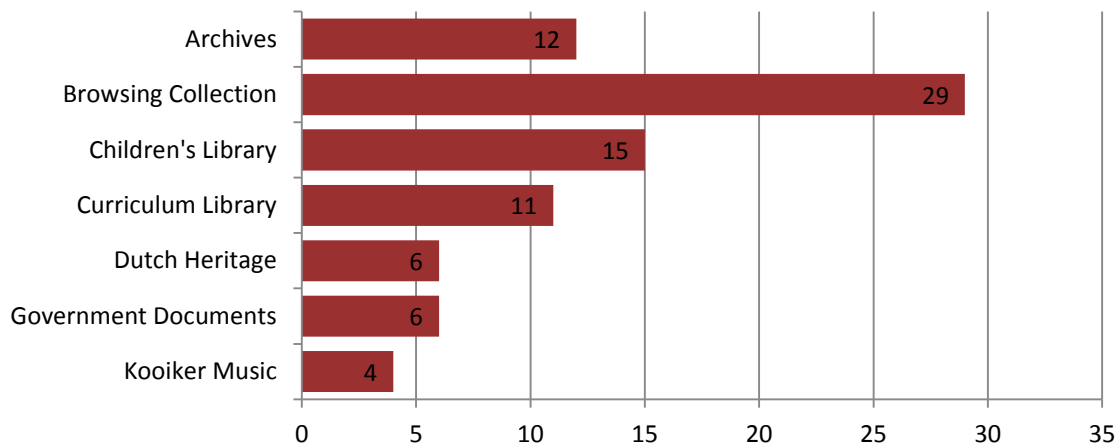
Of course, some of these collections have little appeal outside a particular discipline, such as the Curriculum Library or Kooiker Music Collection. Not surprisingly, all users of the Kooiker collection are affiliated with the Music department at Northwestern.

The Browsing Collection is the most heavily used special collection by faculty. These books are selections of more popular titles, such as recent award winners, best-sellers and the like.

Also interesting is the broad appeal of Ramaker's Archives. Those who have used this collection hail from a range of disciplines such as Art, Biology, Computing Sciences, and Kinesiology.

> **Action Items:**
> → Continue to promote LibGuides to faculty and students.
> → Create well-structured, helpful guides that reinforce the discipline and maintain them to reflect recent additions to our collection.
> → Investigate additional journals and databases for our collection, managing departmental needs with budget limitations.
> → Promote the Find It @ Ramaker feature to faculty, explaining its helpfulness in locating full-text articles.
> → Continue to develop the Browsing Collection within budget limitations.
> → Continue to manage and develop the Archives.
> → Promote special collections to related disciplines and promote general collections to all faculty.
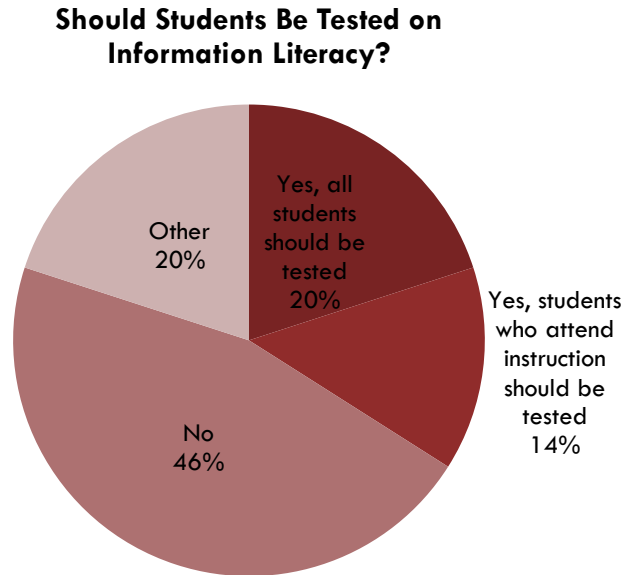
Information Literacy

The survey asked two questions about the information literacy skills of Northwestern College students.

The first was, "Do you feel the majority of students who graduate from Northwestern College have an acceptable understanding of how to find, critically assess and effectively utilize relevant information and resources in the library?"

Can Graduates Effectively Use the Library?

