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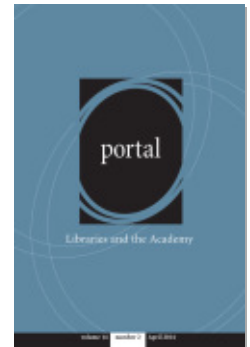
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## E-Book Use and Attitudes in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education

Kelsey Corlett-Rivera, Timothy Hackman

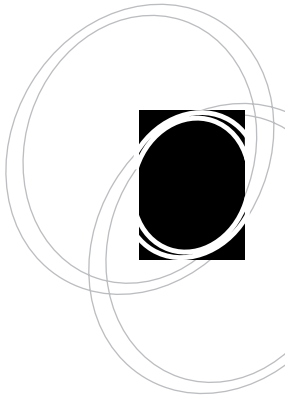
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# E-Book Use and Attitudes in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education

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Kelsey Corlett-Rivera and Timothy Hackman

**abstract:** A survey of more than 1,300 faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students in the humanities and social sciences at the University of Maryland generated a wealth of data on use and opinions of e-books among those users. While the initial purpose of the survey was to gather data that would aid humanities and social sciences librarians in making collection development decisions for their academic departments, the data will also be useful to all academic librarians who make decisions about e-books for their institutions.

## Introduction

Like most university libraries, the University of Maryland Libraries purchase electronic books (e-books) from a variety of vendors and in a number of different formats, and statistics show that our patrons use e-books heavily. Raw “user sessions” for three e-book collections—ebrary, Gale Virtual Reference Library, and Springer eBooks—numbered 170,820 between January and December 2011. Also like most university libraries, we face space constraints and other factors that increasingly pressure us to purchase a significant portion of our collection in e-book form, rather than in print.

Yet anecdotal evidence from reference desk interactions and instruction sessions seems to suggest that many patrons still prefer print books to e-books. Many of our colleagues have experienced interactions similar to those reported by Cynthia Gregory, wherein a student shown a catalog record for an e-book responds, “But I want a real book.”<sup>1</sup> Beyond such anecdotes, however, it was clear that there was a serious gap in what we knew about our users’ preferences for print or electronic books. Will scholars in the humanities and social sciences, for example, support a shift to e-books, which may not be compatible with research methods practiced and taught in these disciplines?

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The purpose of this study, then, is to gather data on use of and attitudes about e-books among faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students in the humanities and social sciences at the University of Maryland (UMD). To keep the quantity of data manageable, we limited the survey to participants from three colleges: the College of Arts and Humanities (ARHU), College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSOS), and College of Education. These three were chosen to provide a range of respondents in the disciplines served by the humanities and social sciences librarians, a team of thirteen subject specialist librarians who work together to provide reference, instruction, collection development, and outreach services at UMD.<sup>2</sup>

Specifically, the purpose of this study is to learn about user preferences for accessing certain kinds of written materials (for example, scholarly monographs, edited collections, and reference works), difficulties encountered when identifying or accessing e-books, and the suitability of e-books to research methods in various disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. Research questions include:

1. Do (or how often do) humanities and social sciences faculty and students use e-books for research purposes? Do (or how often do) they use e-books for recreational reading?
2. How do humanities and social sciences faculty and students identify, access, and use e-books for their research, their recreational reading, or both? Which e-book sources and collections do they use most frequently?
3. For what materials in their disciplines do humanities and social sciences faculty and students prefer the UMD Libraries to buy e-books? For what materials in their disciplines do they prefer the Libraries to buy print books?
4. How do use and attitudes compare among UMD respondents of different statuses (faculty, graduate student, or undergraduate student), disciplines (for example, English, history, psychology, sociology), and colleges?
5. How do use and attitudes compare among UMD respondents who do or do not regularly use the physical libraries or online library resources?
6. What other comments do faculty and students have about finding or using e-books at UMD Libraries?

The initial purpose of the survey was to gather data that would aid humanities and social sciences librarians at the University of Maryland in making collection development decisions for their academic departments. Secondly, the data will also be useful to all academic librarians who make decisions about e-books for their institutions.

### **Institutional Context**

The University of Maryland is a major public research university in College Park, less than ten miles north of Washington, DC. It is the flagship institution of the University System of Maryland and offers 127 undergraduate majors and 112 graduate degrees through programs in twelve colleges and schools. The university has a total enrollment of 37,631 (26,826 undergraduate and 10,805 graduate) and a tenured or tenure-track faculty of 1,472, among 3,996 total faculty.



## Literature Review

The literature on e-books grows by the day, so it can be difficult to achieve an understanding of the current state of e-books in the academic library. Robert Slater offers an excellent literature review that attempts to answer the question, “Why Aren’t E-Books Gaining More Ground in Academic Libraries?”<sup>3</sup> The author pulls several major themes from the literature, including how people use e-books, how people find e-books, problems accessing and using e-books, problems acquiring e-books, and more, and concludes, “Patrons do not use e-books because they find the experience of using e-books incongruous with their experience of using other electronic resources.”<sup>4</sup> Linda Ashcroft also offers a helpful review of the literature, though her focus on large studies means that she summarizes only a few that are relevant to academic libraries.<sup>5</sup>

The large studies cited by Ashcroft include the 2007 Global Faculty E-Book Survey and 2008 Global Student E-Book Survey, both conducted and published by ebrary, and the UK National E-Books Observatory. The 2008 Global Student E-Book Survey reached 6,492 students at 400 institutions in seventy-five countries. Forty-eight percent reported never using e-books from their library, and an additional 28.5 percent reported using e-books less than one hour a week. The most often-cited reasons for never using e-books were “I do not know where to find e-books” or, simply, “I prefer printed books.”<sup>6</sup> The 2007 Global Faculty E-Book Survey netted 906 faculty respondents from 300 institutions in thirty-eight countries, and it reported mixed findings on e-book use by faculty. For example, 42 percent of those who responded said they “encourage students to use [e-books] as viable resource[s]” in their courses, but 36 percent said they do not use e-books in their courses at all. Seventy-nine percent agreed, “When reading the whole book or extensive sections, print books are preferable”; 38 percent also agreed, “Print book collections are generally easier to use for most of my research.”<sup>7</sup> The third study, the UK National E-Book Observatory,<sup>8</sup> was a massive online survey of e-book use and perceptions in the United Kingdom that gathered more than 22,000 responses. Nearly 62 percent of respondents reported using e-books already in their scholarly work; of respondents who had used an e-book recently, 46 percent reported finding it via their university library, while 43 percent reported finding it from the Internet for free. Responses to two open-ended questions—“What are the biggest advantages of e-books over print books?” and “Is there anything else you want to add regarding course texts, print or electronic, or about your university library?”—are summarized in a follow-up article.<sup>9</sup> In the survey, 11,624 respondents, mostly students, answered the first question, naming accessibility, searchability, cost, and portability as the major advantages of e-books. The second question received 4,809 responses with comments; 13 percent provided generally favorable comments on e-books, and an additional 13 percent requested more e-books. On the other hand, 8 percent reported problems with reading texts from a screen, and another 6 percent expressed a general preference for print books.

Other large surveys worth noting are those by Ian Rowlands, David Nicholas, Hamid R. Jamali, and Paul Huntington; and by Michael Levine-Clark.<sup>10</sup> The former netted 1,818 responses from University College London, with a roughly even split of undergraduate students, graduate students, and “staff” (including faculty). Questions addressed current use, sources, advantages, and disadvantages of e-books; current use



of library print collections; book discovery preferences; satisfaction with current provision of e-books; awareness of library e-books; and more. Analysis of demographic factors revealed that a user's "age is a good predictor of e-book use," while "neither status (full-time, part-time, or occasional), nor regularity of use of print library collections are associated with existing e-book use."<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, the authors found that e-book users at University College London would rather read from a computer screen (48 percent) than "print and read from paper" (13 percent), a preference that "seems to be relatively independent of . . . age."<sup>12</sup>

Levine-Clark shares the results of an online survey on awareness and use of e-books conducted at the University of Denver in 2005, which returned 2,067 responses (30 percent undergraduate students, 39 percent graduate students, 13 percent faculty, and 12 percent staff). On average, 59 percent of respondents reported that they were aware of the library's e-book collections; that number was even higher (71 percent) for undergraduate students. Those who responded were "generally pleased with the e-book format," but, in contrast to the University College London study, "most [University of Denver] respondents (more than 60 percent) indicate a preference for print books over electronic, but an even larger number (more than 80 percent) indicate a degree of flexibility between the two formats."<sup>13</sup> A follow-up article by Levine-Clark focuses on the survey responses from students and faculty in the humanities only (195 responses out of 2,067).<sup>14</sup> This subset of students and faculty had a generally higher awareness of e-books than the general population (74 percent compared to 59 percent overall) and were more likely to find e-books via the library catalog (49 percent compared to 39 percent overall). Although his sample size is considerably smaller, Levine-Clark's focus on humanities and the comparisons he makes across statuses (undergraduates, graduates, and faculty) and disciplines make his 2007 study closest to what the authors of the present survey hope to accomplish.

