

The Role of Library Assessment

The library community needs to invest more in data collection and analysis and to take its examples from commercial leaders that have a much more detailed and insightful understanding of their customer base and preferences. In particular, there is a need for ongoing longitudinal data and intelligence functions to provide a vital early radar warning of oncoming change.

No library we are aware of has a department devoted to the evaluation of the user, how can that be?

(Information Behaviour of the Researcher of the Future, CIBER, January 2008)

North American Libraries with Notable Assessment Programs

- Alberta “Ongoing student surveys”
- Cornell “In-house research capability”
- Pennsylvania “Data Farm”
- Rochester “Ethnographic approaches”
- Virginia “Balanced Scorecard”
- Washington “User needs”

Building a Community of Practice: Library Assessment Conference

- Co-sponsored by Association of Research Libraries, University of Virginia and University of Washington
- Held biennially
 - 2006 Charlottesville, Virginia (220 registrants)
 - 2008 Seattle, Washington (August 4-7, 380 registrants)
 - 2010 Washington D.C. area
- Focused on practitioners
 - Papers, panels, posters, informal contact
 - 1/2 day workshops

Association of Research Libraries Sponsored Assessment

- **Tools**
 - ARL Statistics
 - LibQUAL+®
 - MINES for Libraries
- **Building a Community of Practice**
 - Library Assessment Conferences
 - Service Quality Evaluation Academy
 - Library Assessment blog
 - Workshops

Individual Library Consultation (Jim and Steve)

- Making Library Assessment Work (24 libraries in 2005-06)
- Effective, Sustainable, Practical Library Assessment (6 in 2007)

UW Libraries Assessment Priorities

Customer Needs, Use and Success

- Understanding how faculty and students work
- Information seeking behavior and use
- Patterns of library use
- Value of library
- User needs
- Library contribution to customer success
- User satisfaction with services, collections, overall

The University of Washington



- **UW located in beautiful Seattle metro population 3.2 million**
- **Comprehensive public research university**
 - 27,000 undergraduate students
 - 12,000 graduate and professional students (80 doctoral programs)
 - 4,000 research and teaching faculty
- **Large research library system**
 - \$40 million annual budget
 - 150 librarians on 3 campuses
 - Assessment program started in 1992; formal department established in 2006

