

## 2004 Faculty Survey on the University Library Narrative Overview

In early 2004 the University of Virginia Library asked full-time instructional and research faculty to fill out a comprehensive library survey. This faculty survey, the fourth in a series starting in 1993, is an important part of the library's continuing effort to obtain reliable, objective information from its clientele. The survey request went to 886 faculty members; 520 (59%) completed the survey.

### Overall Satisfaction and Customer Service Ratings

University faculty gave an overall satisfaction rating to their primary library (the library they use the most) and to the library system as a whole. They also rated three elements relating to customer service.

Overall ratings (on a 1 to 5 scale) were high:

Primary library	4.35
The system as a whole	4.20

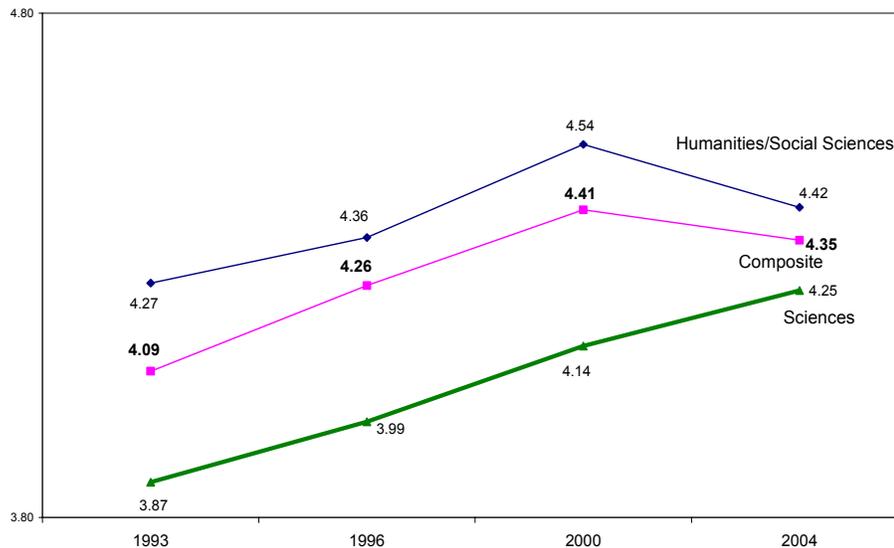
Customer service ratings were very high:

Speed of Service	4.50
Competence of Staff	4.58
Courtesy of Staff	4.73

### Comparison with Previous Surveys

Overall satisfaction ratings have trended upward since 1993. Ratings of science faculty have consistently risen, but humanities/social sciences show some fluctuation. The gap between science and humanities/social sciences faculty is less than half as large as in 1993.