General e-book surveys include those by Cynthia Gregory (105 students from four randomly chosen undergraduate courses at the College of Mount St. Joseph in Cincinnati, OH), by Abdullah Noorhidawati and Forbes Gibb (1,372 students, predominately undergraduates, from the University of Strathclyde, Scotland), and by Edward Walton (204 faculty and students at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, MO).<sup>15</sup> There are also numerous e-book surveys that focus on awareness, use, and satisfaction within specific disciplines and user populations, including business faculty, geosciences faculty and graduate students, sciences faculty, sciences faculty and graduate students, and graduate students in library science.<sup>16</sup>

The present study falls somewhere between a general e-book survey (that is, a survey of an entire college or university) and a discipline- or status-specific survey (for example, only business faculty, or only students and faculty in the sciences). While the surveyed population is less than the full student and faculty body at the University of Maryland, it does cover a range of disciplines (the Colleges of Arts and Humanities, Behavioral and Social Sciences, and Education) and statuses (undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff). The advantages of this approach are a large body of responses and opportunities for comparative analysis by discipline and status.



## Methodology

The basis of this study was an online, self-selected survey, created using the paid (“Pro”) version of Zoomerang (before it was acquired by Survey Monkey), consisting of fifteen multiple choice and three open-ended questions. Questions addressed the use of the physical library and online library resources, use of and attitudes about e-books, and preferences for print or e-books in various formats (monographs, specialized reference, citation manuals, and the like.) Three demographic questions were included to allow for comparisons by college, subject discipline, and status (that is, faculty, graduate, or undergraduate). A copy of the survey is included as Appendix A and is available online at [ter.ps/ebookssurvey](http://ter.ps/ebookssurvey).

We applied for and received research funding from the University Libraries that allowed us to offer incentives for taking the survey. One new (third-generation) iPad and ten \$50 Amazon.com gift cards were purchased and prominently featured in flyers and e-mails publicizing the survey.

The survey was open for four weeks, beginning March 29, 2012. The primary method of distribution was by e-mail; subject librarians for departments in the three colleges were asked to share the survey with students, staff, and faculty in their departments. E-mail announcements were also sent to contacts in the administrative offices for each college, who distributed them to appropriate faculty and student lists, department blogs, and other campus e-mail lists. We identified and contacted campus groups (for example, the Art History Association, Society of African American Studies, and Teacher Education Association of Maryland Students) that would likely have student members from our target departments. We created flyers for the survey and posted them around the UMD Libraries, in the Student Union, and in buildings where the three colleges hold classes. We also created a smaller version of the flyer, which we handed out to students and faculty during class changes in these buildings. Links to the survey were prominently featured on the UMD Libraries’ home page, on its Facebook pages, and on subject-appropriate CampusGuides. The survey closed on April 27, 2012, and results were exported to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and later to a Microsoft Access database, for tabulation and analysis.

## Demographics

In total, 1,351 people completed the survey. Of these, three respondents failed to indicate their status at the University of Maryland and five indicated that they were alumni. These eight responses were excluded from data calculations, leaving 1,343 valid responses. By far the largest numbers came from the College of Arts and Humanities (982, or 73 percent of all responses) and from undergraduate students (701, or 52 percent of all responses). Table 1 shows the breakdown of respondents by college and status. Aside from demographics, such as status and college, our initial questions were designed to capture information about the respondents and how they currently use library resources, specifically e-books.

Table 2 shows the rate of response for each status—faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates—by college. The highest response rates were for College of Education



## Table 1.

### All survey respondents by college and status

	Faculty/Staff	Graduate students	Undergraduate students	Other	Totals
Arts and Humanities	138	280	558	6	982
Behavioral and Social Sciences	56	51	120	1	228
Education	48	69	23	1	141
Totals	242	400	701	8	1,351

\*The survey did not include choices for exempt or nonexempt staff, as we did not expect to receive responses from these groups. Nevertheless, we received twenty surveys from staff (eleven from Arts and Humanities, five from Behavioral and Social Sciences, and four from Education). Responses from faculty and staff were combined into one "Faculty/Staff" category.

faculty (51.6 percent), arts and humanities faculty (42.9 percent), and arts and humanities graduate students (26 percent). Undergraduates in education and in behavioral and social sciences had the lowest rates (3 percent and 2 percent, respectively). The overall response rate was 9 percent (1,343 out of 14,439), at the upper end of the average for Web-based surveys in the discipline,<sup>17</sup> but still small enough that the potential for nonresponse bias is high. Because every university student and faculty member has easy access to an e-mail account and to the Internet, there should have been no "digital divide" among respondents and nonrespondents. More likely, nonrespondents include those who do not regularly check e-mail (and thus missed our e-mail invitations), or who do not regularly come to campus (and thus missed our flyers). Those who hold extremely negative views of e-books may also have chosen not to respond, leading to proportionally more positive responses. Those who were unmotivated by the survey prizes, either because they have no interest in an iPad or because they already own one, may also not have responded, though it is hard to predict how this omission would affect the responses.

Other potential biases include self-selection effects, such as those introduced by offering a tablet and gift cards as survey incentives. People who were already disposed to using e-books (including shopping for them online) may have been more likely to respond to the survey, leading to more positive responses.

## Results

Because of the vast difference in the numbers of responses from the various statuses and colleges, most data here are expressed in percentages. The percentages refer to the percentage of respondents in a particular category (for example, participants from the College of Arts and Humanities or undergraduate respondents.) The total number of

**Table 2.**  
Rate of response

	Tenured/Tenure-track faculty*	Graduate students	Undergraduate students
Arts and Humanities	42.9%	25.5%	12.7%
Behavioral and Social Sciences	32.4%	6.3%	2.1%
Education	51.6%	6.0%	2.9%
All invitees	41.2%	13.1%	6.5%

\* Does not include responses from staff, or from nontenured/tenure-track faculty, including instructor, lecturer, emeritus, research affiliate, visiting professor, or faculty research assistant.

responses for each question may change slightly, due to respondents skipping questions or being blocked from answering a particular question because of an earlier answer. (For example, participants who chose “I don’t use e-books” for question 11 were not given the opportunity to respond to questions 12 through 14 and automatically proceeded to question 15.)

### Library Use

Responses to questions 4 and 5, which inquired about how often respondents use the library both in person (question 4) and virtually (question 5), showed heavy use of both the physical space and online resources. Only 5 percent of participants indicated that they visit the physical library once a year or never, and just 3 percent chose those options for online library resources. Undergraduate (64 percent) and arts and humanities (59 percent) respondents come to the library on the most regular basis (once a week or more), while a smaller percentage of faculty (29 percent) and College of Education respondents (25 percent) visit that often. Graduate students reported the highest frequency of accessing online resources, with 84 percent choosing “at least once a week” or “daily” (compared with 48 percent for undergraduates and 67 percent for faculty.) Overall, respondents access online resources more frequently than they visit the physical library: 18 percent of participants access online resources on a daily basis, compared to 15 percent who visit the library daily.

**Only 5 percent of participants indicated that they visit the physical library once a year or never.**

**Overall, respondents access online resources more frequently than they visit the physical library.**



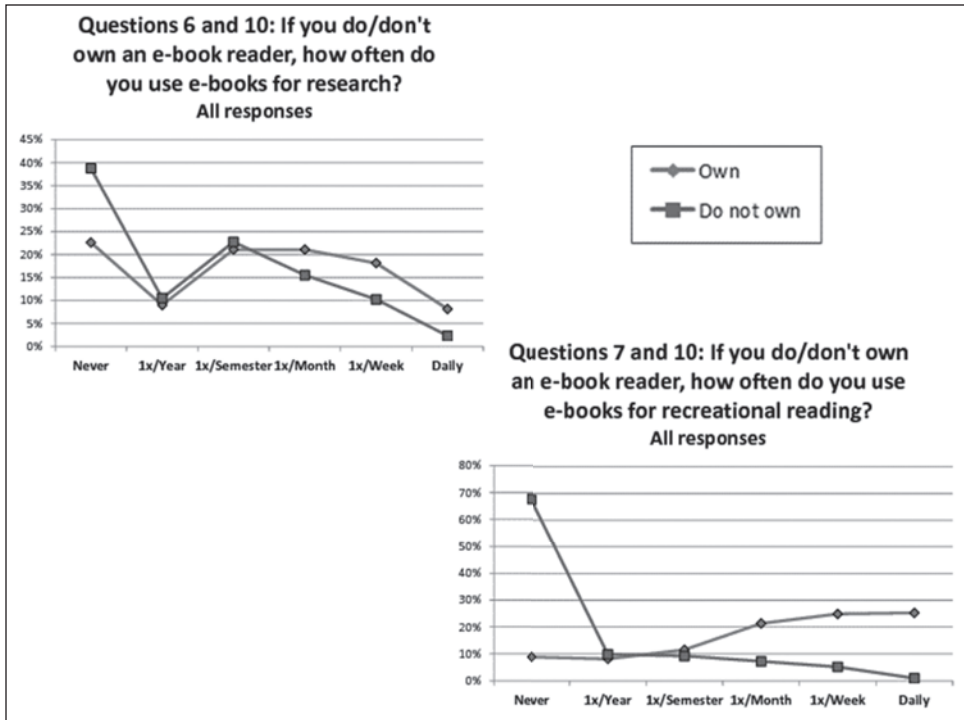


Figure 1. How often respondents who do and who do not own an e-book reader use e-books for research, left, and how often they use e-books for recreational reading, right

