Purpose

The Government Information Services Team has been charged by the University Library to "review current government information programs...and develop a plan to improve the effectiveness of service to users." In order to achieve this, the Team coordinated focus group and email interviews in order to obtain information about how faculty, academic staff and graduate students use materials published and disseminated by governments, intergovernmental organizations (e.g., the United Nations), and nongovernmental organizations (e.g., Human Rights Watch, the Red Cross) in research and teaching. The information gathered will inform the further development of library services to support these scholarly needs. Results will be given to the University Librarian, members of the Government Information Services Team, and may be disseminated on Campus, at professional meetings and in professional publications.

Participants and Methods

In May 2009, Forty-four faculty, academic staff and graduate students who use government information in their teaching and research were sent emails inviting them to participate in one of two focus group sessions hosted by members of the Government Information Services Team at the University Library. Known or likely users of government information were identified by referrals and by reviewing publicly available CVs, faculty webpages, publications, and class syllabi.

In addition, the invitation was forwarded to the following departments, for distribution to their faculty and graduate student email lists: Education, Illinois Natural History Survey, Agriculture and Consumer Economics, Social Work, Urban Planning, History, Finance, Economics, Kinesiology and Community Health, Human and Community Development, College of Media, Political Science, Sociology, Landscape Architecture, Institute of Aviation, Labor and Employment Relations, Afro-American Studies and Research Program, Gender and Women's Studies, Geography, and Geology.

The invitation explained the purpose of the focus group and individuals were informed that they could also participate by email if unable to attend a session. A printable letter and flyer were attached to the email to provide a reminder of the date and place of the session and as an additional prompt for following up to participate. Hard copies of the invitation were also sent through campus mail approximately one week after the initial email invitation.

Eight people provided input. Three of these individuals participated in a focus group session held on May 22, 2009 and the remainder responded to the same questions via an email survey. The respondents come from a broad range of backgrounds that include the sciences (aerospace
engineering), the humanities (history), social sciences (political science) and the College of ACES/Extension:

- Aerospace Engineer, Research Park
- Academic Professional, Office of Extension
- Adjunct Assistant Professor, Political Science
- Associate Professor, History
- Extension Specialist, Human & Community Development
- Assistant Professor, Curriculum and Instruction
- Professor, History
- Associate Professor, Agriculture and Consumer Economics

**Themes from the Focus Group and Survey Responses**

**Research/Teaching Needs**

All participants said that they used government information in their activities. Almost all participants (6 of 8) used government information for their research and teaching needs. Although all participants used government information in their research and/or teaching needs, their needs varied considerably based on their disciplines (E.g., patents, creation of law, school reform, etc.).

**General Usage**

Almost all participants (7 of 8) reported that they started their government documents research on the Internet, turning to agency websites for information. One participant reported being “chained” to his office to describe why he used the web vs. the library. Websites visited, however, varied, according again to discipline (E.g., the Census website, the NASA website, the National Center for Education Statistics website, etc.).

All of the email respondents (5 of 5) said that they used legislative materials and most (3 of 5) said that they also use data and judicial opinions. In the focus group, one of the participants explicitly mentioned using legislative materials two used data sets.

**Service Expectations: Medium of Communication**

The majority of participants (5 of 8) prefer to call the Library if they have a reference question. Some, however, would also visit the Library (3 of 8), or instant message the Library (2 of 8). Only one participant would use the Library website to contact the Library. Coincidently, one participant described the Main Library website as a “wasteland” that annoys him and that he screams at the website every time he goes there.
Service Expectations: Delay & Follow Up

Almost all participants in the email survey (4 of 5) reported that they thought that waiting one to two days for an answer from the library was reasonable. The same number of individuals indicated they were comfortable being contacted by email or via IM. At least 2 participants in the focus group thought that the wait was reasonable. At least 1 participant thought that follow-up by email was helpful and effective means of communicating with librarians about the research question.

Service Expectations: Hours

In reference to a personal research scenario, many participants (5 of 8) were not sure whether they would drop by or contact a library specialist for an in-depth inquiry if they had office hours on Thursday afternoon. As to why, one participant said that dropping by was difficult. Another said that it would depend on how important the question was to his work.