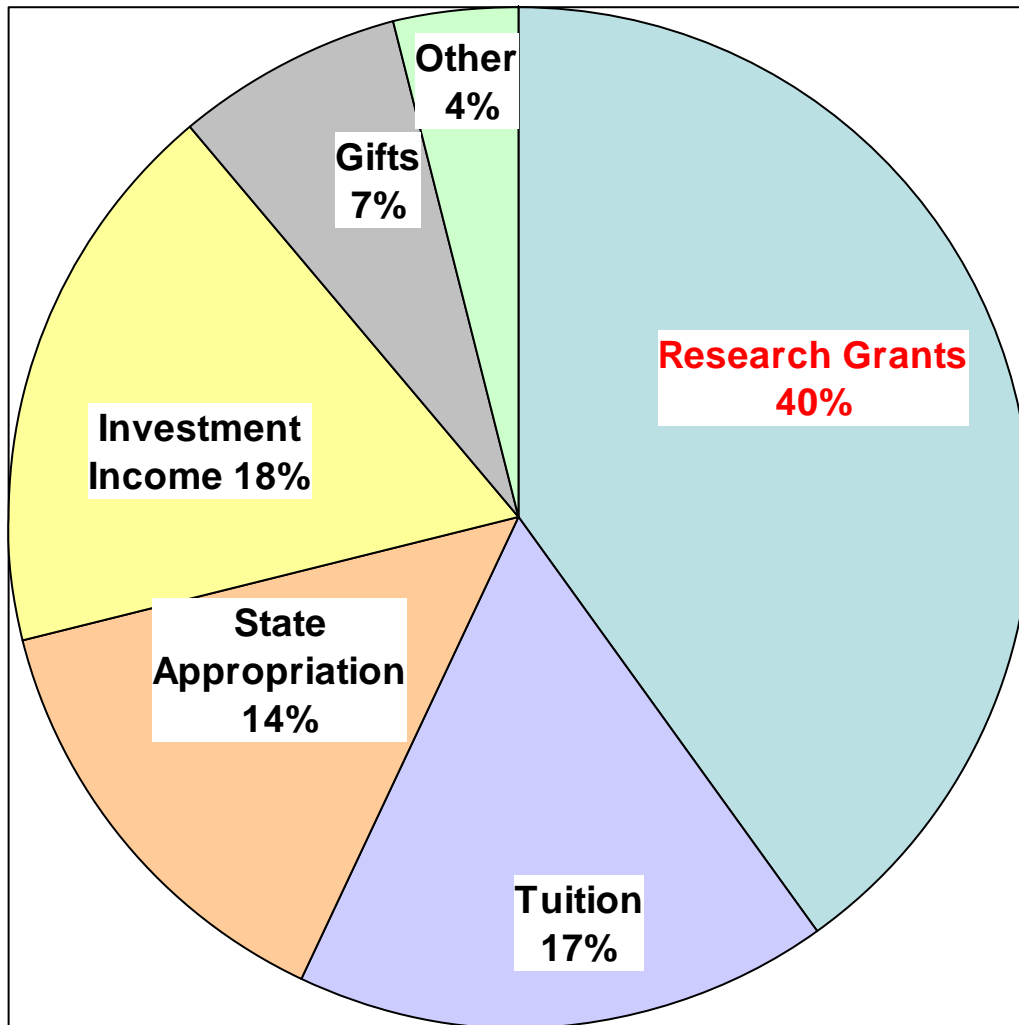
UW Libraries Assessment Methods

- Large scale user surveys every 3 years (“triennial survey”): 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007
- In-library use surveys every 3 years beginning 1993
 - 4000 completed surveys each survey year
- Focus groups/Interviews (annually since 1998)
- Observation (guided and non-obtrusive)
- Usability
- Use statistics/data mining
- Information about assessment program available at:
<http://www.lib.washington.edu/assessment/>

The Importance of the Research Enterprise

University of Washington Operating Revenues

\$2.55 Billion in 2006-07



Research Grants \$1.05 Billion
UW ranks 2nd in federal government research funding

Health and Human Services
\$510 million

National Science Foundation
\$95 million

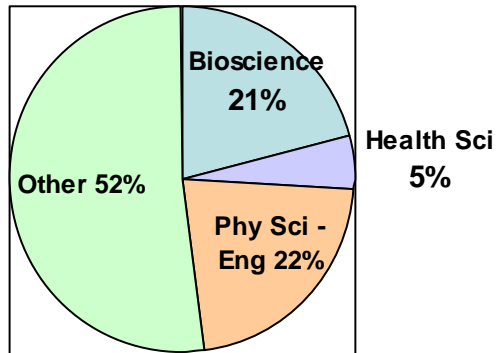
Other federal agencies
\$190 million

Industry/Foundations
\$90 million

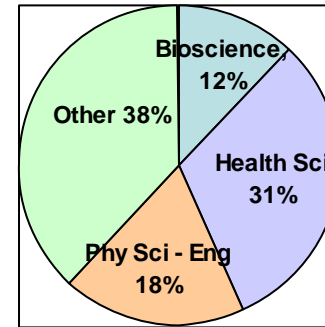
Other non-federal
\$140 million

UW Students, Faculty and Doctorates Awarded by Academic Area

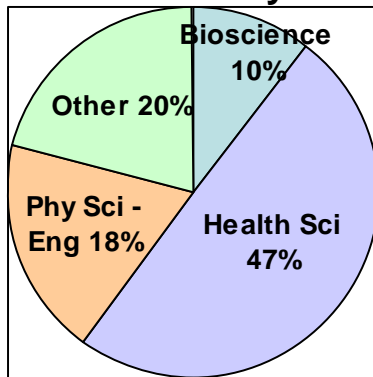
Undergraduate Majors



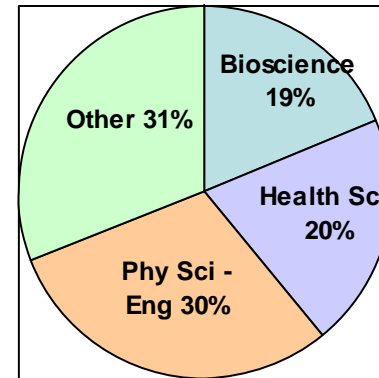
Grad/Professional Students



Faculty



Doctorates Awarded (600+)



Biosciences at the UW

- Contain majority of nationally/internationally ranked graduate and research programs
- Largest segment of University research community
 - 47% of graduate and professional students
 - 39% of doctorates awarded
 - 55% of teaching and research faculty
- Receive 80% of externally funded research monies

UW Libraries Review of Biosciences Support 2006

- Better understand how bioscientists work
- Understand significance and value of bioscience and research enterprise to University
- Gauge extent and impact of interdisciplinary research
- What role does the library play in their work and how has it changed
- Review viability of Libraries organizational structure/footprint
- Strengthen library connection to support of bioscience programs and the research enterprise

Biosciences Focus Group/Interview Themes

- **Content is primary link to the library**
 - Identify library with ejournals; want more titles & backfiles
- **Provide library-related services and resources in our space not yours**
 - Discovery begins primarily outside of library space with Google and Pub Med; Web of Science also important
 - Library services/tools seen as overly complex & fragmented
 - If not online want digital delivery
 - Go to physical library only as last resort
- **Lack understanding of library services/resources**
- **Increasing overlap between “bio” & other research**

Biosciences Task Force Recommendations

- Integrate search/discovery tools into users workflow
- Expand/improve information/service delivery options
- Make physical libraries more inviting/easier to use
 - Consolidate libraries, collections and service points
 - Reduce print holdings; focus on services
- Use an integrated approach to collection allocations
- Get librarians to work outside library space
- Lead/partner in scholarly communications and E-science
- Provide more targeted communication and marketing