Yes
42%

No
58%
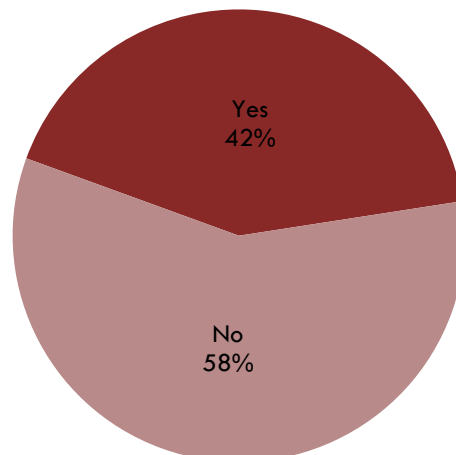
The second question asked whether students should be tested on their information literacy skills:

Should Students Be Tested on Information Literacy?

- Yes, all students should be tested 20%
- Yes, students who attend instruction should be tested 14%
- No 46%
- Other 20%

While a majority feels that students do not demonstrate information literacy skills, faculty is still reluctant to test students on these skills.

The comments provided by those who answered "other" indicate they would want more information before answering. Those responding "other" said the following:
- Testing should be course-specific
- Research class for majors in the field
- Is this a required class? A graduation requirement?
- Lean toward yes, but it's more complex than a simple yes or no
- Need more thought; I'm not opposed
- Non-grad-school bound students would not appreciate such a course
- Success on assignments should demonstrate competencies

Action Items:
→ Ramaker librarians should involve themselves in discussions about information literacy on campus.
→ Librarians should be committed to not just finding resources for students but to helping students effectively determine resources on their own.

Priorities

Faculty respondents provided their answers to what should be the top priorities of Ramaker Library. Their responses, ordered by their priority, were:

Priorities	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total Respondents (56)
Provide online access to more journals	44	79%
Maintain and improve quality of the print collection	26	46%
Develop an information literacy plan for students	19	34%
Provide instruction in using library resources	17	30%
Integrate library information into campus web sites (such as MyNorthwestern)	16	29%
Provide online access to more e-books	13	23%
Provide quieter work and study areas	5	9%
Develop the Archives	4	7%

Clearly, faculty overwhelmingly selected online access to more journals. Their other leading response, improve the quality of the print collection, reinforces conclusions drawn earlier by the survey.

For this question, the survey did include an option where faculty could enter their own priorities. The three responses were:

- House the recordings in the library and have a listening room for this.
- Continue to develop the browsing collection.
- Provide more comprehensive journal access, e.g. Science Direct.
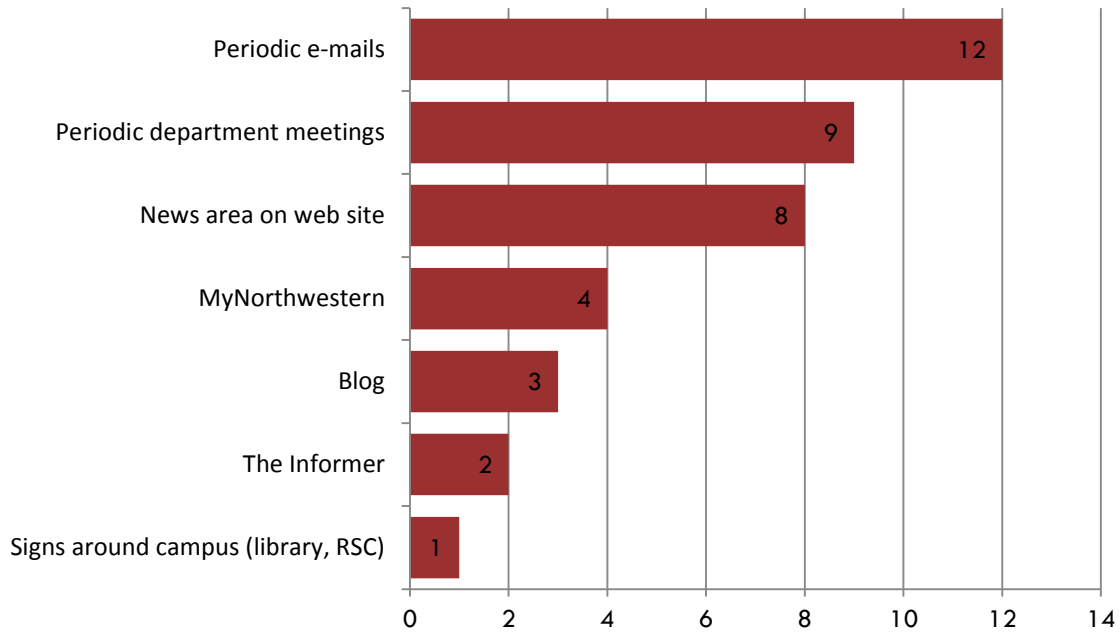
While those are only 3 suggestions from 56 faculty who answered the question, we acknowledge how these responses echo earlier findings in this survey. The browsing collection remains popular among faculty, and faculty desire more online journals, particularly those in the sciences. The idea of a listening library is one we would like to implement, but this cannot likely be addressed without significant facility upgrades.

