

Lily Alicia Whisnant. Search Strategies Used by Fiction Readers with Emphasis on Usage of the Online Public Access Catalog: A Survey of Wake County Public Library Patrons. A Master's paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. April, 2003. 55 pages. Advisor: Barbara B. Moran.

Research in fiction librarianship has led to improvement in how fiction is classified and organized for use in the public library. While advances have been made in understanding how patrons search for fiction within the public library, little research has been done in the setting of the modern online public access catalog.

This study describes a questionnaire survey of public library patrons in the five regional libraries of the Wake County Public Library system in North Carolina. The survey was conducted to evaluate how fiction readers select fiction, to what extent they use the online catalog, and how the online catalog could be improved to better suit fiction readers' needs.

Headings:

Public libraries

Fiction

Online catalogs

SEARCH STRATEGIES USED BY FICTION READERS WITH EMPHASIS ON  
USAGE OF THE ONLINE PUBLIC ACCESS CATALOG: A SURVEY OF WAKE  
COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY PATRONS

by  
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## **Introduction**

A library's fiction collection is an important service offered to its patrons, particularly in a public library. Based on circulation statistics, fiction easily outshines nonfiction as the most important collection within a public library. In North Carolina public libraries, for example, fiction circulation accounted for 64% of the over 20 million adult print material circulations during the 2001-2002 fiscal year. The rate was even higher among juvenile book circulations, where almost 79% were fiction circulations (State Library of North Carolina).

Given that fiction is a key resource offered in public libraries, it follows that providing access to that resource should be of great interest to library staff. Unfortunately, research shows that access to fiction is usually inferior to that offered for nonfiction materials. Online catalogs and the bibliographic records they contain are not being exploited in ways that provide multiple access points to fiction as they do for nonfiction (MacEwan 40). In many cases patrons have access to fiction works based only on author or title.

The lack of access to fiction reflects a historical bias by librarians against fiction. By the time of the American Library Association's formation in 1876, fiction had an established place in the public library; however, the extent to which fiction would be provided remained in question (Carrier 2). On one side, librarians cited the community financial support for the library and the right its members had to demand the reading materials they desired—namely, fiction. Opposing these populists were librarians who

saw the public library as an educational institution and supported restricting fiction to only those works they deemed of the highest literary quality. Even among librarians who supported a broad fiction collection were those who held the belief that among readers “tastes improve as they read better works” and it was the librarians’ duty to guide them to the finest works of literature available (3).

Opinions about fiction continued to vacillate during the first part of the twentieth century. Courses on fiction found their way into professional library school curricula as libraries liberalized their policies on fiction (Carrier 4). At times of national or economic crises, though, these steps forward were questioned as library spending on fiction was challenged (6). Research showed, however, that increased spending on fiction, not on nonfiction, led to increased circulation figures. Opposition to fiction continued to waver (11).

The late 1980’s and 1990’s saw a renaissance in fiction librarianship, with a flurry of new methods developed to deal with the historically ignored task of fiction classification. As part of this renaissance, there has also been a proliferation in research into how readers select fiction. Findings have been mixed, though there is a general consensus readers most often look for fiction based on genre. During the 1990’s, many public libraries across the nation began to separately shelve their fiction collections based on genre in an effort to enhance access to the fiction collection. Although many libraries now shelve fiction by genre, few have evaluated the effects this type of classification has on patron satisfaction (Richard 3).

Fewer still are the studies on the use of the online public access catalog following the genrefication of a fiction collection. In the face of the minimal cataloging proposed

by many library administrations to save processing costs, there is little evidence to show if and how fiction readers are using the library's online catalog. This research study is designed to assess if and how the patrons of Wake County Public Library System in North Carolina use the online catalog, and measure their relative satisfaction with the system through administration and analysis of a reader survey.

## **Literature Review**

Readers at most libraries have a variety of tools at their disposal to assist in the selection of fiction. Use of the online catalog must be considered in the context of other existing search strategies.

Fiction selection is most often a search for an unknown item. Studies have found that browsing the shelves is the most popular way for library patrons to select fiction; more than half of readers use browsing to choose books (Yu and O'Brien 160).

Browsing, however, has its problems; one study found that 52% of browsers did not find the author they sought in the stacks (Baker, "Chapter Six" 130). Success rates were also low when readers reported browsing for an unknown item; this most popular use of browsing to find something of interest was met with a 60% rate of satisfaction (129). Only 34% of browsers in the same study found it easy to choose fiction (129). When browsing a large collection, library patrons can be easily overwhelmed by the available choices. These browsers often adopt strategies to narrow their number of reading possibilities (Baker, "Overload" 326).