Biosciences Review Follow-up : 2007-08 Actions

- Appointed a Director, Cyberinfrastructure Initiatives & Special Asst to the University Librarian for Biosciences & E-Science
- Libraries Strategic Plan priorities for 2007 include:
 - Improve discovery to delivery (WorldCat Local etc.)
 - Reshape our physical facilities as discovery and learning centers
 - Strengthen existing delivery services, both physical and digital, while developing new, more rapid delivery services
 - Enhance and strengthen the Libraries support for UW's scientific research infrastructure
 - Do market research before developing & promoting services
- Informed development of Libraries 2007 Triennial Survey

In God We Trust: All Others Must Bring Data

Did themes raised in the interviews/focus groups reflect the bioscience population? The campus community? The 2007 Triennial Survey as a corroborating source

Related Questions

Mode of access (in-person, remote)

Resource type importance

Sources consulted for research

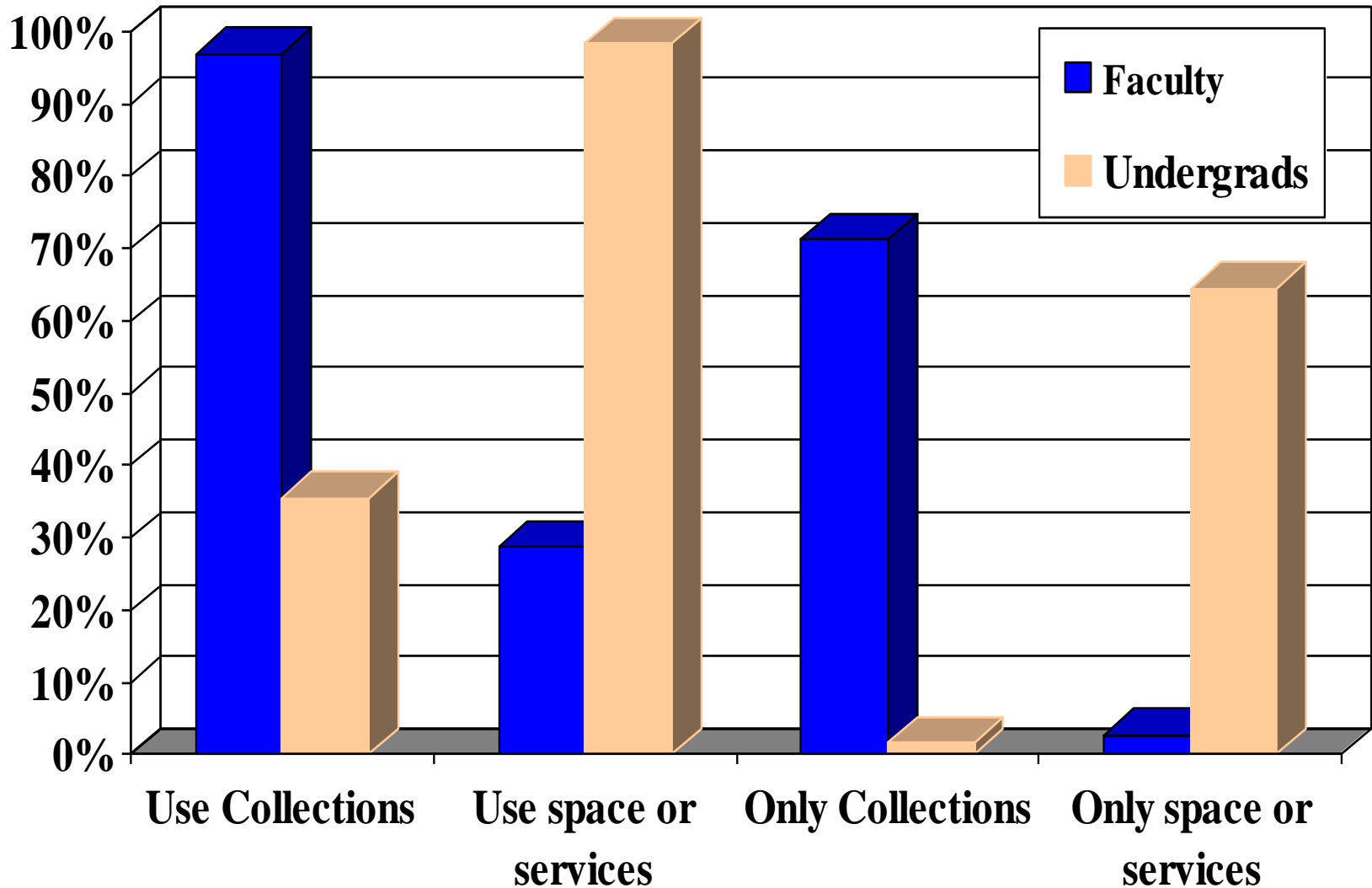
Primary reasons for using Libraries Web sites

Libraries contribution to work and academic success

Useful library services (new and/or expanded)