In reference to a teaching scenario for their students, however, almost half (3 of 7; one of the 8 respondents does not teach) of the participants with teaching responsibilities did think that announced hours for when library staff are available on a drop in basis for one-on-one consulting in the Main Library was a good idea. One participant wanted the hours put on a webpage so his students could see when help is offered.

Research-based Challenges & Service Expectations: Expert Assistance

All participants said that finding relevant information was challenging in some way. Some had problems with “poorly designed websites” because they had to “sort through pages and pages” or “layers of a website.” Others questioned what the most helpful resources were or whether all the resources had been exhausted.

Librarians are seen as expert guides in this challenging landscape. One participant noted that, “A librarian is an important resource when this is the situation.” Another participant said, “I would like to be able to call somebody or email somebody and have them find what I need.”

Instruction-based Challenges & Service Expectations: Expert Assistance

Most participants who teach (5 of 7) said their students have difficulty using government information (One of the eight participants does not teach). One participant said, “Students need to learn how to manage information.” The same participant said, “The problem is finding what they need and pulling that out from a stack of information.” Another participant said, “Students have information discerning government sites...(and) are not able to come up with a concise summary unless I direct them to particular links.”

Probably the most disturbing comments are related to student workers at the library. One participant said that he was not comfortable with the answers from graduate students and that
other people in his department agree with him. Students of the same participant were allegedly
told to “get lost” when they went to a certain departmental library. Students of another
participant said that student workers had no time for them and weren’t helpful (not clear if
they were graduate assistants or student assistants).

In contrast, many participants and their students only had glowing words for librarians. One
participant said, “I was amazed librarians can find things in ten seconds flat when it took me
thirty minutes and I didn’t find it.” Three other participants described specific librarians that
significantly help them with their research or instruction needs.

This phenomenon is strange because if the faculty and the students appreciate the reference
services that the librarians provide so much, why are there problems with these other services
that are managed by librarians? This disconnect should be explored further. Possible solutions
include better training for students and for librarians in units dealing with government
information, in both basic customer service and in the specific skills required to navigate
government information. It also suggests the need for more effective referrals, people with
questions that can’t be answered on the spot can and should be connected to reference staff
who have the necessary expertise to assist them. The Information Desk in the Main Library is
the primary service point staffed by government information specialists. At this service point,
a few simple steps might help build trust in graduate students as reference providers: 1) a
program of training and ongoing feedback to graduate assistants on effective approaches to
answering inquiries involving government information sources; and 2) targeted hiring of
applicants with an interest and aptitude for navigating government information sources.

Implications for Library Services

Creating Web-based Tools

Many participants said they would welcome web-based tutorials (6 of 8). They seemed to be
most enthusiastic about ones that covered specific resources that could be customized and
linked to their webpage. Some participants said they were in favor of a web tutorial on finding
government information (2 of 5 in the email survey). There were also mixed responses as to the
interest in customized, interactive tools designed to help students explore the problem space.
Participants with the least interest in the technology could not see the application to their field.
Participants with the most interest in the technology were those with students who had
problems doing research by themselves.

Increasing web-based tutorials can be done in a number of ways. Currently, a number of
libraries produce LibGuides and other online training documentation. The Library can
encourage the creation of different online guides and better advertise these services to their
patrons. In order to be most effect, these tutorials should address the specific patron needs.
Increasing Access to Digitized Materials

All the participants in the focus group section were quite vocal about storage and access issues. Participants were quite excited about the prospect of having past and current government information available online and more readily accessible, but there were some concerns expressed about documents vanishing or being altered on the web.

Improving Library Instruction

Almost all of the participants (4 of 5) in the email survey said they liked visits by a librarian to the classroom (again, 1 participant did not have students). One participant mentioned how important “direct contact” was. Some participants (3) were not as excited about their class visiting a smart classroom in the Main Library because of the large size of their class (the fact that their students don’t know the Library well enough, or simply because it did not work in the past.