When compared with responses for question 4, question 5 answers seem to suggest that undergraduate students mostly use the physical library as a study or meeting space, not for its online resources. This conclusion is supported by anecdotal observations of students in the library, who seem to be using every imaginable Web site or program *except* the UMD Libraries' databases. Or it may suggest that undergraduates are less aware than the other two groups of when they are actually using resources provided by the Libraries (for example, articles found via Google Scholar, which are only available full-text thanks to library subscriptions). Otherwise there was little difference between respondents of the three colleges or three statuses.

**Undergraduate students mostly use the physical library as a study or meeting space, not for its online resources.**

**For both research and recreational reading, those who used e-books more frequently were more likely to get them from commercial sites.**

**Use of E-Books**

Questions 6 and 7 inquired about how often respondents use e-books for research (question 6) and recreational reading (question 7). For both research and recre-



ational reading, the most popular response was “never,” at 31 percent and 41 percent, respectively. Responses for both were clustered toward the lower end of the scale. In fact, “never” was the favorite choice for all three statuses and all three colleges for both research and recreational reading.

Arts and humanities (20 percent) and graduate (24 percent) respondents used e-books for research most often (“at least once a week” or more). Rates differed for recreational reading, in that faculty reported the highest levels of use, with 29 percent choosing “at least once a week” or more. Interestingly, College of Education respondents reported both the lowest (44 percent chose “never”) and highest (44 percent chose “at least once a month” or more) frequencies of e-book use, in comparison to the other colleges.

Questions 8 and 9 inquired whether respondents’ frequency of e-book use for both research and recreational reading had increased, stayed the same, or decreased over the past three years. Most participants indicated that their e-book use for both research (60 percent) and recreational reading (52 percent) had increased, with only around 1 percent selecting “decreased.” Graduate and arts and humanities respondents were most likely to report increased use of e-books for research and recreational reading.

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**Most participants indicated that their e-book use for both research (60 percent) and recreational reading (52 percent) had increased.**

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### Library and E-Book Use

One of our research questions was whether the frequency of use of the physical library, the virtual library, or both affects frequency of e-book usage. There seems to be little correlation between use of the physical library and use of e-books for research or recreational reading, although one interesting anomaly emerged from these answers. While it could be expected that respondents who only physically enter a library “at least once a year” would be more likely to report “never” using e-books for research, it was surprising that those same participants had the highest percentages of reported “daily” and “weekly” use of e-books for recreational reading, at 17 percent and 26 percent, respectively. This finding would indicate that those who rarely use the physical library read e-books for pleasure (but not for research) on a regular basis.

### Use of Online Resources and E-Books

For research purposes, there is a clear correlation between infrequent or nonexistent use of online library resources and infrequent or nonexistent use of e-books. In our survey, 78 percent of respondents who said they “never” access online library resources and 77 percent of those who say they access online library resources “at least once a year” reported that they “never” use e-books for research. However, for recreational reading, there seems little or no clear correlation between use or nonuse of online library resources and use of e-books.

### E-Book Readers

Question 10 asked respondents which, if any, e-book readers they owned. Of those who responded, 169 (12 percent) chose “other, please specify” and entered an intelligible



response. After tallying these “other” responses, the following categories were added to our totals: iPad or other tablet; phone or iPod; laptop or desktop; other e-book reader. We also added a category for software because several respondents listed a software package (for example, iBooks, iTunes, or Adobe) instead of a device. In cases where those who responded said they used a particular program on a particular device (for example, “Kindle app on my iPad”), the responses were tallied under the device.

Using the analyzed “other” responses, “I don’t own an e-book reader” received 52 percent of the responses, followed by Kindle (27 percent) and Nook (7 percent). The next most popular choices were iPad or other tablet (6 percent), phone or iPod (3 percent), and laptop or desktop (2 percent).

By counting only affirmative responses—that is, by excluding “I don’t own an e-book reader”—we can get an idea of the relative popularity of the top four devices by college. The Nook is slightly more popular in behavioral and social sciences and in education, where it was selected, respectively, 17 percent and 18 percent of the time by respondents who own an e-reader. The percentage was only 14 percent in arts and humanities. The response “iPad or other tablet” was slightly better liked in ARHU than in the other colleges, at 14 percent of affirmative responses compared to 10 percent for both BSOS and the College of Education. Reading e-books on a smartphone or iPod was the least popular of the top answers but was slightly more popular among BSOS responses (9 percent) than among ARHU and College of Education responses (6 percent for both).

Using only the affirmative responses to compare by status, the popularity of Kindle is relatively consistent (ranging from 54 percent for faculty to 59 percent for graduate students), while the Nook is significantly more popular among undergraduates (18 percent compared to 13 percent for faculty and 11 percent for graduate students.) The iPad is much better liked among faculty (6 percent compared to 2 percent for graduate students and only 1 percent for undergraduates), perhaps due to the cost of that device. Graduate students are more likely than the other two groups to read e-books on a smartphone or iPod: 8 percent compared to 5 percent for faculty and 6 percent for undergraduates.

## How Respondents Access E-Books

Having determined how often the respondents use e-books and the library in general, we next inquired as to how they access those e-books, and what they do with them.

### Sources for E-Books

Question 11 asked respondents to indicate their chief source for e-books. The possible responses were:

- Commercial site (for example, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Google eBookstore)
- Free Web site (for example, Google Books, HathiTrust Digital Library, Project Gutenberg)
- Public library Web site
- University of Maryland Libraries Web site
- I don’t use e-books
- Other (please specify).<sup>18</sup>



Overall, “commercial site” and “free site” were the most popular choices, at 31 percent and 30 percent, respectively. The next most popular choice was “I don’t use e-books” at 22 percent, while only 11 percent of respondents selected “University of Maryland Libraries.” Responses differed slightly by college: Arts and humanities participants chose “free site” most often (33 percent); behavioral and social sciences respondents selected “I don’t use e-books” most frequently (30 percent); and those who responded from the College of Education chose “commercial site” most often (35 percent). The College of Education reported using the public library more often than any other college (8 percent), while respondents from arts and humanities picked getting e-books from the UMD Libraries slightly more than other colleges (12 percent).

Responses also differed slightly by status. Faculty chose “commercial site” most often (36 percent). For graduate and undergraduate students, “free site” was the most popular choice (34 percent and 30 percent, respectively). Graduates selected “I don’t use e-books” at a significantly lower rate than the other statuses (18 percent, compared to an overall average of 22 percent). Undergraduates chose “UMD Libraries” at a significantly higher rate than the other statuses (13 percent, higher than the overall average of 11 percent); vice versa, faculty selected “UMD Libraries” at a significantly lower rate than did respondents from the other statuses (8 percent).

Comparing how frequently respondents use e-books for research or recreational reading to their chief sources for those e-books, a few trends emerged. For both research and recreational reading, those who used e-books more frequently were more likely to get them from commercial sites; 69 percent of those who use e-books on a daily basis for recreational reading (and 48 percent who use them daily for research) obtain them from commercial sites. The use of free sites actually increased as frequency of e-book use decreased (down to “never”); 47 percent of those who use e-books for recreational reading (and 37 percent of those who use e-books for research) get them from free sites at least once a year.

### Finding Library E-Books

In question 12, we asked respondents how they find e-books through the University of Maryland Libraries Web site. The question was open to all who responded, but presumably the responses reflect only those 11 percent who actually do access e-books through the UMD Libraries. The possible choices were:

- Search the catalog
- Search within a specific e-book collection (such as ebrary, EBSCO eBook Collection [formerly NetLibrary], Springer eBooks, or Safari Books Online)
- Search for individual books in Research Port, the University of Maryland Libraries’ gateway to online databases and digital materials
- I don’t use e-books from the UMD Libraries
- Other (please specify).