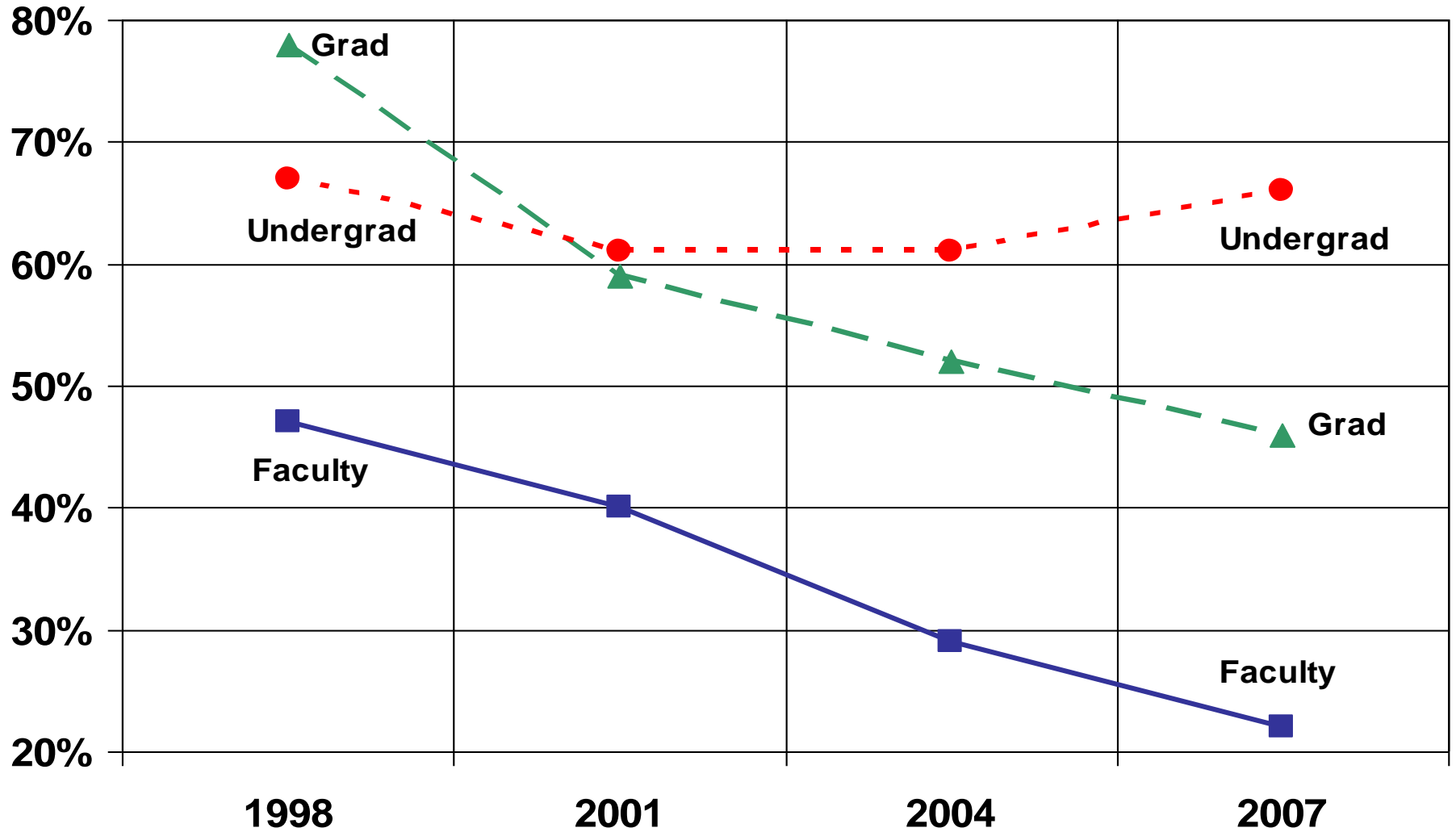
Reasons for In-Person Library Visits 2001

