Outline of the Study

This study consists of two parts: a 40-minute online search activity and a 15-minute survey. You will receive $35 if you complete both parts by Monday, April 7. The money will be deposited into your TechCash account by Monday, April 21.

We will assure confidentiality of responses by allowing database access only to the two educational researchers involved with this project. Only the names of the students who completed the survey will be provided to a 3.091 class administrator to process the incentive payments. The responses of individual participants are not reported to anyone. Only the means and standard deviations of responses in the aggregate will be reported. It is important that you understand that participating in the survey study is completely voluntary.

* If you are interested in participating, please check YES below and then click NEXT>> at the bottom of the page to move on to the first page of the survey.

◯ YES

If you choose not to participate in this survey and would like to exit, please click EXIT THIS SURVEY>> at the top right corner of this page.

If you have any questions
about the survey administration,
please contact:

Daniel Nocivelli
Administrative Assistant
Teaching and Learning Laboratory

book@mit.edu
617-253-2850

Participant Name

In order to receive payment for your participation in this study, you must provide your first and last names exactly as they appear on your MIT ID below.

* First Name (as it appears on your MIT ID Card)

* Last Name (as it appears on your MIT ID Card)

Part 1, Task A: Searching for Authoritative Sources

We are interested in learning how engineering/science students conduct online searches to research a topic. In the next three sections, we ask you to complete three different types of online tasks: (A) finding authoritative sources, (B) identifying reliable sources to support or refute a statement, and (C) finding an expert for a specific topic. Forty minutes should be sufficient to complete these tasks. If, after 40 minutes, you have not completed the three Part 1 tasks, check the box at the end of Part 1 and move on to the Part 2 survey.

Part 1, Task A:

You are writing a research paper on medical uses of ceramics and must find *three* authoritative sources online to include as references.

For each source identified, please record your information in a pair of text boxes, as shown below. The first box should contain the citation and the second box should describe the strategies utilized to find the citation, including the name of the database(s) you searched, why you selected the database(s), and the search terms you used.

Please use the following citation format:
AuthorLastName, FirstInitial. MiddleInitial. "Article title." Journal title Volume number, Issue number (Publication year): Complete pages.

Refer to the example below to complete each text box pair:

Citation #1: (EXAMPLE)

Bednorz, J. G., and K. A. Muller. "Possible High Tc Superconductivity in the Ba-La-Cu-O System." Zeitschrift fur Physik B (Condensed Matter) 64, no. 2 (1986): 189-93.

Description of Search Strategy #1: (EXAMPLE)

I used DATABASE X for my search, since I've used it a lot before and I can usually find stuff in it. I searched for TERM A and TERM B. That returned too many results, so I limited my search using TERM C and a date limit. I also tried DATABASE Y since I heard it is good for this topic. I tried TERM A and TERM B in this database, and found the citation I needed.

Task A - Citation #1

Task A - Description of Search Strategy #1

Task A - Citation #2

Task A - Description of Search Strategy #2

Task A - Citation #3

Task A - Description of Search Strategy #3

Part 1, Task B: Searching for Sources to Support or Refute a Statement

Part 1, Task B:

Please find *two* reliable sources which either support or refute the following statement:

In the event of exposure to elevated levels of radiation due to a nuclear power accident, potassium iodide (KI) should be taken.

For each of the two sources identified, please record your information in a pair of text boxes, as shown below. The first box should contain the citation and the second box should describe the strategies utilized to find the citation, including the name of the database(s) you searched, why you selected the database(s), and the search terms you used.

Please use the following citation format:
AuthorLastName, FirstInitial. MiddleInitial. "Article title." Journal title Volume number, Issue number (Publication year): Complete pages.

Refer to the example below to complete each text box pair:

Citation #1: (EXAMPLE)

Bednorz, J. G., and K. A. Muller. "Possible High Tc Superconductivity in the Ba-La-Cu-O System." Zeitschrift fur Physik B (Condensed Matter) 64, no. 2 (1986): 189-93.

Description of Search Strategy #1: (EXAMPLE)

I used SEARCH ENGINE X for my search, since I've used it a lot before and I can usually find stuff in it. I searched for TERM A and TERM B. I got 10,000 results, and just sorted through them until I found a web page, which lead me to this citation.