Improving Reference Services

Participants seem to appreciate the reference services that they receive, and preferentially seek out experienced librarians when they need help finding government information. Concerns were expressed about undergraduate and graduate student workers, which suggests a need for more effective referrals and for better training of frontline workers at all service points.
Appendix 1: Focus Group Script

Government Information Services Team, University Library
Spring 2009

Purpose: In this focused group interview we will ask you about your use of government information in research and teaching, which will inform the further development of library services to support these scholarly needs.

Consent Form: [Distribute, review, and ask all to sign] Participation is voluntary, your identity will remain confidential, and you are free to leave at any time. We will be recording the session, but ask that the recorder be turned off at any point.

Questions [Start with 1-2. The order of the remaining questions (some may be skipped if they have been previously addressed)]

1. Ask participants to briefly describe their research and teaching interests.

2. We’d like to know more about how you use materials published and disseminated by governments, intergovernmental organizations (e.g., the United Nations), and nongovernmental organizations (e.g., Human Rights Watch, the Red Cross) in your research, teaching and outreach activities.

Officially, a government publication or government information is published at government expense, or as required by law. Government information sources include legislative material, judicial opinions, regulations, reports, and statistics (e.g., census and economic data).

a. Do you use government information in your
   i. Research?
   ii. Teaching
   iii. Service/outreach activities?

b. What types of materials do you use? [Allow time for open-ended responses, then prompt with these examples]:
   i. technical reports, agency reports, etc.
   ii. websites
   iii. data (raw datasets or descriptive statistics)
   iv. legislative material
   v. judicial opinions
   vi. regulations

c. When looking for these materials, where do you start?

d. What are the challenges you have in finding and using these materials?
3. If you had a magic wand, what would you do to improve the process of finding and using these materials? …OR …given the technologies we now have (or may soon have), what would you do to improve the process of finding and using government information?

4. **Research Scenario**

You are working on a project and need some data (e.g., How many plastic grocery bags are used each year in the U.S.? How many of these are recycled? [or something more pertinent to the research interests of the particular focus group participants]). You think this is probably readily available, but aren't sure where to find it.

   a. Where would you start looking?

   b. Would you contact the University Library?

   c. How? (phone, library website, IM, in person?)

   d. If you contacted the Library, and they indicated that they might need 1-2 days to answer the question, would that be acceptable?

   e. If they told you the specialist in that area had office hours on Thursday afternoons, would you be willing to drop by or contact that person to get help with an in-depth inquiry?

   f. Have a specialist follow-up on email or via IM?

5. **Teaching Scenario**

Think of a challenge your students have faced when using government information (e.g. technical reports, legislative information or census/economic/other data), for an assignment.

   a. Briefly describe the assignment and the challenges students faced.

   b. What sort of assistance would have been helpful from the Library? [Allow time for open-ended responses, then prompt with these examples]:

      i. Modular web-based tutorials covering specific resources, and topics that can pulled into the instructor’s courseware (cafeteria style) Could also involve collaborating with a librarian who creates a customized "module" that can be pulled in for a specific course

      ii. A web-based guide to finding government information, with sections on types of resources and strategies for discovering and using them e.g.,

          http://www.library.uiuc.edu/doc/ [Click on “government Information Guides” under “Research Tools” on right]
iii. Visits by a librarian to the classroom (specify either a series of 10-minute presentations on specific topics or a one-shot 60-minute session covering multiple sources and search strategies)

iv. Visits by the class to a smart classroom in the Main Library

v. Regular, announced hours when library staff are available on a drop-in basis for one-on-one consultation in the Main Library

vi. Customized, interactive tools designed to help students explore the problem space (e.g. Mehta's (2006) *US Presidential Speeches Tag Cloud* `<chir.ag/projects/preztags/>`)
Appendix 2: Focus Group Summary

Government Information Services Team, University Library
May 22, 2009

1. Research and teaching interests:

   Political science professor– Research use is inconsequential. Teaching use is extensive. Look at federalist papers, Supreme Court decisions, follow bill as it becomes a law, look of evolution of court case through legal system, follow progress of regulation, etc. Full range of American gov docs. More current info and reports. Some state, no international. Use nongovernmental organization info much often. Most of students access this info through the web.