Faculty and Undergrads Visiting Weekly or More Often



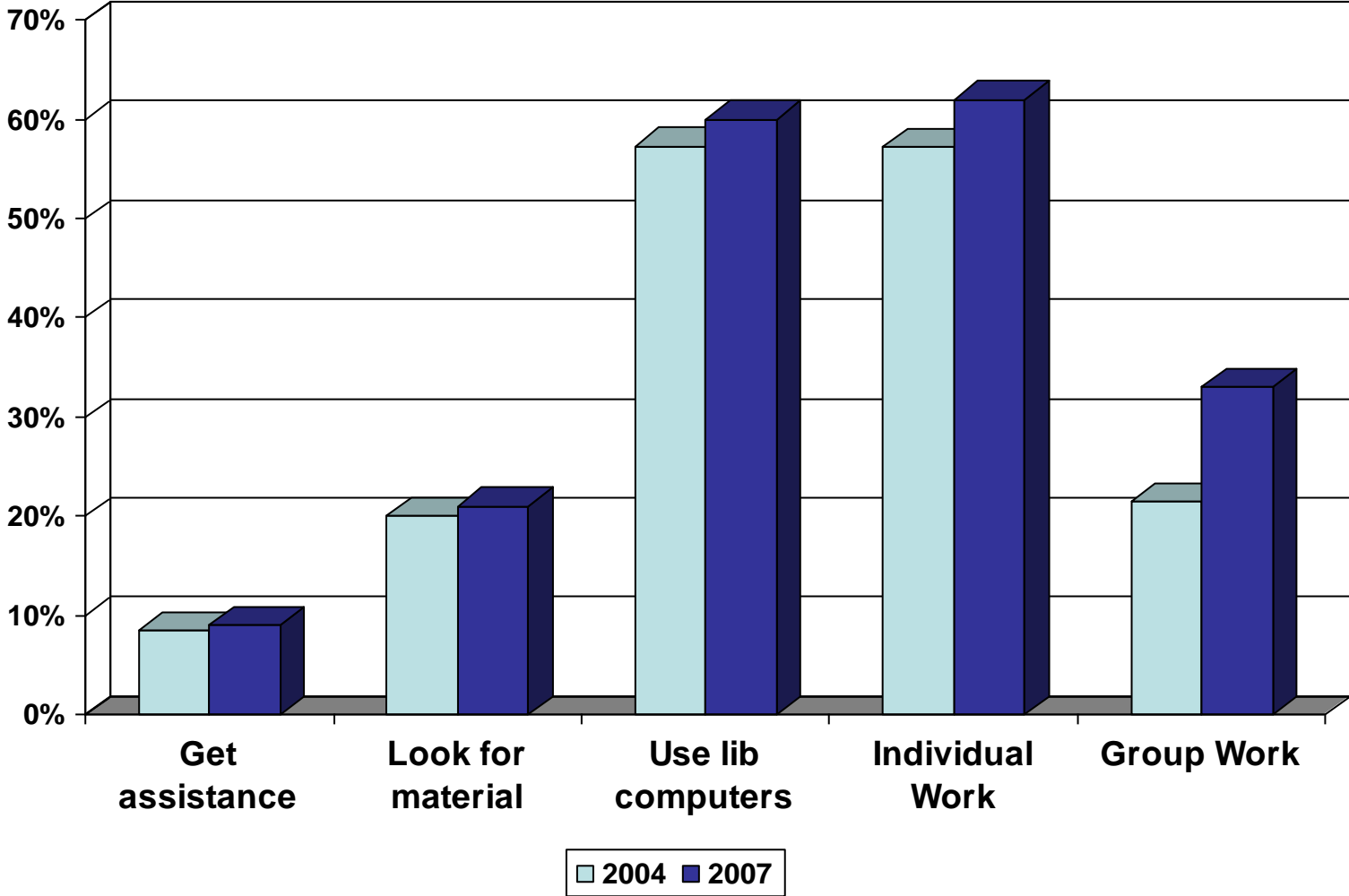
Library as Place

Change In Frequency of In-Person Visits 1998-2007 (weekly+)



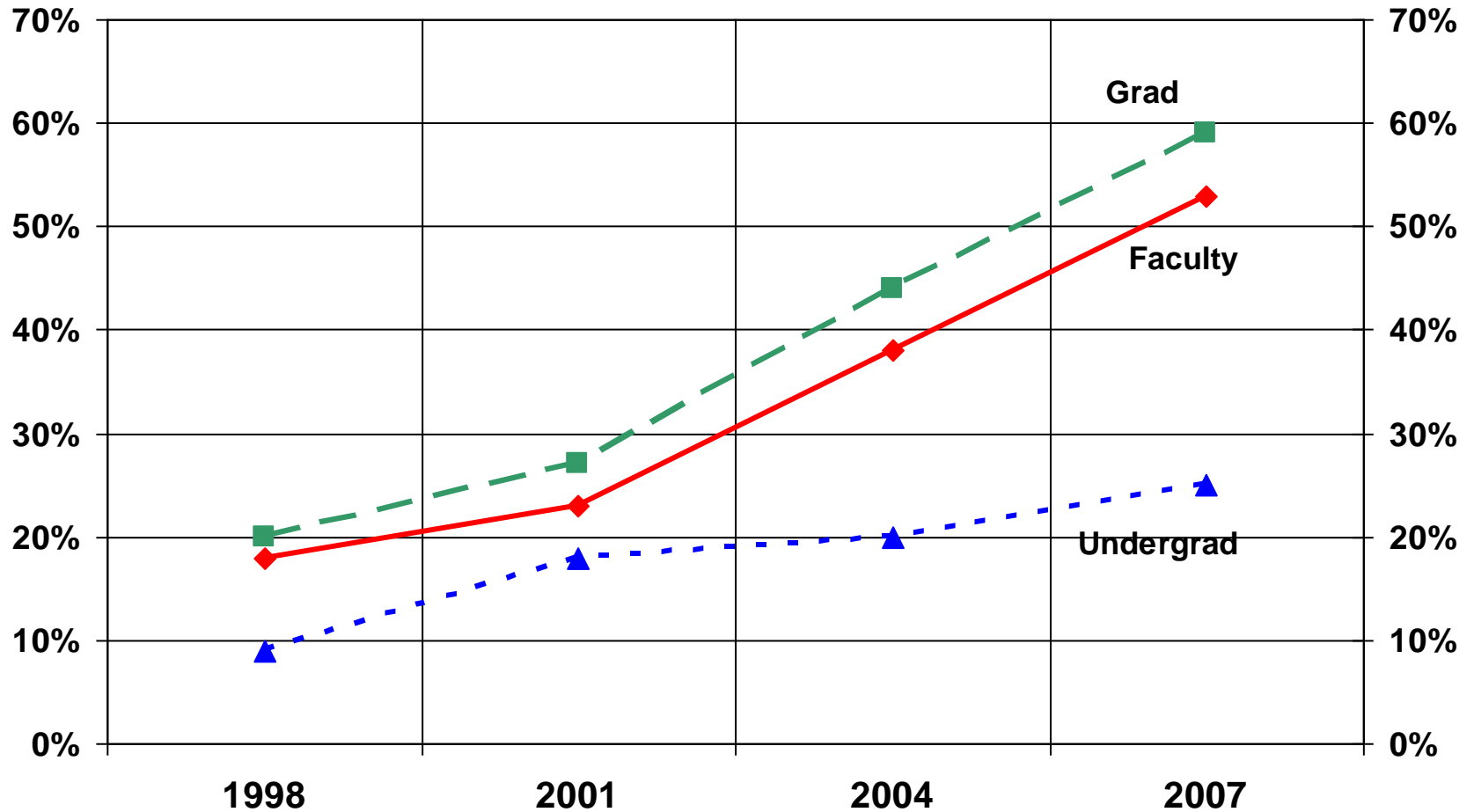
Undergrad Activities During Library Visits