Task B - Citation #1

Task B - Description of Search Strategy #1

Task B - Citation #2

Task B - Description of Search Strategy #2

Based on the sources cited, do you agree or disagree with the statement above?

- ○ agree
- ○ disagree

Part 1, Task C: Finding an Expert for a Specific Topic

Part 1, Task C:

As an intern for National Public Radio, you have been assigned the task of identifying a professor (outside MIT) who is an expert on global warming and the destruction of the ozone layer. Enter in the text boxes below the following information about the expert:

- Indicate the name of the expert.
- Briefly profile the expert in terms of current position, educational background, recent publications, and most important publications.
- List database(s) and the series of key terms used.

Name of Expert: (EXAMPLE)

Bruno Bear

Profile of Expert: (EXAMPLE)

Current position: Head of mascot relations, Brown University 1975-present

Educational Background: BS Civil and Environmental Engineering, Brown University 1964; PhD Civil and Environmental Engineering, Brown University 1970

Recent Publications: Bear, B. "Why I love Brown U. and love to hate it." Science 2390, 6 (1996): 15-34.

AuthorLastName, FirstInitial. MiddleInitial. "Article title." Journal title Volume number, Issue number (Publication year): Complete pages.

List of Databases and Series of Key Terms for Expert: (EXAMPLE)

I used SEARCH ENGINE X, searching for the words TERM A and TERM B. That didn't seem to work, so then I tried DATABASE X because I know that's where people who do research on this topic have their papers indexed. This expert has written XX articles, which I found in this database. I then looked up the expert name to find his current position, etc.

Task C - Name of Expert:

Task C - Profile of Expert:

Task C - List of Database(s) and Series of Key Terms for Expert:

Completion of Part 1

Were you able to complete the three tasks of Part 1 within 40 minutes?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Click NEXT>> at the bottom of the page to begin the survey.

Part 2: Survey

The next part of this study is a 15-minute survey about how you use both the library and online databases to search for information.

In order to receive the $35 payment, you must complete this survey.

Click the "next" button below to continue to the survey.

Search Behavior

Please note: For this survey, journal databases are defined as an online collection of citations for articles published in academic journals. If you have ever used any of the article databases accessed through the MIT Libraries' web page, you have used a journal database.

1. Please use the seven-point rating scale to indicate how well you agree with each of the following statements.

	strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	neutral/ no opinion	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
1a. I use the Libraries' online journal databases to search for articles.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1b. When I'm having difficulty searching a topic of importance to me, I am willing to consult with a librarian.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1c. I use the Libraries' website to access electronic texts and journals.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1d. I read academic journals online.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1e. I read newspapers online.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1f. Outside of class, I use library or other journal databases to locate articles in academic journals.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1g. When I am assigned a research paper, I first go to the Libraries' home page to identify relevant online databases or other electronic resources.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1h. To obtain information about topics of importance to me, Google or Wikipedia meet my needs.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1i. I am aware of the large number of resources I can access online via the Libraries' home page.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Judging Online Information

2. Please use the seven-point rating scale to indicate how well you agree with each of the following statements.

	strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	neutral/ no opinion	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
2a. Given that I am in the early stages of my education, I do not need to know how to judge the merits of an academic journal article.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2b. In order to determine the credibility (trustworthiness) of important information I find online, I read several different sources.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2c. Unless I am specifically required to do so, I do not critically examine the information I obtain online for my classes.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2d. I check critical facts in at least two sources to determine their accuracy before including them in any research project of importance to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2e. I check ambiguous information in additional sources in order to clarify it before including it in any research project of importance to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2f. I carefully critique the information that is of importance to me that I find in Google by judging the qualifications of the author.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2g. I carefully critique the information that is of importance to me that I find on Wikipedia by reading additional sources.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2h. For information that is of critical importance to me, I would search journal databases to obtain academic journal articles.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2i. When I have a research project/assignment, I primarily use Google or Wikipedia.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2j. Given that I am in the early stage of my education, knowing how to use journal databases is of	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

minimal use.