   History professor – Research centers on WWII homefront and on other public policy issues, use Congressional hearings and reports and record, newsletters for local mobilization efforts and collections of polls and surveys the government took to guide policy. Teaching focuses on public policy and sometimes civil liberties, war and society. For war and society, depend on students using gov docs. They use gov docs for research papers. Mostly focus on US gov docs. Another use is in terms of readers he puts together for students. Historical docs. Should be more transnational component to what he does, but his own limitations prevent this. Hope his students compare US policy to other countries. He sends students to Gov Docs to help them figure out what hearing they might use and sometimes goes with them.

2. How people use materials published and disseminated by governments, intergovernmental organizations (e.g., the United Nations), and nongovernmental organizations (e.g., Human Rights Watch, the Red Cross) in research, teaching and outreach activities.

   What types of materials do you use?

   • websites – CIS Congressional Universe – Political science professor’s students use this all the time. Does this count as legislative materials? Better than THOMAS. Political science professor said students look at GAO reports and agency reports available on the web. History professor said students in seminar tend to use more cultural history projects and they do not use docs for central research. CRS report is good examples.

   • data (raw datasets or descriptive statistics) - Political science professor’s students use these, but usually not from government sources, instead Roper polls, etc. He doubts his 101 students would know how to use raw data sets. He doesn’t expect them to do this. Aerospace engineer said he goes to NIST website to find data from report and also data sets for chemicals and molecules. He uses that with some regularity.
• regulations - Political science professor said students also look at Federal Register too. If we could get Supreme Court briefs, his students would use those too. Harder to get this information.

When looking for these materials, where do you start?

• Political science professor tells students to start with Congressional Quarterly Almanac because they need to write a paper on a bill becoming a law. Can look there to see what actually became a law and then work backwards.

• Aerospace engineer goes right to online websites – such as NIST. With patents, go through the University Library. For NASA, he finds the NASA website isn’t too informative with reports, but is showy. Thinks it’s best to talk to someone in the library to see if they can help find it directly.

• History professor works mostly with what he has, but normally goes to the stacks. He doesn’t use the web as intelligently as he should to take advantage of sources. For his students, he tells them to go see the Gov Docs librarian.

What are the challenges you have in finding and using these materials?

• Things not being available is a core problem.

• Gov docs is its own world and History professor says it’s not easy stuff to use. It confuses his students. History professor sometimes goes to the library with students or they will call him at night when no librarian is available. Students are used to going to the OPAC to track down sources, but that doesn’t work for gov docs. It’s a wonderful thing this library provides help tracking these things down. He wants to find this report and then they move around the stacks and he can’t find them. Then no one knows where it is and people direct him to other people who can’t help. Political science professor said he feels History professor’s pain.

• Using the materials is hard because Political science professor is chained to his office. If it’s not on the web, it’s hard for him to get to the library.

• Aerospace engineer said digitization of documents is important. It makes it more accessible.

• Political science professor concerned about documents being on the web and then disappearing or being altered. Scott Althouse (sp?), a colleague, has started writing about this issue and taught a course on it, especially White House documents.

• History professor said people doing dissertation research find that documents vanish or facilities closed – post 9/11. Political science professor agrees it’s an issue, but not necessarily a library issue.
3. If you had a magic wand, what would you do to improve the process of finding and using these materials? ...OR ...given the technologies we now have (or may soon have), what would you do to improve the process of finding and using government information?

- Aerospace engineer said digitizing would be the biggest thing for him.

- History professor considers himself lucky to have a University where there are people who are able to help guide students and making documents accessible. Said it’s also a separate digital world and being able to send his students to someone who understands is important. Aerospace engineer agrees because some things are tricky to find and having a specialist available is very important.

- Political science professor said archiving of past documents is important. One other issue is accessing particularly spatial or quantitative information is difficult and file formats are difficult. Sometimes you can manipulate online, but not important into own software. Common data problems.

- Aerospace engineer said digitization is great, but get locked into phone menu system. Need to press 0 to get help. Still need hard documents because there are changes and if everything’s digital then real original document might disappear.

- Political science professor said digital information isn’t the same as walking into the stacks. Can’t collocate like you can in the stacks. Hard to do with digital.

4. Research Scenario

Where would you start looking?

- Did not talk about specifically.

Would you contact the University Library?