Most respondents chose either “search the catalog” (36 percent) or “I don’t use e-books from the UMD Libraries” (28 percent).<sup>19</sup> “Search for individual books in Research Port” came in third at 20 percent, and “Search within a specific e-book collection” was selected



in 13 percent of responses. If we consider only affirmative responses (excluding “I don’t use e-books from the UMD Libraries”), “search the catalog” was chosen nearly half the time (49 percent).

Arts and humanities and behavioral and social sciences respondents chose “search the catalog” most often (37 percent and 33 percent, respectively). Education was the only college to select “I don’t use e-books from the UMD Libraries” most frequently (37 percent). When comparing responses by status, a higher percentage of faculty or staff chose “I don’t use e-books from the UMD Libraries” (43 percent), compared to only 20 percent of undergraduates. Conversely, undergraduates selected the affirmative responses at higher rates than faculty or staff or graduate students: “Search the catalog” (39 percent), “Search for individual books in Research Port” (21 percent), and “Search within a specific e-book collection” (18 percent).

### E-Book Collections

Question 13 attempted to uncover which e-book collections respondents used the most. Like question 12, this item was open to all who responded but presumably targeted the 13 percent of respondents who chose “Search within a specific e-book collection” in the previous question. After testing an early version of the survey on colleagues, we added an “I don’t know” option, which was selected 23 percent of the time. This may correspond to a number of factors, such as an absence of branding in the collections or a lack of importance to users (that is, an attitude of “I just need something on my topic, I don’t care what it is or which collection it comes from.”) Possible responses, selected from the UMD Libraries’ e-book collections with the highest usage statistics, were:

- ebrary
- EBSCO eBook Collection (formerly NetLibrary)
- Gale Virtual Reference Library
- Handbooks in Economics (Elsevier)
- Oxford Handbooks Online
- Safari Books Online
- Springer eBooks
- None of these
- I’ve used e-books from the UMD Libraries but I don’t know which collection(s)
- Other, please specify.

A majority of respondents (55 percent) selected either “none of these” or “I don’t know which collection(s).” The EBSCO eBook Collection was the only one to break 10 percent of overall responses, at 17 percent, and was also the most popular among all three colleges and statuses. If we consider only affirmative responses, excluding both “None of these” or “I don’t know which collection(s),” the top five collections were EBSCO (38 percent), Oxford Handbooks Online (21 percent), Gale Virtual Reference Library (19 percent), Springer eBooks (8 percent), and ebrary (8 percent).

More College of Education respondents chose negative responses, with a full 62 percent selecting either “None of these” or “I don’t know which collection(s).” Participants enrolled in education selected Springer eBooks (10 percent) and ebrary (7 percent)



more frequently than their classmates in arts and humanities or in behavioral and social sciences. Faculty or staff (63 percent) and graduate students (65 percent) also chose more negative responses. Undergraduates selected Gale Virtual Reference Library (12 percent) and Oxford Handbooks Online (12 percent) more often than faculty or staff and graduate students.

### How E-Books Are Used

Question 14 was designed to determine how respondents are using e-books. Are they downloading them to an e-reader? Or are they printing as much as possible to replicate the experience of a printed book? We asked how frequently they download to a dedicated e-reader. The majority of respondents (52 percent) indicated that they never download to a dedicated e-reader when using e-books. This was the largest percentage of “never” responses in question 14. On the other hand, 29 percent of all who responded said that they download to a dedicated e-reader either “frequently” or “always.” Arts and humanities

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**The majority of respondents (52 percent) indicated that they never download to a dedicated e-reader when using e-books.**

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respondents were slightly more likely to choose “never” (54 percent), while education participants chose “never” only 42 percent of the time. Behavioral and social sciences respondents chose “frequently” or “always” at a lower rate (22 percent) than average, while education respondents chose “frequently” or “always” at a higher rate, 38 percent. There were no substantial differences by status.

We also asked how frequently respondents download to a personal computer when using e-books. Responses to this question were evenly distributed, with “never,” “rarely,” and “always” receiving roughly the same percentage overall (16 to 17 percent). The most popular responses were “sometimes” and “frequently,” with 24 percent and 27 percent, respectively. Combined, these two choices represent a slight majority of responses (51 percent). These results hold when compared by college or by status with the exception of BSOS, where respondents chose “sometimes” or “frequently” at a lower rate than average (45 percent).

We inquired how often participants read e-books online. This question had the fewest “never” responses; only 8 percent reported that they “never” read e-books online. The most popular answer was “frequently” (35 percent), followed by “sometimes” (26 percent). Combined, these two responses represent a vast majority of responses (62 percent). These results hold when compared by college or by status.

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**Nearly three-quarters of all respondents reported that they “never” or “rarely” print all or a portion of an e-book.**

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We asked how often respondents print all or a portion of a book. This option had the second-highest rate of “never” responses (47 percent). This number was relatively consistent across colleges and statuses. Nearly three-quarters of all respondents reported that they “never” or “rarely” print all or a portion of an e-book, with faculty or staff



choosing these two responses at the highest rate (79 percent). This question also had the lowest rate of “always” responses, with just 3 percent of all who responded choosing “always.” If “always” and “frequently” answers are combined, undergraduate respondents (10 percent) and respondents from the College of Education (11 percent) are the most frequent printers.

## What Respondents Want

One of the main goals of this survey was to determine how to develop our e-collections in a way that best meets patron needs. Question 15 directly corresponds to that goal, asking whether respondents would prefer that the UMD Libraries purchase electronic or print versions of commonly collected works. Definitions of each format, with the exception of conference proceedings, which we (wrongly) assumed was self-explanatory, were provided in a heading to question 15, as shown in Appendix A.

### Scholarly Monographs

The largest number of respondents (41 percent) preferred that the library purchase scholarly monographs in print. This number was highest for faculty or staff (44 per-

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**The largest number of respondents (41 percent) preferred that the library purchase scholarly monographs in print.**

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cent) and arts and humanities (43 percent) and lowest for graduate students (40 percent) and education students (34 percent). Graduate students and education students chose “I prefer e-books” in the larg-

est numbers, 30 percent and 36 percent, respectively. Approximately 22 percent of all who responded indicated no preference, and another 9 percent selected “it depends.”

### Edited Collections

Responses to this question were evenly split, with 32 percent preferring e-book and 33 percent favoring print. Faculty preferred print to e-book (36 percent to 25 percent), but graduate students preferred e-book to print (37 percent to 31 percent). Among the three colleges, Education stood out, favoring e-book to print (39 percent to 24 percent). Respondents indicated “no preference” 24 percent of the time and “it depends” 11 per-

cent of the time, numbers that were relatively consistent across colleges and statuses.

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**Respondents greatly preferred e-book to print for conference proceedings by a margin of more than 22 percent.**

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### Conference Proceedings

Respondents greatly preferred e-book to print for conference proceedings by a margin of more than 22 percent (41 percent print versus 18 percent e-book). By status, graduate stu-

dents had the largest margin (52 percent e-book to 14 percent print). By college, Education had the largest margin (49 percent e-book to 13 percent print). Graduate students and

behavioral and social sciences respondents chose print at the lowest rates, 14 percent and 13 percent respectively. Thirty-four percent of respondents chose “no preference,” on average, with undergraduates choosing “no preference” at a higher rate (40 percent). Overall, respondents selected “it depends” 7 percent of the time; this percentage was consistent across colleges, but faculty or staff chose “it depends” at nearly double the average rate (12 percent).

### General Reference

Participants heavily favored e-book to print for general reference by a margin of 25 percent. Undergraduates preferred e-books slightly less (41 percent to 25 percent), while graduate students favored e-books the most (52 percent to 18 percent). Margins across all three colleges were similar, with a range of 24 to 25 percent. Faculty or staff and students in the College of Education chose print at the lowest rates, 17 percent and 20 percent respectively. For all statuses and colleges, respondents selected “no preference” (23 percent) at almost the same rate as print (21 percent).

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**Participants heavily favored e-book to print for general reference by a margin of 25 percent.**

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### Specialized Reference

Respondents liked e-books more than print for specialized reference by the large margin of 22 percent. Graduate students and education students preferred e-books by the largest margins (30 percent and 26 percent, respectively), while undergraduate students had the lowest margin (16 percent). Faculty or staff and education students chose print at the lowest rates, 17 percent and 20 percent respectively. Aside from graduate students (at 21 percent to 19 percent), all statuses and colleges chose “no preference” slightly more than print, 25 percent to 22 percent. The results for general and specialized reference mirror those reported in other surveys. For example, Timothy D. Lincoln’s 2013 survey of theological students and instructors found between 82 and 86 percent of respondents in that setting favored e-book to print for these types of resources.<sup>20</sup>

### Citation Manuals and Style Guides

Participants overwhelmingly preferred e-book to print for citation manuals and style guides by a margin of 30 percent. Graduate students and education students preferred e-books by the largest margins (39 percent and 34 percent, respectively), while undergraduates had the lowest margin (22 percent). Faculty or staff and education students chose print at the lowest rates, 15 percent and 17 percent respectively. Overall, respondents chose “no preference” (22 percent) at roughly the same rate as they chose print (21 percent).