(% using at least weekly in 2004/2007)



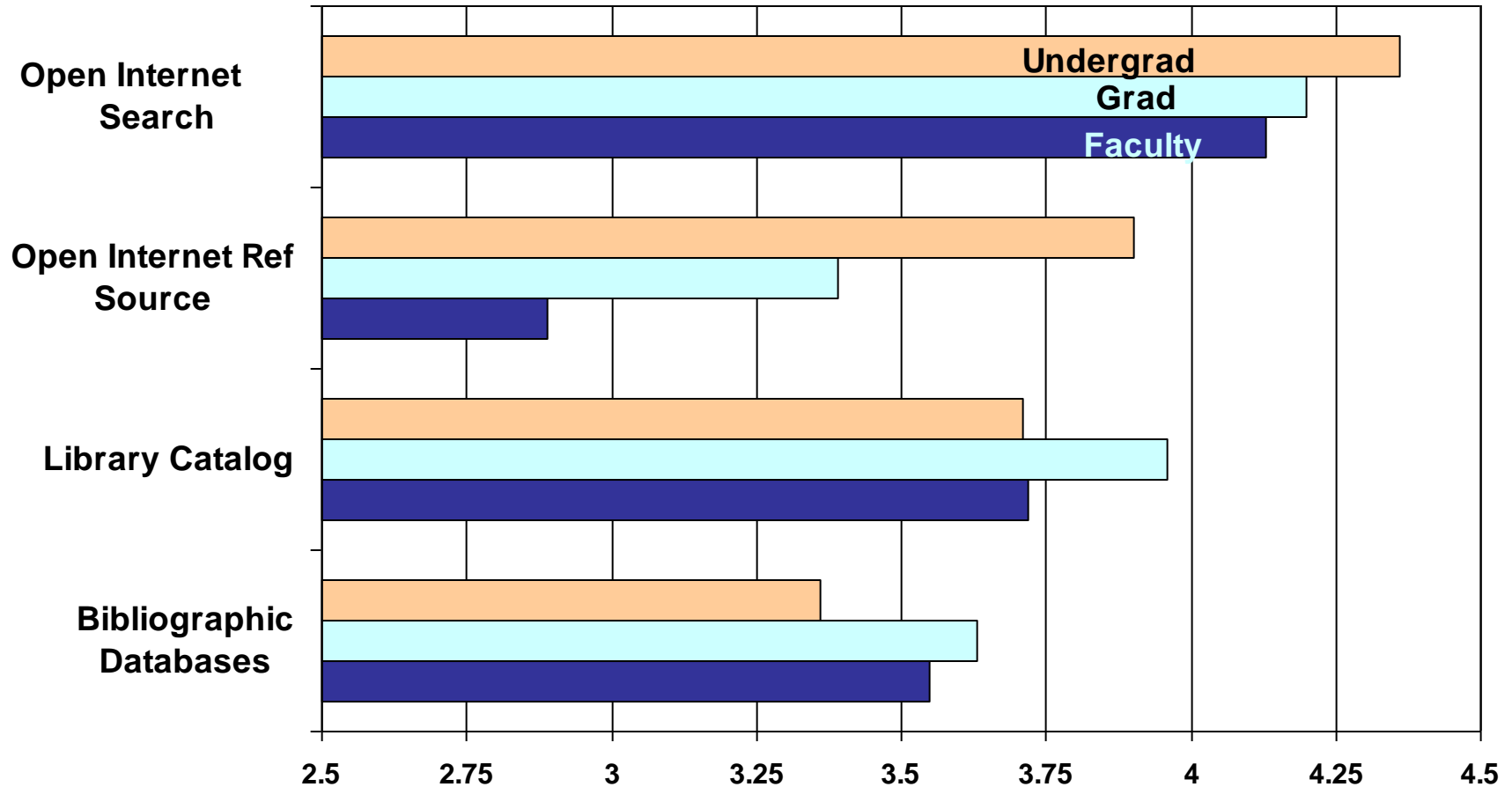
Off-Campus Remote Use 1998-2007

(Percentage using library services/collections at least 2x week)