- Did not talk about specifically.

How? (phone, library website, IM, in person?)

- Political science professor said he would use phone to access experts. Library website is a wasteland – Main Library website. Annoys him. Every time he goes there, he screams at it. Can’t find what he wants. It takes too long. Has sent emails in the past, but doesn’t get an answer.

- Aerospace engineer said they use phone, website, and in person. Use website first, then phone, then in person. Never used IM before. Might be useful for modern core of students, but not for his questions. Seems fraught with problems.
History professor said he’s more likely to visit in person. Has had students use website to find indexes, such as HPNL website. Said history is very lucky to have Mary Stuart to talk with his students and prepare overview of sources for students. This is more than he can do and helpful for students to refer to later. Likes that this is also accessible from library website.

Political science professor said who the person is matters to him – built in advantage because he married a librarian. Graduate students are fine to help with 101 papers, but he’s not comfortable with answers from graduate students. He said students express satisfaction with help they receive. He’s not comfortable that he’s received the right answer from a graduate student. Other people in his department agree. Several years ago he had students go to Law school and he said they were told to get lost.

Aerospace engineer and History professor said students have received better help from professionals. History professor said students will say to him that GAs had no time for them and weren’t helpful. He recognizes it could have been the student and not GA. Political science professor said students have asked librarians for help and also had wonderful things to say. Aerospace engineer is amazed librarians can find things in 10 seconds flat when it took him 30 minutes and he didn’t find it.

If you contacted the Library, and they indicated that they might need 1-2 days to answer the question, would that be acceptable?

Aerospace engineer and political science professor said 1-2 days for an answer is reasonable.

If they told you the specialist in that area had office hours on Thursday afternoons, would you be willing to drop by or contact that person to get help with an in-depth inquiry?

Aerospace engineer said this would be disappointing because they should be available at least 4 hours a day – something predictable. Important to have regularity during the week.

Political science professor said dropping by is difficult, but follow up by email is fine.

Have a specialist follow-up on email or via IM?

Aerospace engineer doesn’t like IM, but email is good. No problem with email and would like document sent as PDF (if small doc).

History professor said he would rarely need gov docs for own research, so as long as he has access in some way, that’s sufficient. Does not consider himself the model that we should build on. He knows there are others who need help and need a predictable time to access help.
3. Teaching Scenario

Briefly describe the assignment and the challenges students faced.

- Political science professor said students don’t know what they want, don’t know what they have once they found it. The problem is finding what they need and pulling that out from a stack of information. Said one student commented he had enough info for a 30 page paper, too much for a 5 page paper. Said students need to learn how to manage information and should pick a small bill – not the credit card reform bill.

- History professor said everything Political science professor described is a problem he has encountered. When he has students do that, he only has 13-15 students, so he will bring document back to explain that. Students need help analyzing, but in a seminar he can help students do this. Guidance is important. It’s unfamiliar to students.

- Political science professor said graduate students may be better to help students because they are closer to their level. May look to them for suggestions more readily than more mature librarians.

- Political science professor would welcome GAs to help undergrad students make good choices.

What sort of assistance would have been helpful from the Library

web-based tutorials

- History professor said print and web bibliographies are helpful.

- Political science professor not used a web-based tutorial, but would welcome it. No such thing has been made he said.

Visits by a librarian to the classroom / Visits by the class to a smart classroom in the Main Library

- Political science professor said it’s not a possibility for him to bring a class to the library – too large. This is what History professor does because he has smaller classes.

Regular, announced hours when library staff are available on a drop-in basis for one-on-one consultation in the Main Library

- Political science professor would put it on the webpage so students can see when help is available.

Customized, interactive tools designed to help students explore the problem space (e.g. Mehta's (2006) US Presidential Speeches Tag Cloud <chir.ag/projects/preztags/>)

- Political science professor said he’s never suggested a student use something like this, but think it’s fascinating. He wouldn’t want librarians to work on this for him.
• Aerospace engineer doesn’t see the utility for his field. History professor agrees.

• Political science professor doesn’t think tools like would be useful for his needs necessarily.

• History professor said this may be one resource for students to explore and talk about what it means.