Primary Sources

Please note: For this survey, a primary source is defined as a "source containing new information authored by the original researcher(s) and not previously published elsewhere."

3. Please use the seven-point rating scale to indicate how well you agree with each of the following statements.

	strongly disagree	disgree	slightly disagree	neutral/ no opinion	slightly agree	agree	stgrongly agree
3a. For me, primary sources are of interest because they provide a first-hand account of the research being reported.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
3b. I search for primary sources when doing research for classes or lab work.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
3c. It's too early in my academic education to be reading primary sources.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
3d. For me to do well at MIT, I must know how to conduct effective searches of journal databases.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
3e. My MIT classes have made me realize the importance of determining the credibility of information.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
3f. My MIT classes have made me realize the importance of primary sources.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
3g. My MIT classes have made me realize the value of using more than Google or Wikipedia to obtain substantive information.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Attitude

4. Please use the seven-point rating scale to indicate how well you agree with each of the following statements.

	strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	neutral/ no opinion	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
4a. I am effective at using online research tools (online search engines and databases) to find the substantive information I need for my classes.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
4b. I am effective at assessing the credibility of information I find online that relates to my academic work.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
4c. I can judge well the quality of information that is of importance to me that I find on the Internet.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
4d. At this stage of my academic career, I take responsibility for my own learning.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
4e. In general, in terms of my own learning, I carefully monitor what I know, don't know, and need to learn.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
4f. I have used Google to deepen my understanding of a topic beyond what was covered in lecture or assignments.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
4g. I have used journal databases to deepen my understanding of a topic beyond what was covered in lecture or assignments.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Usage

5. Please use the following the rating scale to indicate your level of usage for each search activity.

	Never done it	Once or twice	3-5 times	Periodically	Frequently
5a. I have used journal databases to search for articles that appeared in academic journals.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
5b. I have obtained articles that have appeared in academic journals.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
5c. I have used Vera, the Libraries' online tool, to help locate appropriate journal databases.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
5d. I have used SFX to download a full text journal article.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
5e. I have read online abstracts of journal articles to determine if I wanted to download an article.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
5f. I have used the Web of Science citation feature to assess the relevance of an article.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
5g. I have used online the Barton catalog to review the MIT Libraries' holdings.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
5h. I have searched for primary sources.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Confidence in Current Library Research Skills

6. At present, how confident are you in your ability to do the following:

	Not confident at all	Only slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Very confident
6a. Use Google or another search engine to find materials quickly and efficiently	○	○	○	○	○
6b. Use online library catalogs to find materials quickly and efficiently	○	○	○	○	○
6c. Use article databases such as InfoTrac, ProQuest, or Web of Science to find materials quickly and efficiently	○	○	○	○	○
6d. Use the MIT Libraries' web page to access necessary materials	○	○	○	○	○
6e. Use call numbers to find books (and other materials) on library shelves	○	○	○	○	○
6f. Determine when to cite others' contributions to your research	○	○	○	○	○
6g. Appropriately cite others' contributions to your research	○	○	○	○	○
6h. Recognize the parts of a citation	○	○	○	○	○
6i. Differentiate the types of information that can be found in encyclopedias, handbooks, journals, books, or other types of materials	○	○	○	○	○
6j. Differentiate among the major Boolean operators (and, or, not) and use them correctly	○	○	○	○	○
6k.Use EndNote, RefWorks (or some other software) to manage references and citations	○	○	○	○	○
6l. Distinguish between primary and secondary sources	○	○	○	○	○
6m. Identify the scientific publication cycle	○	○	○	○	○
6n. Articulate the meaning of plagiarism	○	○	○	○	○
6o. Contact the library staff for assistance	○	○	○	○	○
6p. Critically evaluate information that you find,	○	○	○	○	○

regardless of the source (print, electronic, video, etc.)					
6q. Use the appropriate MIT library for research on a particular topic	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
6r. Access both print and online library resources (e.g., books, journals, and full text articles and databases)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Thank You

Thank for your participation. Your answers have been recorded.

$35 will be deposited in your TechCash account by Monday, April 21.

We hope the rest of your semester goes well.

Return to MIT home page.