As part of their recognition of the difficulties in browsing, many libraries have established Readers' Advisory positions whose primary duties are in service to leisure reading. Although these Readers' Advisory Librarians exist and many libraries place a clear focus on fiction, patrons often are wary of asking staff for assistance in their fiction selection process. One study found that 84% of browsers did not turn to the library staff for assistance. Frequently cited reasons for not asking staff included: browsers liked to select fiction on their own; staff looked busy; staff would not know what readers would



like; a question about fiction would be perceived as a waste of staff time (Baker, “Chapter Six” 130).

Knowing that library browsers are easily overwhelmed by available selections and infrequently turn to staff for assistance, librarians have studied the effect that establishing sub-sections can have within the fiction collection. Book displays and book lists have been developed by librarians as a way to expose a large number of readers to a subset of the library’s holdings. Baker’s review of the literature found evidence that readers “want, need, and will use book lists and book displays” as part of their efforts to narrow the choices before them (“Overload” 319). A significant increase was found in the circulation rates of books placed in displays; this increase in circulation was more pronounced in a public library of 4,700 titles than it was in a smaller library of 1,300 fiction titles (322). In three separate studies book lists were found to have a similar impact on circulation, though a fourth study found no relation between the book lists and increased circulation (323).

Baker looks to marketing theories for explanation of why book displays and lists work only part of the time. She postulates that these two techniques will assist browsers only when they successfully attract attention and require little effort from the potential user (“Overload” 324-25). This means that book displays need to be in high traffic areas in order to significantly impact fiction selection. Book lists, to be most successful, need to be handed to patrons rather than left on displays for readers to find on their own (325).

Baker proposes two low-cost techniques to increase the browsability of fiction collections. The first recommended technique is to reduce information overload by regularly weeding the fiction collection (Baker, “Chapter Six” 133). By using circulation

statistics from the integrated library system, one public librarian moved 10-12% of four small collections into remote storage with only 1% of those titles requested from storage eight months later (134). Baker also asserts that rotating collections periodically throughout the library will positively affect circulation. Space near the entrance of the library and shelves throughout the physical space at eye-level have the greatest amount of exposure to the browser, so they should be regularly rotated to house “new” books (138).

Classification by genre has received a disproportionate amount of attention from researchers because reader studies have found that browsers most often narrow their choices by seeking a book based on its genre. In one study, 20% of browsers searched by genre even though the test libraries did not separate their fiction collections by genre (Baker, “Chapter Six” 141). An experiment in one North Carolina library found a 30% increase in fiction circulation after the library shelved fiction by genre (Cannell and McCluskey 163).

Based on such findings, public libraries have begun creating segregated genre collections as a way to facilitate browsing access to their fiction and decrease information overload (Sarricks 24-5). Harrell found that 94% of large public libraries surveyed used at least one genre category in their fiction collection (152). The majority of responding libraries, 69%, used a combination of notation in the catalog, separate shelving, and spine labels to signify genre (153). Not all respondents in her survey shelved genre collections separately; 11% used only spine labels to indicate genre, and 7% used only a combination of catalog notes and spine labels (152). Because there is often a fine line between different genres, Readers’ Advisory Librarians have worked with technical services staff to establish genre guidelines that vary from library to library. Patron response to fiction

collections separated into genres has generally been found to have the anticipated, positive effect (Sarricks 25).

A fiction collection separated by genres is not without difficulties for the browser, however. Many works defy categorization into a single genre; the librarian must either make a decision to shelve the book in one of the many genres to which it belongs, or place it in the general fiction collection (MacEwan 41). Authors also write across genres, meaning their collected works could be shelved across a number of collections (Sarricks 24). Both instances will present problems to the browser who expects to find the book on the shelf in one genre collection, but must search across many genres before locating it.

Because of the inherent problems with browsing, many library patrons use browsing in combination with other search strategies. Yu and O'Brien found that 77.6% of patrons combined browsing with specific search strategies (161). This combination most frequently occurred when patrons turned to browsing after failing to find a book using a specific search. In fact, as many as 50% of patrons in the Yu and O'Brien study were not able to find books using specific searches.