Political science professor said he would be willing to make copies of assignments to give to library ahead of time. Beth said she could talk with GAs ahead of time to let them know how they can best help.

Mary asked how Aerospace engineer accessed DTIC – as a defense contractor, they have access to it. They deal with them directly. Mary said she will look into this for the University Library to have wider access. Mary said the government is trying to digitize legacy collection and the LOC is digitizing things as well. Also mentioned CIC digitalization. Mary asked Aerospace engineer how he would feel about browsing if part of collection went offsite if it’s all digitized. Aerospace engineer said he’s not opposed as long as it’s accessible. Political science professor he’s also fine with it, as long as it’s accessible. Aerospace engineer thinks it would be good for Bill Gates to digitize things.

Aerospace engineer wants recent and older things digitized. He works with rocket nozzle technologies and wants to be able to look back at older documents to compare to recent things. Said that era of scientist has retired or died so creating rockets as good as Apollo era is hard. Nice to have access to older docs too.

Mary asked about combining online guides/tutorials into course management software. Political science professor said he would be surprised if the library would make a course specific tutorial because it’s time consuming. But he would link to it if it exists.
Appendix 3: Compilation of Email Responses

Use of Government Information in Teaching and Research Survey Notes
Government Information Services Team, University Library
Spring 2009

Questions

6. Briefly describe your research and teaching interests:

   Economics professor-Researches demographic issues. Interested in household decisions about children’s schooling and child labor and in international nurse migration.

   Director of an extension program. Also a chair of a collaborative partnership in Illinois that focuses on government officials and specific issues, such as alternative energy, broadband, solid waste planning, etc.


   Education professor- Concerned with school reform and policy and teachers’ professional learning specifically related to mathematics education.

   Project manager within extension program- Dedicated to providing project assistance to communities and organizations that have an applied research component – usually defined by data collection and analysis, either primary or secondary data. Has a charge to build capacity within Extension by providing training to professional staff to increase the skill level in areas that can contribute to such projects – survey design, SPSS, secondary data identification and manipulation, and so on.

7. We’d like to know more about how you use materials published and disseminated by governments, intergovernmental organizations (e.g., the United Nations), and nongovernmental organizations (e.g., Human Rights Watch, the Red Cross) in your research, teaching and outreach activities.

   e. Do you use government information in your research, teaching, service/outreach activities?

      ___Yes

      ___No  (If you answered “No,” please skip remaining questions and return survey)

      • Economics professor-Yes.
      • Director of an extension program/chair-Yes.
      • History professor-Yes.
• Education professor-Yes.
• Project manager within extension program-Yes.

f. What types of materials do you use? (Circle all that apply)

i. technical reports, agency reports, etc.
• Economics professor-Yes.
• Director of an extension program/chair-Yes.
• History professor-Yes.
• Education professor-Yes.
• Project manager within extension program-Yes.

ii. websites
• Economics professor-Yes.
• Director of an extension program/chair-Yes.
• History professor-Yes.
• Education professor-Yes.
• Project manager within extension program-Yes.

iii. data (raw datasets or descriptive statistics)
• Economics professor-Yes.
• Director of an extension program/chair-Yes.
• History professor-No.
• Education professor-No.
• Project manager within extension program-Yes.

iv. legislative material
• Economics professor-Yes.
• Director of an extension program/chair-Yes, occasionally
• History professor-Yes.
• Education professor-Yes.
• Project manager within extension program-Yes.

v. judicial opinions
• Economics professor-No.
• Director of an extension program/chair-No.
• History professor-Yes.
• Education professor-Yes.
• Project manager within extension program-Yes.

vi. regulations
• Economics professor-Yes.
• Director of an extension program/chair-Yes.
• History professor-No.
• Education professor-Yes.
• Project manager within extension program-Yes.

g. When looking for these materials, where do you start?

• Economics professor-Google, and then he usually goes to an agency’s website (The Census, USDA, Bureau of Labor Statistics, World Bank, UN, etc.).

• Director of an extension program/chair- Online, using agency websites, association websites, etc.

• History professor-Increasingly with agency and NGO websites. He uses indexes less than in the past.

• Education professor-He starts with the Internet for well known statistics such as the National Center for Education Statistics.