### Literature

With the exception of students in education, respondents favored print to e-book for literature by a margin of 18 percent. Undergraduate students and arts and humanities





preferred print by the largest margins, 23 percent and 24 percent, respectively. Graduate students liked print by the smallest margin, 9 percent. Education respondents actually favored e-books by a margin of 6 percent, the only case in all of question 15 where a group's preference was the opposite of the majority opinion.

### **"It Depends"**

Question 16 allowed for further explanation on the choices made in question 15: "If you chose 'it depends' for any of the resources in question 15, please elaborate." These open-ended comments were analyzed and coded; see Appendix B for definitions of the codes used to classify responses.

Across all format types, the top reason for selecting "it depends" was "personal reasons," with an average of 24 percent of responses. One respondent cited "the mood I'm in at the time of reading," while another explained that it "depends on the urgency that I am reading with and what my end goal is, i.e. research, paper writing, personal betterment."

"Access" was also frequently identified as a reason for selecting "it depends," averaging 12 percent of responses. One respondent detailed the logic behind this selection:

I chose "it depends" because I'm more interested in convenience and access. If I'm planning on going to the library, then I'll look to see if the library has the book I want, and I'll check it out. However, more often than not, I need to access the book quickly, and it's frankly more convenient if the book is online rather than making the trek to the library and navigating the stacks.

"E-book features," such as full-text search, was also a popular selection, receiving at least 13 percent of responses for all formats. One comment indicated that this ability to search is the deciding factor: "I prefer a digital version if the text is searchable (ctrl + f), otherwise indifferent."

Overall, responses to question 16 were similar regardless of the format under consideration. A few anomalies emerged, however; the ability to annotate, highlight, and otherwise mark up a hard-copy text was also in the top five choices, with "mark-up" selected in an average of 10 percent of responses. However, "mark-up" was only chosen in 4 percent of responses for "citation manuals and style guides" and in 8 percent for "specialized reference." An average of 10 percent indicated that they preferred a print book when reading a longer passage. This was especially true for "scholarly monographs" and "edited collections," at 15 percent and 14 percent, respectively. Conversely, some respondents (an average of 3 percent) indicated they preferred e-books when reading a longer passage, especially in the case of literature (6 percent).

### **E-Reader Ownership and Format Preference**

While the responses did vary slightly across formats, the overall results show that those who own an e-book reader selected e-books as their preference more than those who do not have an e-book reader (46 percent to 32 percent), and vice versa (35 percent to 21 percent). This was most noticeable for "scholarly monographs" and "literature." For "scholarly monographs," 34 percent of those who own an e-reader preferred e-books,

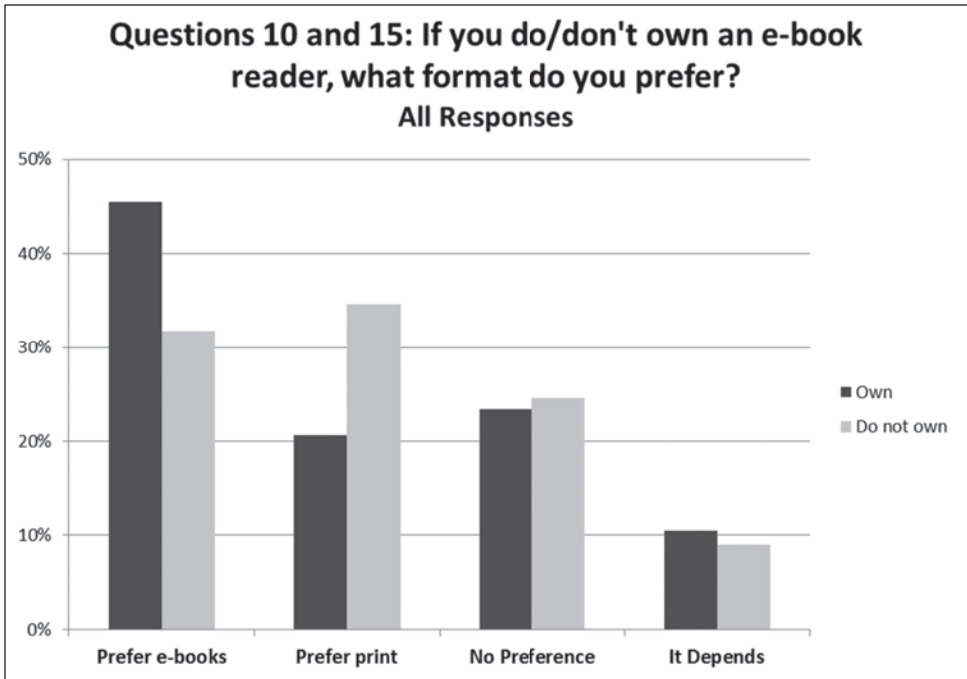


Figure 2. The formats preferred by respondents who do and who do not own an e-book reader

compared to 20 percent of those who do not. On the other hand, 48 percent of those who do not own an e-reader preferred print, compared to 33 percent of those who do. Literature was even more significant: 42 percent of those who own an e-reader favored e-books (compared to 14 percent), and 59 percent of those without an e-reader preferred print (compared to 26 percent). The responses of “it depends” and “both” did not vary based on e-reader ownership.

### Other Comments

Questions 17 and 18 were completely open-ended, giving respondents latitude to express their feelings on what would make them more likely to use e-books and any other ideas they wanted to share. In total, 861 respondents (64 percent) completed this optional open-ended question, and a number of common threads emerged. The top two responses (at 16 percent and 15 percent) were “greater availability” and “e-book reader.”<sup>21</sup> Many of those who responded explained that not enough books in their field are available as e-books.

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**Many of those who responded explained that not enough books in their field are available as e-books.**

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Many of those who indicated an e-reader would make them more likely to use e-books mentioned the difficulty of extended reading on a traditional computer screen. Another common theme among the “e-book reader” responses was that the library should make

e-readers available for check out. UMD's McKeldin Library already has an equipment loan program that offers Sony e-readers for check out by students, but those devices have not had much use. It may be that patrons are not aware they are available, which brings us to another of the top choices: "publicity / training / didn't know about e-books." Nine percent of respondents indicated they were not aware that the University of Maryland Libraries had e-books or that they did not know how to use the e-books we have.

Also figuring into the most frequently mentioned topics are "lower cost or free" and "ease of access / use," with each representing 12 percent of responses. Many respondents simply wrote "If they were free" or "If they were cheaper" with no further explanation, so it was not always apparent whether the remark referred to e-books, e-readers, or both. These comments were rather perplexing given that all our library materials, e-books included, are available at no cost to our students and faculty. The remarks about "ease of access / use" usually focused on the degree of difficulty in finding and using library e-books. The UMD Libraries (and librarians) are aware of the discoverability and access challenges, and they have created a CampusGuide to help e-book users navigate these challenges, but the infrastructure still leaves much to be desired.

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**Avoiding the size and weight of print books was frequently mentioned as an advantage of e-books, as well as their constant availability.**

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"Features" was mentioned in 9 percent of responses, because many respondents would like the ability to easily replicate their preferred methods of reading hard-copy books (for example, highlighting or annotating) when using e-books. "Convenience" and "technology improvements" round out the top choices at 5 percent and 4 percent, respectively. Avoiding the size and weight

of print books was frequently mentioned as an advantage of e-books, as well as their constant availability. In terms of technology, most complaints referenced the proliferation of unwieldy proprietary interfaces.

Other common responses were "don't like e-books / prefer print" (4 percent), "already use e-books" (2 percent), "citation" (2 percent), "depends on text" (2 percent), "no print available" (2 percent), "textbooks" (2 percent), and "work with my device" (2 percent).

Question 18 was optional and asked participants to "share any additional comments or suggestions on e-books at the University of Maryland Libraries." A total of 335 respondents (25 percent) entered a comment; many chose to answer question 18 as an extension of question 17, reiterating or expanding their answers as to what would make them more likely to use e-books. We therefore used many of the same response codes, although the quantity of those answers differed significantly between the two questions. In question 17, 15 percent indicated having an e-reader would make them more likely to use e-books, but just 2 percent entered that comment in question 18. The most frequent response for question 18 was "publicity / training / didn't know about e-books," at 16 percent, a choice that only garnered 9 percent of question 17 comments.

"Greater availability" also ranked as one of the frequent responses to question 18 at 12 percent. Similar sentiments were expressed in the question 18 comments, in that e-books are considered to be convenient and useful, but a sufficient selection is not available for many fields.