**Overall Satisfaction**



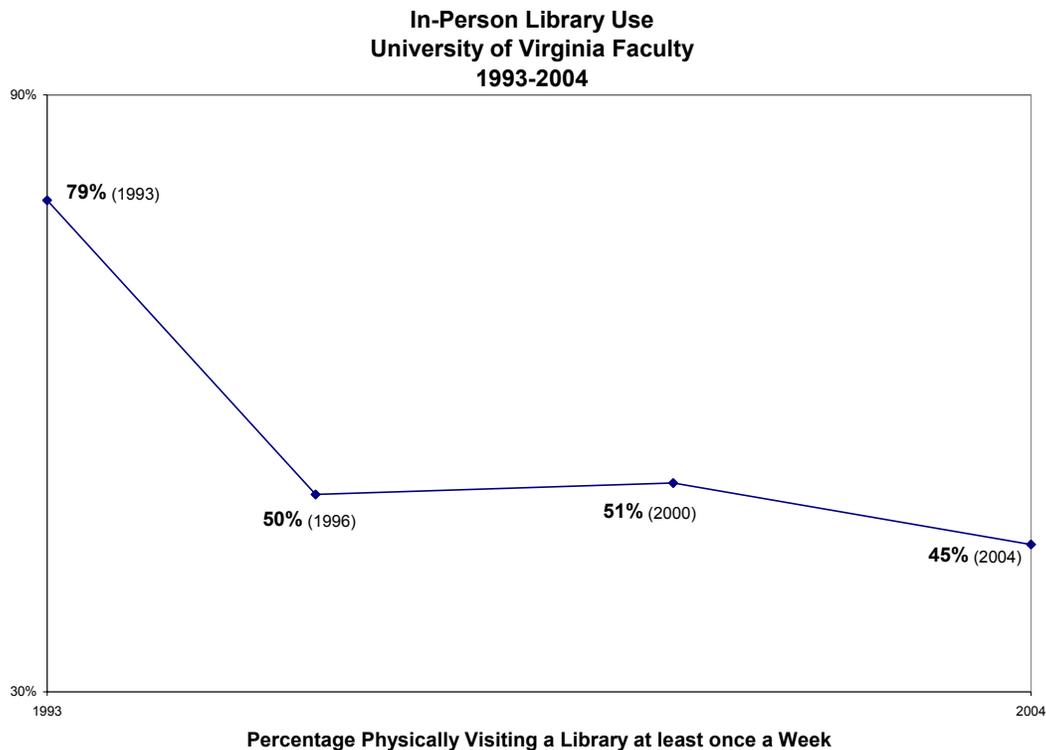
## Frequency of Library Use

The survey asked how often faculty use library services.

91% used a library resource or service at least once a week.

45% physically visited a library at least once a week.

While faculty continue to rely heavily on library resources and services, more and more they are doing so from their office or home. The number visiting a library in person has declined sharply since 1993.



## Priorities for the Library

When faculty were asked to select their highest priorities for the Library, the top results, and the percentage marking each selection, were the following:

Books	61%
Electronic Journals	49%
Interlibrary Loan/ LEO Document Delivery	35%
Electronic Reference and Indexing Sources	31%
Print Journals	27%

No other item was selected by more than 11% of the respondents.

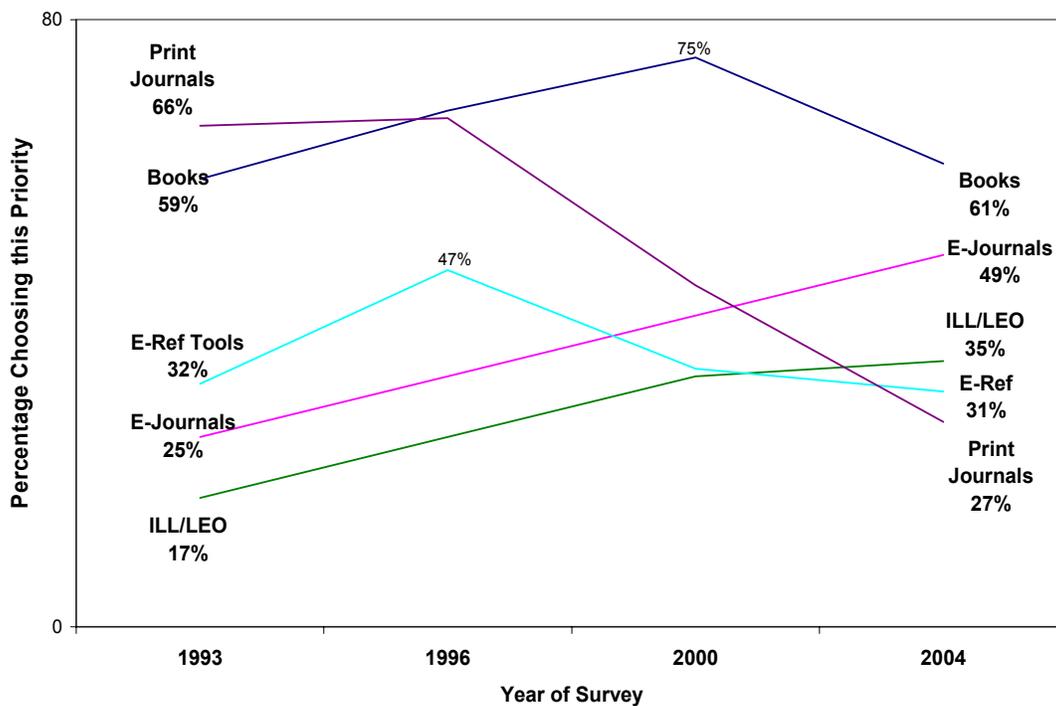
When we examine the data more closely, we find the priorities varied greatly among the schools and departments of the University. What is very important in one department may be

unimportant in another, and the top priority in a given department may rank low in the overall tally. For example, books were selected by 100% of faculty in the Classics department, and by over 85% of faculty in History, Religious Studies, English, Philosophy, and Mathematics. At the other end of the scale only 18% of Biology faculty named books as a priority. Thus it is important to examine the specific priorities for each department.