• Project manager within extension program-Almost always the Internet.

h. What are the challenges you have in finding and using these materials?

• Economics professor-Poorly designed websites, difficulty in finding the exact piece of information that he is looking for.

• Director of an extension program/chair- Time. Determining the most helpful resources.

• History professor- Questions whether he has found all relevant information. Questions whether search engines are reliable.
• Education professor-The significant challenge is being sure that he has exhausted all resources known to him when he finds little or nothing that he is looking for. A librarian is an important resource when this is the situation.

• Project manager within extension program- Sorting through pages and pages, finding the best source, dead links.

8. If you had a magic wand, what would you do to improve the process of finding and using these materials?

• Economics professor- He would like to be able to call somebody or email somebody and have them find what he needs. It can be time consuming for him to search through FAQs or the layers of a website. Some institutions are better than others. He recently got a response to a question about the American Time Use Survey within a day from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

• Director of an extension program /chair- Actually, he just needs to spend more time familiarizing himself with resources and shortcuts.

• History professor- still wedded to a “place” staffed by reference staff to guide him. Indexes and listings may be/should be electronic. The true issue remains where he is looking.

• Education professor- If he is looking for information about TIMSS, he would like to have all works and databases that include TIMSS linked to it.

• Project manager within extension program- Create a portal that contains valid links to data sources on the Internet, sorted logically but not so finely as to create yet another complicated, confusing, overwhelming website.

9. Research Scenario
You are working on a project and need some data (e.g, How many plastic grocery bags are used each year in the U.S.? How many of these are recycled? [or something more pertinent to the research interests of the particular focus group participants]). You think this is probably readily available, but aren't sure where to find it.

a. Where would you start looking?

• Economics professor-Google, then find links that appear to be from reputable sources (academic, government agencies).

• Director of an extension program/chair- National grocers association, National Plastics (that’s not the name, but there is an association). Maybe one of the environmental agencies and/or associations.

• History professor-Electronic/agency websites.

• Education professor-He would search the Internet “facts about recycled grocery bags.”
• Project manager within extension program- Google – keywords: plastic bags; grocery; annual usage; recycled. He’d see what that yielded and then play around with the keywords if the resulting links don’t provide what he needs.

b. Would you contact the University Library?

• Economics professor- He usually doesn’t think about contacting the library first, but he has asked for help from a retired Latin American Librarian, to locate Brazilian data. She is very helpful for him but is willing to keep the library in mind.

• Director of an extension program/chair-Yes.

• History professor-Yes.

• Education professor-Yes.

• Project manager within extension program- No. Probably not, only because it hasn’t been his habit and he wouldn’t know where to start or who to call.

c. How?

Phone, library website, IM, in person? (Circle one)

• Economics professor-IM or phone.

• Director of an extension program/chair-Phone.

• History professor-IM and in person.

• Education professor-Phone.

• Project manager within extension program-Library website would be most likely.

d. If you contacted the Library, and they indicated that they might need 1-2 days to answer the question, would that be acceptable?

Yes/No/ It depends (Circle one)

• Economics professor-It depends—if he needed the information for teaching that day, it would not be acceptable. But for a long-term research project, it would be ok.

• Director of an extension program/chair-Yes, probably

• History professor-Yes.

• Education professor-Yes.

• Project manager within extension program-Yes.
e. If they told you the specialist in that area had office hours on Thursday afternoons, would you be willing:

To drop by or contact that person to get help with an in-depth inquiry?

Yes/No/ It depends (Circle one)

- Economics professor-Yes.
- Director of an extension program/chair- It depends (mostly on how important the question is to my work).
- History professor-It depends.
- Education professor-It depends.
- Project manager within extension program-Yes.

Have a specialist follow-up on email or via IM?

Yes/No/ It depends (Circle one)

- Economics professor-Yes.
- Director of an extension program/chair-Yes.
- History professor-Yes.
- Education professor-It depends.
- Project manager within extension program-Yes.

10. Teaching Scenario

Think of a challenge your students have faced when using government information (e.g. technical reports, legislative information or census/economic/other data), for an assignment.

a. Briefly describe the assignment and the challenges students faced.