Next in line, at 9 percent, was “don’t like e-books/prefer print.” Some opinions were very negative: one graduate student in arts and humanities wrote that the UMD Libraries should “Say NO to E Books. They are an undemocratic farce and a cheap gimmick.” Another, in an excerpt from a much longer diatribe, explained:

The library, with its tangible books that you can hold in your hand, is our life-blood: indeed one might argue that without the material existence of those books, such academic areas as English will suffer dramatically reduced enrollments. The idea that our scholarship might be forced somehow to reorient itself wholly or mainly around e-books and PDFs is simply PARALYZING.

“Convenience” also came in at 9 percent of responses. Many comments identified advantages, such as e-books being easier to transport, available at any time, and never lost or checked out. Five percent indicated that it “depends on text.” Many of the reasons for this selection were explored in depth in question 16, but one faculty member in arts and humanities expanded on the answer: “As a writer, I’m partially opposed to e-books, really just for shift they bring to the book as art-object (it’s a tough transition for me). That said, I fully support use of e-books that are not intended as art, such as reference books and scholarly texts.”

Wrapping up the top five responses for question 18 was “general positive response.” Many took the opportunity to share favorable comments on the UMD Libraries in general, the survey itself, or the existing e-book offerings at the University of Maryland. Positive observations such as these validated having carried out the survey: “Thanks for pursuing this possibility. Hurrah for the UMD libraries!”

## What Affects Opinions of E-Books

A cross-tabulation of responses to questions 6 and 7 (regarding use of e-books for research and recreational reading) with those from question 17 turned up a few interesting trends. Sixty-five percent of those who use e-books for research “daily” or “at least once a week” indicated that “greater availability” would make them more likely to use e-books. Thirty-eight percent of those who use e-books for research either “once a year” or “never” said they would be more likely to use e-books if they had an e-reader. Similarly, a full 44 percent of those who use e-books either “once a year” or “never” for recreational reading said they would be more likely to use e-books if they owned an e-reader. However, only 44 percent of those who use e-books for recreational reading “daily” or “at least once a week” indicated that “greater availability” would make them more likely to use e-books, a decrease of more than 20 percentage points from the most frequent e-book users for research.

Remarkably, 24 percent of those who “never” use e-books for research and 21 percent of those who use them on a “daily” basis answered question 18 with some variation of

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**Sixty-five percent of those who use e-books for research “daily” or “at least once a week” indicated that “greater availability” would make them more likely to use e-books.**

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**Table 3.**  
Implications for collection development

Category	Finding	Action
Which collections?	The top five most popular e-book collections were EBSCO (38%), Oxford Handbooks Online (21%), Gale Virtual Reference Library (19%), Springer eBooks (8%), and ebrary (8%).	Buy e-books that are available through the EBSCO e-book collection, but keep in mind that many patrons are not aware of which collection they are using.
Scholarly monographs	The largest number of respondents (41%) preferred scholarly monographs in print. This number was highest for faculty / staff (44%) and Arts and Humanities (43%) and lowest for graduate students (40%) and Education (34%). Graduate students and Education chose "I prefer e-books" in the largest numbers, 30% and 36%, respectively.	Buy print versions of scholarly monographs. Education scholars may be more amenable to electronic versions of scholarly monographs.
Edited collections	Responses to this question were evenly split, with 32% preferring e-book and 33% preferring print. Faculty preferred print (36%) to e-book (25%), while graduate students preferred e-book (37%) to print (31%). Among the three colleges, Education stood out, preferring e-book (39%) to print (24%).	Consider buying both print and e-book versions of edited collections, at least in the near future. Again, Education scholars and graduate students may be more amenable to electronic versions.



Conference proceedings	Respondents overwhelmingly favored e-book to print for conference proceedings by a margin of more than 22% (41% print vs. 18% e-book).	Buy electronic versions of conference proceedings.
General reference	Respondents overwhelmingly favored e-book to print for general reference by a margin of 25%.	Buy electronic versions of general reference books.
Specialized reference	Respondents overwhelmingly favored e-book to print for specialized reference by a margin of 22%.	Buy electronic versions of specialized reference books.
Citation manuals and style guides	Respondents overwhelmingly favored e-book to print for citation manuals and style guides by a margin of 30%.	Buy electronic versions of citation manuals.
Literature	With the exception of Education, respondents favored print to e-book for literature by a margin of 18%. Undergraduate students and Arts and Humanities favored print by the largest margins, 23% and 24%, respectively.	Buy literature in print, except for Education scholars (although it may be that they read less literature).
E-book features	When respondents indicated that their preference for e-books or print "depended," "e-book features," such as full-text search, was a popular reason, receiving at least 13% of responses for all formats.	Buy e-books that provide these advanced features (as opposed to static, scanned PDFs, for example).
What would make patrons more likely to use e-books?	A top response to questions 17 and 18 (at 16% and 12%, respectively) was "greater availability": not enough books in the respondents' fields are available as e-books. Those who own e-readers are more likely to use and prefer e-books, and many respondents (15%) indicated in question 16 that they would be more likely to use e-books if they had an e-book reader.	Purchase more electronic versions in a wider variety of fields. Purchase e-books in collections and formats that are compatible with popular e-readers and tablets (such as Kindle, Nook, iPad).



“publicity/training/didn’t know about e-books,” showing a desire for more information even from those who are already using e-books regularly. While 10 percent of respondents who “never” use e-books for recreational reading selected “publicity/training/didn’t know about e-books,” a full 32 percent of those who use them on a daily basis chose that response. Other researchers, notably Levine-Clark, have observed this lack of awareness or desire to know more about the e-book offerings of the library.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusions

This survey generated a significant amount of data representing a wide variety of responses. Those comments varied from enthusiasm about e-books at the University of Maryland, to hesitation, to outright hostility toward e-books and the prospect of the

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### **Humanities and social sciences scholars on our campus have by no means reached a consensus regarding e-books.**

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library purchasing them instead of traditional print books. Humanities and social sciences scholars on our campus have by no means reached a consensus regarding e-books, and we suspect this may be the case on other campuses and among other disciplines as well. More time and experience using e-books for scholarly pursuits may be necessary.

One added benefit of this survey was publicity for our e-book collections. Many of the open-ended responses mentioned a lack of awareness of the UMD Libraries’ e-books,

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### **One added benefit of this survey was publicity for our e-book collections.**

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and while we are considering various approaches to provide outreach training to this user group, the survey itself went a long way toward increasing awareness.

The survey also highlighted the importance of e-reader ownership for increased e-book use (see figures 1 and 2). This finding indicates that UMD

Libraries might achieve higher e-book adoption rates if more patrons had e-readers. Since the Libraries already offer e-readers as part of the equipment loan program, providing the devices for patrons to borrow may not be sufficient to increase usage. Several responses to

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### **The survey results showed that patrons are comfortable with, or even prefer, e-books for general and specialized reference materials, citation manuals, and style guides.**

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question 17 mentioned offering cheaper e-readers for university affiliates; perhaps the UMD Libraries could partner with the technology shop on campus for such a program.

We obtained valuable information regarding users’ preference for e-books or print books based on format, which we can incorporate into our collection

development policies for these subject areas. The survey results showed that patrons are comfortable with, or even prefer, e-books for general and specialized reference materials, citation manuals, and style guides. If they have not started doing so already, subject librarians can immediately begin purchasing these materials in electronic format

exclusively. The jury is still out on edited collections, scholarly monographs, and works of literature. Subject librarians will need more conversation with their students and faculty, perhaps using this survey as a starting point, before making a wholesale shift from print to electronic formats. Finally, the dissatisfaction expressed by survey respondents with e-book platforms and technologies can contribute to librarians' conversations with e-book publishers and aggregators to build better systems.

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**The jury is still out on edited collections, scholarly monographs, and works of literature.**

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### Suggestions for Future Research

The present survey has generated a wealth of data that UMD librarians for the humanities, social sciences, and education can use to guide collection decisions. It has also created a useful benchmark, which we can employ to measure the evolution of e-book use and opinions among our faculty and students. It may be worthwhile to conduct the survey again in two to three years to see how opinions have changed, or to run the survey again targeting different user groups (for example the sciences and engineering, or the graduate-only programs in public policy and information studies). Conducting identical surveys at several peer institutions could help determine if e-book opinions vary more by institutional affiliation than by discipline or status. Because the present analysis was based on self-reported survey data only, it would also be worthwhile to conduct user interviews, perhaps combined with observation of user interactions with e-books, to compare reported with actual behavior. There is a definite need for continuing research to keep a finger on the pulse of our users' opinions of, and relationships with, e-books.

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## Appendix A

### UMD Libraries E-Books Survey

Welcome to the UMD Libraries E-books Survey. This survey is intended for faculty and students from the Colleges of Arts and Humanities, Behavioral and Social Sciences, and Education only.