Action Items:
→ Continue offering instruction sessions for students.
→ As MyNorthwestern evolves, include key access areas of the library in this portal.

Library Communication

The library staff at Ramaker wants to communicate collection additions, resources and services to Northwestern faculty. We asked them how the library can best inform them about new resources and services:

Method	Count
Periodic e-mails	12
Periodic department meetings	9
News area on web site	8
MyNorthwestern	4
Blog	3
The Informer	2
Signs around campus (library, RSC)	1

Periodic e-mail is undoubtedly the faculty's preferred method of receiving news. Also, a number of faculty members appreciate in-person contact; 34% of those who answered this question want meetings between their department and their liaison librarian.

Faculty respondents also want a news area on the library web site to include information about relevant updates at the library.
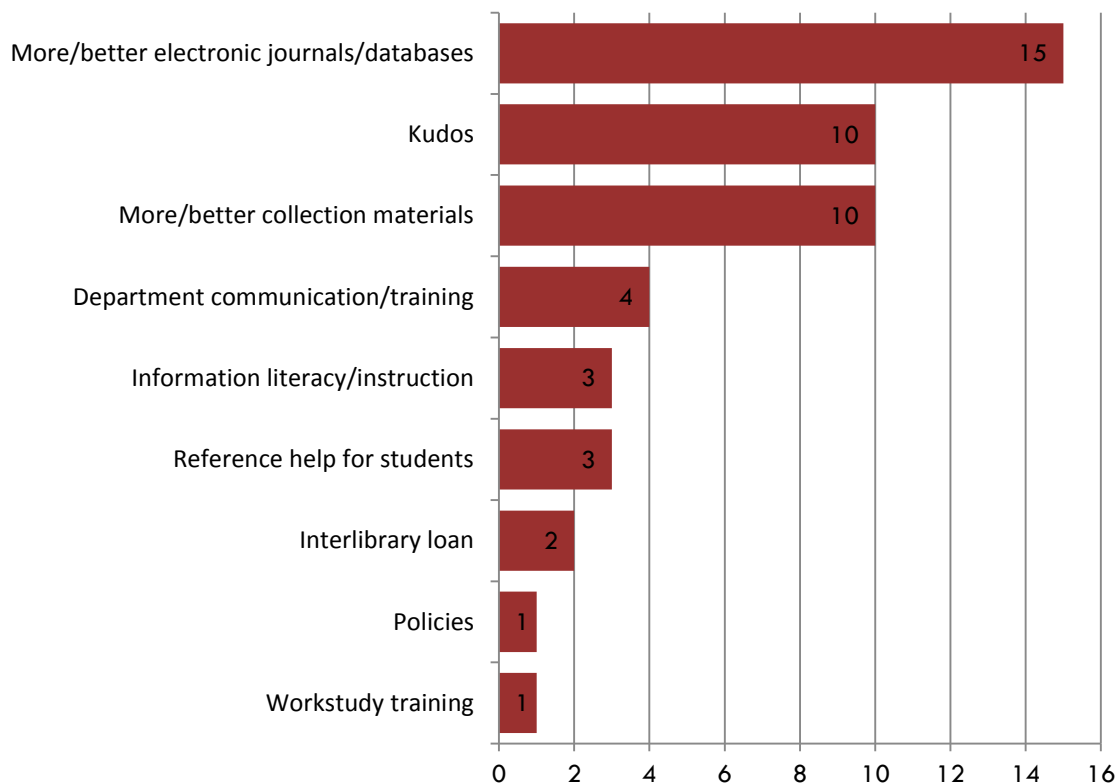
Faculty Suggestions for Library Improvements

To end the survey, we asked two open-ended questions. The first was, "What is the most important thing the library can do to support your teaching and research?" Forty faculty answered this.