The University Library has conducted four faculty surveys from 1993 to 2004. In each of these surveys, faculty were asked to name their top three priorities. The top five priorities of 2004 were all given ratings in 1993, allowing us to compare faculty priorities then and now.

Print journals, the top priority in 1993, has fallen from 66% to 27%. Electronic journals have moved the opposite direction, going from 25% to 49%. Books were almost unchanged, moving from 59% to 61%, after peaking at 75% in 2000. E-reference hit a peak in 1996 at 47%, but is now at 31%, very close to its 1993 level. The rating of ILL/LEO has doubled, from 17% to 35%.

**Faculty Surveys 1993-2004**  
**University of Virginia Library**  
**Top Priorities**



## Journal Format

The survey asked faculty to state their format preference, if journals were available in both print and electronic forms. The results were clear:

Prefer Electronic Journals	58%
Prefer Print Journals	29%
No Preference	13%

However, results varied greatly across academic units. Over two thirds of the respondents in the Slavic, German, Art, and French departments expressed a preference for print journals, while 100% of the respondents in Biology, Economics, and Statistics preferred electronic journals.

## Ratings of Individual Services

The survey asks respondents to rate (on a 1 to 5 scale) a number of library activities, services, resources, and facilities. When the results were tallied, each item received two scores. One score is a mean rating calculated using the 1 to 5 scale. This figure indicates the level of **satisfaction** with the particular item. The other score is the number of people who rated the item on the 1 to 5 scale; this figure, the number of respondents who had an opinion about the item, indicates the **visibility** or impact of the particular item.

The highest satisfaction/high visibility items were:

	Rating	Visibility
Requesting items through Interlibrary Loan/LEO	4.60	84%
Renewing Library materials	4.59	65%
Checking out Library materials	4.57	76%
Answering questions by phone, email, in person	4.55	79%

Items with the lowest ratings and high visibility were:

Study and research space	3.10	51%
Photocopiers	3.44	59%
Conference proceedings	3.53	50%
Print journals	3.78	91%

## Open Ended Comments

Faculty were given the opportunity to make comments about the Library. The answers to two open ended questions provide some insight into faculty views of the University Library.

*In your opinion, what is the greatest strength of the University Library?*

Some 30% of the respondents named the library staff in answering this question. The collections, the electronic resources, and LEO were also mentioned frequently.

Some representative answers:

“The industriousness of the staff and their willingness to cooperate on any sorts of special requests.”  
“the range of materials and the splendid staff”  
“the competence and professionalism of library staff”  
“great staff, and forward-looking approach to e-collections”  
“besides its great historical holdings, user friendly attitude of staff”

*In your opinion, what could the University Library do to improve its services?*

Answers to this question were widely scattered. The most frequent comments concerned expanding and improving collections, both traditional and electronic. Other respondents asked for retention of print journals, better study and research space, more library funding, and VIRGO improvement.

Some examples:

“keep print collections...especially magazines and journals”  
“More electronic services”  
“More space for study, conversation, work”  
“Improve Virgo; it's very obtuse.”  
“deepen collections, esp. in current printed monographs”  
“accelerate the move to electronic resources”  
“bludgeon the general assembly to provide more generous funding”

### **Continuing to Serve a Diverse Constituency**

The results of the survey make clear the faculty are, on the whole, very satisfied with their library services. The results also indicate considerable movement toward electronic resources and remote services, and away from in-person use of traditional materials. These overall results are very important; they show the Library is performing well and moving in the right directions.

To maintain or increase the level of satisfaction, the Library should go beyond the overall results. University faculty are a very diverse lot, with widely varying needs, interests, and preferences. In analyzing the survey data, we need to take a ‘granular’ approach, studying the results from each academic unit, determining the needs and wants of that particular constituency. Only when we have those details in hand, will we be able to fully use the data that have been provided by hundreds of survey respondents.