The purpose of this survey is to help the Libraries gather information about how our faculty and students access and use electronic books (e-books). We also want to know more about faculty and student opinions regarding e-books. The data will help the Libraries make better decisions about how to build our book and e-book collections. All responses will be kept strictly confidential.





To thank you for participating in this survey, we will award one new (third-generation) iPad and ten Amazon.com gift cards (\$50 each) via random drawing. To be entered in the drawing, please make sure to click the link at the end of this survey and fill in your contact information.

1. \*With which college are you primarily affiliated? (Your tenure home or major)
  - College of Arts and Humanities
  - College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
  - College of Education
  - Other\*\*
  
2. \*Within your college, with which department or program are you primarily affiliated? (Your tenure home or major. Double majors, please select only one program.)  
[Drop-down list of majors]
  
3. What is your status at the University of Maryland?
  - Undergraduate student
  - Graduate student
  - Assistant professor
  - Associate professor
  - Professor
  - Instructor
  - Lecturer
  - Research affiliate
  - Other, please specify
  
4. How often do you physically enter a campus library?
  - Daily
  - At least once a week
  - At least once a month
  - At least once a semester
  - At least once a year
  - Never
  
5. How often do you access online library resources (databases, e-journals, e-books, catalog)?
  - Daily
  - At least once a week
  - At least once a month
  - At least once a semester
  - At least once a year
  - Never



## What Is an E-book?

For the purposes of this survey, an e-book (also known as ebook or digital book) is a book-length publication in digital form. E-books can be read on dedicated e-book readers (for example, Kindle or Nook), personal computers, and some mobile phones. Note that electronic journals, newspapers, and full text archives (for example, Early English Books Online) are not considered e-books for the purposes of this survey.

6. \* How often do you use e-books for research?
  - Daily
  - At least once a week
  - At least once a month
  - At least once a semester
  - At least once a year
  - Never
7. \* How often do you use e-books for recreational reading?
  - Daily
  - At least once a week
  - At least once a month
  - At least once a semester
  - At least once a year
  - Never
8. Please complete the following statement: compared to three years ago, my use of e-books for research has \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Increased
  - Stayed the same
  - Decreased
9. Please complete the following statement: compared to three years ago, my use of e-books for recreational reading has \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Increased
  - Stayed the same
  - Decreased
10. Do you own any of the following e-book readers? (Check all that apply.)
  - Libre (Aluratek)
  - Kindle (Amazon.com)
  - Nook (Barnes & Noble)
  - PocketBook
  - Sony Reader
  - I don't own an e-book reader
  - Other, please specify



11. \*What is your PRIMARY source for the e-books you use?
- Commercial site (for example, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Google eBookstore)
  - Free Web site (for example, Google Books, HathiTrust, Project Gutenberg)
  - Public library Web site
  - University of Maryland Libraries Web site
  - I don't use e-books [Skip to question 15]
  - Other, please specify
12. How do you find e-books that are available from the UMD Libraries? (Check all that apply.)
- Search the catalog
  - Search within a specific e-book collection (ebrary, EBSCO eBook Collection/ NetLibrary, Springer eBooks, Safari Books Online, etc.)
  - Search for individual books in Research Port
  - I don't use e-books from the UMD Libraries
  - Other, please specify
13. Which of the following e-book collections (available from the University of Maryland Libraries) have you used in the past year? (Check all that apply.)
- ebrary
  - EBSCO eBook Collection (formerly NetLibrary)
  - Gale Virtual Reference Library
  - Handbooks in Economics (Elsevier)
  - Oxford Handbooks Online
  - Safari Books Online
  - Springer eBooks
  - None of these
  - I've used e-books from the UMD Libraries but I don't know which collection(s)
  - Other, please specify
14. When using e-books, how often do you:  
(Choices: Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Frequently / Always)
- Download to a dedicated e-book reader (for example, Kindle or Nook)?
  - Download to a personal computer, laptop, or tablet?
  - Read online?
  - Print all or a portion of the book?

**In question 15, the formats are defined as follows:**

**Scholarly monograph:** Book-length, detailed study of a single subject, usually by a single author.



**Edited collection:** Book on a single theme with one or more editors and chapters/essays on different subjects by different authors.

**General reference:** Examples: *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *World Almanac*, *Bartlett's Quotations*, etc.

**Specialized reference:** Examples: subject encyclopedias (e.g., *Oxford Encyclopedia of Economic History*), research guides (e.g., *Literary Research Guide*), handbooks and manuals (e.g., *Merck Manuals*), etc.

**Citation manuals and style guides:** Examples: *Chicago Manual of Style*, *MLA Handbook*, *APA Publication Manual*, etc.

15. Please indicate in what format you would prefer that the UMD Libraries purchase the following types of resources:

(Choices: I prefer print / No preference / I prefer e-books / It depends)

- Scholarly monographs
- Edited collections
- Conference proceedings
- General reference
- Specialized reference
- Citation manuals and style guides
- Literature (novels, short stories, poetry, etc.)

16. If you chose "It depends" for any of the resources in Question 15, please elaborate:  
[Open-ended comments box]

17. What, if anything, would make you more likely to use e-books?  
[Open-ended comments box]

18. Please share any additional comments or suggestions on e-books at the University of Maryland Libraries.  
[Open-ended comments box]

\* Indicates mandatory question.

\*\* Respondents who chose "Other" were not permitted to continue with the survey.



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## Appendix B

### Coding for Open-Ended Questions

#### **Question 16: If you chose “It depends” for any of the resources in question 15, please elaborate:**

**Access:** Respondent prefers whichever format is easiest to access, for example, print if he or she is already in the library, but e-book if he or she is online.

**Both:** Respondent would prefer to have both formats available.

**Citations:** If the respondent expects to cite material from the book, he or she prefers print because citing e-books without page numbers can be difficult.

**Cost:** Respondent prefers whichever format is cheaper.

**Device:** Respondent’s preference depends on the availability of a title on his or her e-book reader.

**E-book features:** Respondent prefers e-book features, such as full-text search, convenience, and the like.

**E-book for scholarship:** Respondent prefers to use e-books for scholarly reading and, vice versa, would rather have print books for leisure reading.

**E-reader not required:** Respondent prefers e-books, but only if they can be read without an e-book reader.

**Formatting:** Respondent indicated that e-books were preferred if the print formatting was preserved and the e-book was error-free.

**Illustrations:** Respondent prefers print versions of books containing illustrations.

**Lack of familiarity:** Respondent was unable to make a determination due to a lack of familiarity with the type of resource or the e-book format.

**Length (in general):** Respondent indicated that the length of the resource would influence which format was chosen but did not indicate which format was preferred for any given length.

**Long passage prefer e-book / Long passage prefer print book:** Some respondents indicated they would prefer an e-book when reading lengthy passages or a full book but would rather have print when reviewing short passages. Others indicated the opposite—that is, they would rather have a print book when reading lengthy passages or a full book but would prefer an e-book when reviewing short passages.

**Mark-up:** Respondent prefers print to be able to physically mark up the text (underline, highlight, add marginal notes, and so on).

**Navigation:** Respondent indicated that it was more difficult to “flip through” an e-book to the notes or other sections, and therefore preferred print.



**Ownership:** Respondent prefers to purchase and own hard copies of some titles but would favor e-books for titles he or she does not intend to keep.

**Personal reasons:** The respondent cited a personal reason, such as mood or feeling at the time, for the selection of print versus e-book.

**Print for scholarship:** Respondent prefers to use print works for scholarly reading and, vice versa, likes e-books for leisure reading

### **Question 17: What, if anything, would make you more likely to use e-books?**

**Already use e-books:** Respondent is already using e-books for leisure reading, research, or both. For example, "I love my ebook readers and I take them everywhere"; "I use them avidly for leisure reading."

**Citation:** Respondent reported lack of page numbers, or standards for citing e-books, as a reason for not using them more. For example, "Consistency in page number[s]"; "If citation and page markings in e-books corresponded to their printed versions."

**Convenience:** Respondent indicated "Convenience" (without any further explanation), or mentioned portability of e-books, ability to access them without going to a library, or 24/7 accessibility.

**Depends on text:** Respondent indicated a willingness to use e-books for certain purposes or with certain kinds of texts. For example, "I prefer e-books for shorter passages and print for larger ones"; "I prefer only to use them for reference"; "Books that I am unlikely to read more than once, but are not being used for research purposes."

**Don't like e-books/Prefer print:** Respondent indicated a general preference for print books or a dislike of e-books, or indicated that he or she would only use e-books if there were no print equivalent available. (For example, "KEEP HARD COPIES. NO EBOOKS!!!!!!!!!!!!" or "I like holding a physical book, newsletter, article, etc. in my hands and turning the pages.")

