Information Seeking & the LIS Student
Do They Differ from Undergraduates?
Librarians

• Expert Searchers
• Added Value
• Efficiency and Effectiveness
• Resource Knowledge

Getting information off the Internet is like taking a drink from a fire hydrant.

Mitchell Kapor

Image from: https://www.flickr.com/photos/25031050@N06/3292307605/
Undergrad Information Behaviors

• Familiar Resources
• Need for Context
• Evaluation is a Challenge
• Convenience

http://www.jisc.ac.uk/northern-ireland
Research Methods

- Survey based on Project Information Literacy
- Fall 2012

- 117 responses
- 88.9% female
- 77.8% Bachelor’s highest previous degree
- Fairly even distribution of credit hours completed
- Age skewed low; 40.2% between 22 and 25
Findings

Information Behaviors of LIS Students
Source Selection

Most Used*

- Research Databases (91.9%)
- Course Readings (89.9%)
- Library Catalogs (73.7%)
- Google/Search Engines (52.0%)
- Wikipedia (22.2%)

Least Used**

- Social Networking Sites (Facebook, etc.) (64.6%)
- Online Forums (43.4%)
- Video Sharing Sites (35.6%)
- Gray Literature (23.2%)

*Percent reporting “always” or “often” used. ** Percent reporting “never” used.
People Consulted

Most Consulted*

- Instructors (51.5%)
- Classmates (34.3%)
- Librarians (24.2%)

Least Consulted**

- Family and Friends (33.3%)

*Percent reporting “always” or “often” consulted.  ** Percent reporting “never” consulted.
Evaluating Information

Library Resources

- Currency
- Bibliography/resource list
- Footnotes
- Author’s credentials
- Inclusion of differing viewpoints
- Prior knowledge/recommendation

Web Resources

- Currency
- Author’s credentials
- Domain name
- Links to outside resources
- Bibliography
- Inclusion of differing viewpoints
- Site design
- Prior knowledge/recommendation
• Getting Started is difficult, but...

• Confident in search skills
• Comfortable with resources
• Confident in ability to evaluate information
Demographic Factors

- **Degree level**
  - Students with only a Bachelor’s find searching more difficult
  - Consult encyclopedias more often
  - Consult instructor’s less often
  - More motivated by grades

- No strong correlations with age
Discussion

- LIS students are more confident and comfortable overall
- Experience less difficulty getting started on assignments
- Find it easier to narrow a topic
- Confident in ability to find and evaluate resources
- LIS students:
  - Consult librarians somewhat more frequently
Conclusions

- LIS students exhibit at least some advanced IL behaviors
- Lack of correlation with previous degrees or age suggest LIS programs are responsible for increased skill and confidence
- Could do more to build on these behaviors