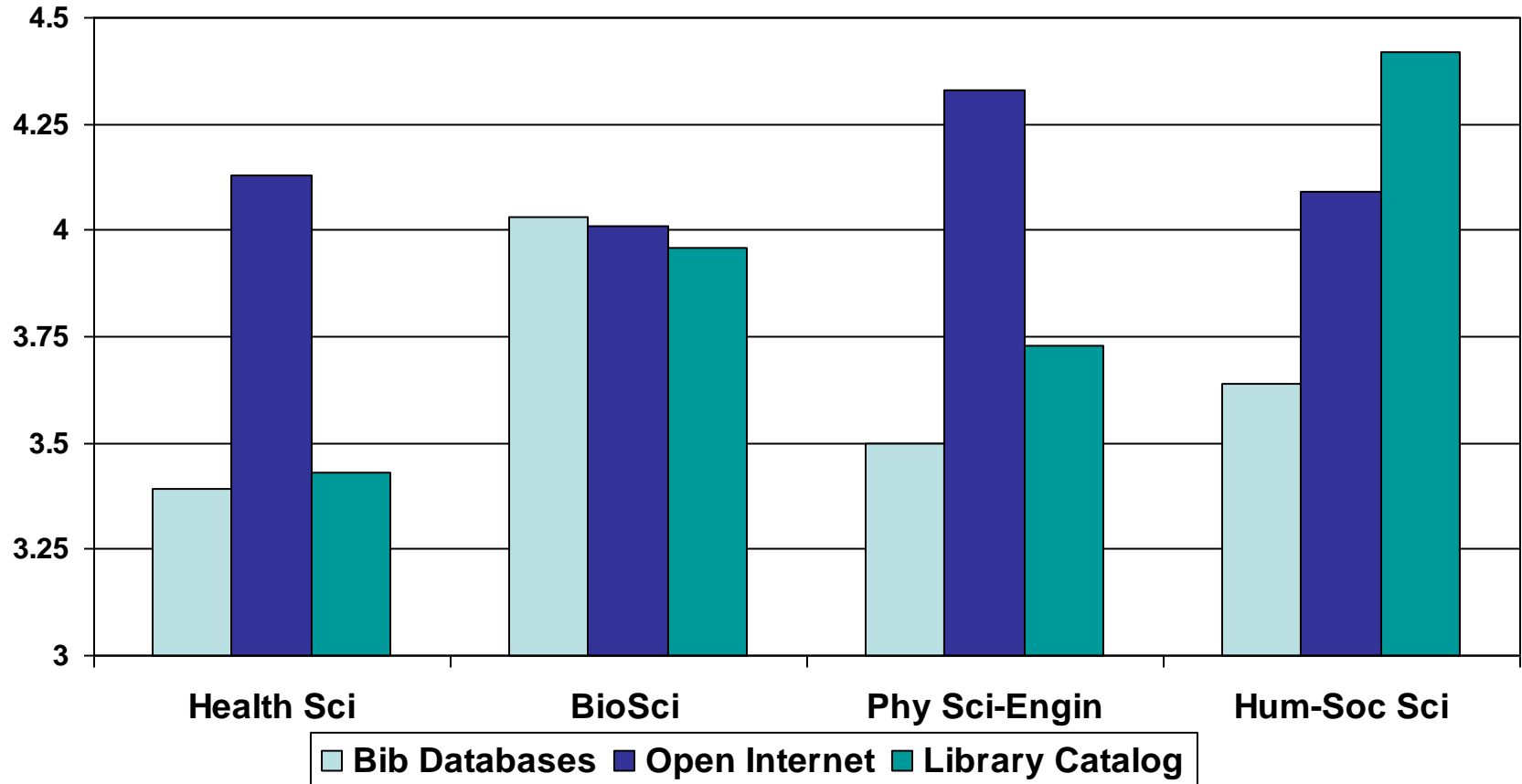
Sources Consulted for Information on Research Topics

(Scale of 1 "Not at All" to 5 "Usually")