**Ease of access/use:** Respondent indicated that e-book use would increase if electronic books were more user-friendly or declared that e-books are currently difficult to find, access, or use. For example, "If they were easy to find and access through the library website," "An incredibly friendly way to use them, more advanced than what is out now." Note: Also includes respondents who answered "Accessibility," though this response could also refer to greater availability (having larger numbers of e-books available).

**E-book reader:** Respondent would more likely use or read e-books if he or she owned an e-book reader (Kindle, Nook, or the like). Some answers mentioned iPads in obvious reference to the survey prize, for example, "If I won an iPad!"

**Environment:** Respondent indicated a preference for e-books over print books because e-books do not use paper and are therefore more "sustainable."

**Features: print/highlight/annotate/search:** Respondent would more likely use e-books for specific features, or if specific features were available. Most frequently mentioned



were the ability to easily print, to highlight text, to annotate or write in margins, and to search for specific words or phrases. Note that three of these features—highlighting, annotation, and searching—are available in existing e-book formats, while printing remains prohibited or problematic for most e-books.

**Greater availability:** Respondent indicated a wish for a greater number or wider selection of available e-books, for example, “More choices.” Also includes participants who indicated a desire for specific formats (such as “magazines,” “research articles that are peer-reviewed,” “audiobooks”) or subjects (“literary theory,” “linguistics,” “biographies,” “recreational reading,” and the like).

**Languages:** Respondent indicated a wish for greater availability of e-books in foreign languages generally, or in specific languages (such as Spanish).

**Lower cost or free:** Respondent indicated that use of e-books would increase if they were free or cheaper than the print equivalent. Note that many responses seem to conflate e-books with e-book readers and it is not always possible to tell whether the individual means “if e-books were cheaper” or “if readers were cheaper.” Other participants did not seem aware that the library lends e-books and e-book readers free of charge, for example, “E-books would be more feasible if there were not as many fees involved with using them, or if the readers were more affordable.”

**No response:** No response or unusable response, for example, “Yes”; “If they made me fly.”

**Nothing/not sure:** Respondent indicated “Nothing” or “Not sure” with no explanation.

**Plan to use them more:** Respondent indicated that he or she is currently not using e-books but has no objection to using them or will use them more in the future.

**Publicity/training/didn’t know about e-books:** Respondent indicated lack of awareness regarding library holdings of e-books, need for the UMD Libraries to do more publicity about e-book collections, or a willingness to use e-books if he or she had more knowledge of how to use them, for example, “Clear information about how to use. More publicity would help . . . I never even knew these were available.”

**Technology improvements:** Respondent mentioned specific improvements to e-book formats or readers that would make him or her more likely to use them—for example, clearer screens for less eyestrain, open formats with no restrictions on what the user can do because of digital rights management (DRM).

**Textbooks:** Respondent would more likely use e-books if more textbooks were available in e-format. Also includes participants who indicated that professors do not allow e-readers, laptops, and similar devices in the classroom, thereby inhibiting use of e-books for course texts.

**Work with my device:** Respondent would more likely use e-books if they were in a more compatible format (for example, PDF), or one that worked with a specific device (such as Kindle, Nook, iPad, or iPhone).



### **Question 18: Please share any additional comments or suggestions on e-books at the University of Maryland Libraries.**

Many respondents took this opportunity to reiterate their attitudes regarding e-books, with responses similar to those for Question 17. Therefore, we were able to use many of the same categories for the answers to Question 18. A few additional categories were required to capture all the responses:

Acceptance: Respondent prefers print but recognizes that e-books will likely become more prevalent in the future and therefore is willing to adapt.

Both: Respondent indicated that he or she would prefer to have books available in both electronic and print formats (for example, print is easier to read, but e-books are easier to search so I would like to have both options).

General positive response: Respondent expressed a favorable opinion of the UMD Libraries, their services, or the survey itself.

### **Notes**

1. Cynthia Gregory, "But I Want a Real Book": An Investigation of Undergraduates' Usage and Attitudes Toward Electronic Books," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 47, 3 (2008): 267.
2. The humanities and social sciences librarians also serve the Robert H. Smith School of Business, Philip Merrill College of Journalism, School of Public Policy, and College of Information Studies. The latter two units were considered but rejected because they are graduate-only programs. There was also a concern that library science students from the College of Information Studies would skew the survey results. Journalism and Business, along with colleges in the sciences and engineering, are under consideration for a future expansion of this study.
3. Robert Slater, "Why Aren't E-Books Gaining More Ground in Academic Libraries? E-Book Use and Perceptions: A Review of Published Literature and Research," *Journal of Web Librarianship* 4, 4 (2010): 305–31.
4. *Ibid.*, 305.
5. Linda Ashcroft, "Ebooks in Libraries: An Overview of the Current Situation," *Library Management* 32, 6–7 (2011): 398–407.
6. Ebrary, 2008 Global Student E-Book Survey (2008), [http://www.ebrary.com/corp/collateral/en/Survey/ebrary\\_student\\_survey\\_2008.pdf](http://www.ebrary.com/corp/collateral/en/Survey/ebrary_student_survey_2008.pdf).
7. Ebrary, 2007 Global Faculty E-Book Survey (2007), [http://www.ebrary.com/corp/collateral/en/Survey/ebrary\\_faculty\\_survey\\_2007.pdf](http://www.ebrary.com/corp/collateral/en/Survey/ebrary_faculty_survey_2007.pdf).
8. David Nicholas, Ian Rowlands, David Clark, Paul Huntington, Hamid R. Jamali, and Candela Ollé, "UK Scholarly E-Book Usage: A Landmark Survey," *Aslib Proceedings* 60, 4 (2008): 311–34.
9. Hamid R. Jamali, David Nicholas, and Ian Rowlands, "Scholarly E-Books: The Views of 16,000 Academics: Results from the JISC National E-Book Observatory," *Aslib Proceedings* 61, 1 (2009): 33–47.
10. Michael Levine-Clark, "Electronic Book Usage: A Survey at the University of Denver," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 6, 3 (July 2006): 285–99.
11. Levine-Clark, "Electronic Book Usage," 285–99.
12. Rowlands, Nicholas, Jamali, and Huntington, "What Do Faculty and Students Really Think About E-Books?" 494–95, 497.
13. Levine-Clark, "Electronic Book Usage," 285.





14. Levine-Clark, "Electronic Books and the Humanities."
15. Gregory, "But I Want a Real Book," 266–73; Abdullah Noorhidawati and Forbes Gibb, "How Students Use E-Books—Reading or Referring?" *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science* 13, 2 (2008): 1–14; Edward Walton, "From the ACRL 13th National Conference: E-Book Use Versus Users' Perspective," *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 14, 4 (2008): 19–35.
16. Leticia Camacho and Andy Spackman, "Transitioning to E-Books: Usage and Attitudes Among Business Faculty," *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship* 16, 1 (2011): 33–45; Jody Bales Foote and Karen Rupp-Serrano, "Exploring E-Book Usage Among Faculty and Graduate Students in the Geosciences: Results of a Small Survey and Focus Group Approach," *Science & Technology Libraries* 29, no. 3 (2010): 216–34; K. T. Anuradha and H. S. Usha, "Use of E-Books in an Academic and Research Environment: A Case Study from the Indian Institute of Science," *Program: Electronic Library and Information Systems* 40, 1 (2006): 48–62; James Bierman, Lina Ortega, and Karen Rupp-Serrano, "E-Book Usage in Pure and Applied Sciences," *Science & Technology Libraries* 29, 1–2 (2010): 69–91; Rajiv Nariani, "E-Books in the Sciences: If We Buy It Will They Use It?" *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship* 59 (Fall 2009); Heting Chu, "Electronic Books: Viewpoints from Users and Potential Users," *Library Hi Tech* 21, 3 (2003): 340–46.
17. Rowlands, Nicholas, Jamali, and Huntington, "What Do Faculty and Students Really Think About E-Books?" 492.
18. When possible, responses under "Other (please specify)" were tallied under the other options. For example, two respondents each named iBooks and iTunes, which we coded as commercial Web sites. Four responses could not be recoded and were left as "Other:" (1) scanned books [2 responses], (2) Calibre software [1 response]; (3) iPhone [1 response]; and (4) borrowed from family member [1 response].
19. Percentages for questions 12 and 13 reflect the proportion of the total number of responses to this question, not the proportion of respondents, because respondents could check more than one answer.
20. Timothy Lincoln, "Reading and E-Reading for Academic Work: Patterns and Preferences in Theological Studies and Religion," *Theological Librarianship* 6, 2 (2013): 34–52.
21. In questions 17 and 18, some comments included more than one concept and were therefore coded as multiple responses. See Appendix B for code definitions.
22. Levine-Clark, "Electronic Book Usage," 297.