We categorized each response; some responses addressed more than one area of library resources and services.

Some explanation is necessary regarding these comments. Positive comments left about Ramaker staff and services were included as "Kudos." For example, one comment read, "I have always been quite pleased with the help Ramaker staff offers

both my students and me. They do a great job; I'm quite satisfied. Anita and Anne are great; I'm thankful they are there!"

Comments specifically about online or electronic access to journals were categorized under "more/better electronic databases." Notes left about more materials for their department that did not specify whether electronic or print were grouped under "more/better collection materials." For example, the comment "Provide resources for research" is included under collection materials, while "Provide more access to online journals and ebooks," since it is specific to the electronic collection, is classified under electronic databases.

One comment was not categorized, which regarded one professor's statement that, while the library is integral to the Northwestern campus, it is not integral to his/her teaching or research.

For the final question, "Do you have ideas for how the library can improve its services," 28 faculty responded. Here, it is more difficult to categorize responses, as most were quite specific and detailed. Three offered congratulations to the library for its staff and services, and another three wished for creature comforts such as free coffee and more cookies.

Also, three responses indicate the need for a new library facility:
- Most of what I can think of will be incorporated into the new library building. Perhaps a "noisy" study area for students…but they may already have one.
- The staff members are doing all they can with the limited resources they are given and current building.
- You need a new facility. Without a new, bigger, building, it's hard to make big changes.

Two other responses addressed the definition of library. Both respondents noted that, as more items become accessible through electronic means, the concept of what the library is necessarily evolves with it.

Other responses included the following:
- We need our AV resources to be accessed more easily by the students. Whenever they like rather than only for a specific class. And then, a viewing room for them to look at them. I would like to have a dialect library. Thank you so much for what you are doing. I will make a goal to be less ignorant of the library resources this year.
- Listen carefully to the concerns and needs of those who most utilize your services. It sounds like you are trying to do this, and for that i commend you.
- Get more online subscriptions.
- As so much goes online, why not have the library more an area for student study and even tutoring sessions? Rather than build a whole new library, why not move the library out to the green with a large-windowed area and

small group study rooms. Encourage group tutoring sessions in these new "soft" areas. Maintain the great online access and services of the website but make the library a center for "study" as well as information.
- I think the summer hours are too short.
- I would like to see more computers so I could have a whole class in there at the same time to work on an activity or assignment/test.
- Not specifically. I'd love to see the ILL expanded--the one book I've requested wasn't tracked down, though it was published in 2002 or something, and by a decent publisher
- I've really enjoyed the welcoming, aesthetic changes in the library and the comfortable furniture. Would recommend continued movement in this direction.
- Turn off night time motion sensors.
- Don't do away with periodicals
- Small thing: A reserve form that would allow you to type in the resource you're putting on reserve--now you have to print it off and write on it. I'm ok with printing it off, but it would be nice if I could type on it what I'm putting on reserve.
- The webpage is cluttered and this makes it hard to find the desired links.VPN access is hit or miss.

These specific responses are helpful as we continue to improve Ramaker while making plans for the future Learning Commons.

> **Action Items:**
> → Continue to provide scheduled hours of reference help for students.
> → Continue to train workstudy students on information literacy skills.
> → Review the list of specific changes and make necessary improvements and adjustments. For example, redesigning the library home page and adding a reserve form are relatively inexpensive and simple improvements.
> → Improve remote access to Ramaker resources.
> → Keep faculty suggestions about library services at the forefront when discussing plans for the future Learning Commons, such as reserving space for listening rooms, viewing rooms, and group study areas.