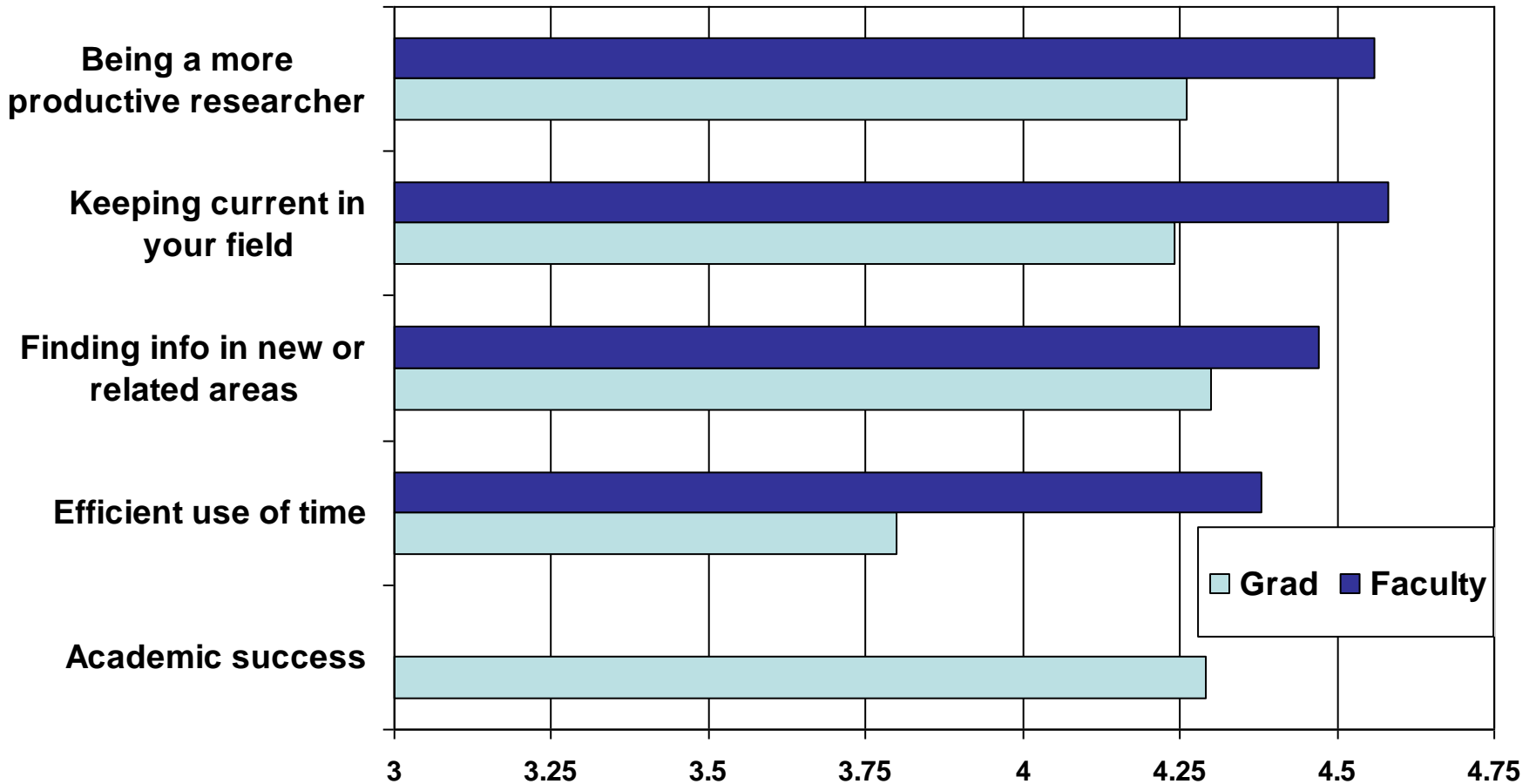
Sources Consulted for Information on Research Topics

(Scale of 1 “never” to 5 “usually”)



I wish the interface between scholar and UW libraries was better. I want to search with Scholar, but use UW's credentials to access full-length articles. Right now, there are a lot of intermediary pages I need to visit. *Bioengineering grad student*

Libraries Contribution to: (Scale of 1 “Minor” to 5 “Major”)



WorldCat Local: Usage and Impacts

- One box, one stop shopping
 - Formats integrated
 - UW holdings, regional consortium, WorldCat, First Search, BL articles
 - User doesn't need to know how we do things internally
- 200-275k searches per month
 - ~80% go to full record
 - Local OPAC down by ~ 140k
- WCL is our #2 ranked OpenURL origin
 - 31000+ clicks-to-content in each of last 2 qtrs
- Our borrowing from consortium is up 61%
- ILL requests up 114%

What Does It All Mean? 16 Years of Assessing User Needs

- Undergraduates
 - Library as Place
 - Work, meet, learn, live
- Graduate/professional students
 - Access to information and services
 - How can the library save me time?
- Faculty
 - Collections (physical and virtual)

What We've Learned about the UW Community

- Libraries are still important sources of scholarly information but lessening in value
- Library needs/use patterns vary by and within academic areas and groups - no “one size fits all”
- Remote access is preferred method and has changed the way faculty and students work and use libraries
- Faculty and students find information and use libraries differently than librarians prefer them too
- Library/information environment is perceived as too complex; users find simpler ways (Google) to get info
- Customers cannot predict the Libraries future

How UW Libraries Has Used Assessment

- Extend hours in Undergraduate Library (24/5.5)
- Create more diversified student learning spaces
- Eliminate print copies of journals
- Enhance usability of discovery tools and website
- Provide standardized service training for all staff
- Stop activities that do not add value
- Consolidate and merge branch libraries
- Change/reallocate collections budget and staffing
- Improve librarian liaison program to academic areas
- Support budget requests to University

Our Challenge: Maintain Relevancy and Centrality to the Academic Community