- Economics professor-Students have to find data about the Consumer Price Index. He gives them the web link. Students have difficulty interpreting and understanding the numbers that they find. This is not really a library issue. He probably would not want to spend much time in this course on how to retrieve government data, at least not with the way the course is structured now.

In his research methods class, he didn’t really have the students do much with government information, although the data might have been helpful for them. For example, students could have accessed government information about student loan debt, tuition, etc. If he teaches the course again, he will consider doing this.
• Director of an extension program/chair-The biggest challenge his students faced is that they are informal students, may very well not have research skills at all, and mostly prefer others to do the work for them.

• History professor-Law students seeking background on legislation, history students seeking government reports, hearings, etc.

• Education professor- His students have difficulty discerning the information on government sites like NCES. In graduate courses on mathematics education, I’ve asked students to go to the websites to learn about PISA, TIMSS and NAEP. Students are not able to come up with a concise summary unless he directs them to particular links.

• Project manager within extension program- Not applicable – He doesn’t teach.

b. What sort of assistance would have been helpful from the Library?  *(Circle all that apply)*

   i. Modular web-based tutorials covering specific resources, and topics that can pulled into the instructor’s courseware (cafeteria style) Could also involve collaborating with a librarian who creates a customized "module" that can be pulled in for a specific course

   • Economics professor-Yes.

   • Director of an extension program/chair-Yes. As he develops programming for advanced certificates, it would be fabulous to have tutorials that would help students find information.

   • History professor-Yes.

   • Education professor-Yes. This would be great.

   • Project manager within extension program- Not applicable – He doesn’t teach.

   ii. A web-based tutorial on finding government information, with sections on types of resources and strategies for discovering and using them

   • Economics professor-No

   • Director of an extension program/chair-No. This may be a little more sophisticated than he needs.

   • History professor-Yes.

   • Education professor-Yes. This would be marvelous.

   • Project manager within extension program- Not applicable – He doesn’t teach.
iii. Visits by a librarian to the classroom (specify either a series of 10-minute presentations on specific topics or a one-shot 60-minute session covering multiple sources and search strategies)

- Economics professor-Yes.
- Director of an extension program/chair-He think it would be great to have direct contact.
- History professor-Yes. This option is better than other options.
- Education professor-Yes. This is good
- Project manager within extension program- Not applicable – He doesn’t teach.

iv. Visits by the class to a smart classroom in the Main Library

- Economics professor-Yes.
- Director of an extension program/chair-Maybe – would be also a way to introduce students to tools available at the University.
- History professor-No. These don’t seem to work.
- Education professor-Yes. He has done this with his students about yearly. An on-site workshop is better than the visit to the classroom, since many of his students have never been to the library in the first place. The purpose has always been for general orientation. A workshop focused on government websites would be make his life and students lives easier.
- Project manager within extension program- Not applicable – He doesn’t teach.

v. Regular, announced hours when library staff are available on a drop-in basis for one-on-one consultation in the Main Library

- Economics professor-No.
- Director of an extension program/chair- Not sure this would be effective for his groups.
- History professor-Yes.
- Education professor-Yes. This is always good.
- Project manager within extension program- Not applicable – He doesn’t teach.

vi. Customized, interactive tools designed to help students explore the problem space (e.g. Mehta’s (2006) US Presidential Speeches Tag Cloud <chir.ag/projects/preztags/>
• Economics professor-No.

• Director of an extension program/chair-Yes, maybe.

• History professor-No.

• Education professor-Yes. This example is very cool. Instead of speeches, he’d use policy recommendations and mandates. He sees it as a valuable tool in helping students understand education policy rhetoric from a historical perspective.

• Project manager within extension program- Not applicable – He doesn’t teach.

Other comments from survey respondents (via email) SOURCES

Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture -He does use UNESCO and ICOMOS sources constantly.

CED Educator, & CDSMP Program Coordinator University of Illinois Extension, RE: TRAINING & INSTRUCTION-He sure wouldn’t mind training for the governmental resources mentioned. Most important factor would be distance and cost naturally. Would attend a webinar on the subject. Would also be willing to schedule a training with public library staff and Extension (jointly) for a training.