One cause for failed specific searches in the online catalog has been the lack of full bibliographic records for fiction. Historically, the main means of providing subject access in United States libraries has been through use of subject headings established by the Library of Congress, but *Library of Congress Subject Headings* contained specific instructions regarding the limited topical subject headings to apply to works of fiction. *LCSH* authorized subject headings only for animal stories and biographic or historical fiction where the historical event or setting is the focus of the work (Hayes 441). Classification of fiction was by national origin, language, form, time period, and author

(Beghtol 20). Because most public libraries do not assign call numbers to their fiction, the standard public library shelving system produces a fiction collection that is classed only by author and without subject access points in the catalog (21).

This lack of access to fiction subject analysis was due in part to the historical bias against fiction in libraries, but also because the very subjective nature of fiction challenges the traditional means of classification. In assigning topical access to nonfiction, it is logical to select subject headings that express what the work as a whole is about. A work of fiction, in contrast, might be about a myriad of topics, or no single topic at all. For fiction, topical access may need to be more thematic than it is for nonfiction (MacEwan 41). Assigning access terms to the entire work may necessitate that the cataloger read the work because of the lack of summary information such as tables of contents, indexes, and appendixes (Beghtol 11). Some librarians have rejected the analysis and categorizing of fiction because of the level of interpretation that would be required of the cataloger, an act they believe is best left to the reader (Saarti 161).

Despite the challenges of creating subject access to fiction, efforts designed to provide subject access have a long history. H.W. Wilson first published its *Fiction Catalog* in 1908 (Beghtol 2). A publication with widespread influence, *Olderr's Fiction Subject Headings*, developed as a supplement to *LCSH*. *Olderr's* applies existing subject headings to fiction and explains the application of existing rules. It also creates subject headings for fiction where they are lacking in *LCSH* (4). Individual libraries also have devised subject lists for their readers. Sandy Berman of Hennepin County Library in Minnesota developed a subject heading system for fiction and used those headings to provide extensive access to the library's collection.

From the standpoint of cataloging, the 1990's saw not only recognition of a historical bias against fiction but also a serious attempt to improve access. In 1990, amid other advances in fiction librarianship, the Library of Congress approved a new system for enhanced access to fiction. In that year the American Library Association's Subcommittee on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, Etc. published its *Guidelines on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, Etc.* This published manual was the product of four years of semiannual meetings by the Subcommittee, originally charged with:

- studying LC subject headings and recommending changes in LC practice to provide improved access to imaginative works
- creating guidelines to enable libraries to improve access to fiction
- studying and recommending changes in MARC tagging and coding to enhance access to fiction
- studying CIP practice and recommending changes to improve timely access to imaginative works (ALA 2).

The Subcommittee recommended that access to fiction be provided according to genre or form, character, setting, and topic (ALA 2). *Guidelines* contains both LC and non-LC headings; many of the non-LC headings were adopted from Hennepin County Library's system. The Library of Congress proceeded to approve the *Guidelines* and joined with OCLC in launching a viability test of the Subcommittee's recommendations. The OCLC/LC Fiction Project called for ten libraries to volunteer their cataloging services and enrich records for both existing holdings and new acquisitions. OCLC was slated to provide training and authority work for the Project (Fineberg 82).

Once underway, the Project faced many challenges. Only six, rather than the desired ten, libraries volunteered to participate (Westberg). The Project faced delays and criticism from librarians, including Hennepin County's Sandy Berman, who disliked the narrow focus of the study (Quinn and Rogers 15). LC's participation in the Project quickly waned until its involvement consisted only of approving new subject headings (Library of Congress). The OCLC/LC Fiction Project officially ended in September 1999, after its participants had enriched over 15, 000 records (Westberg). Throughout the Project, the Subcommittee had continued to meet and consider edits to the *Guidelines*, and in June 2000 a second edition was published (Wilson 06/23/2002).

The original charge of the Subcommittee on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, Etc., was to improve subject access to fiction. Unfortunately, little research has been done to determine the effects of enhanced fiction cataloging with *Guidelines*. More common is anecdotal evidence such as the statement that "patrons have become adept at finding books using the GSAFD headings" (Ketcherside). Only one study was found to evaluate the effect of enhanced subject cataloging on access, through an analysis of circulation rates. The study, conducted at Texas A & M University, found that although there was "a moderate correlation between the number of subject access points for a work of fiction and use as defined by circulation, there is no statistically significant relationship" (Wilson et al 462).

Evaluating the success of subject access to fiction does not need to be tied to circulation rates. Patron surveys and studies of patron searches can also help gauge the effectiveness of enhanced records. At Ohio's Cleveland Public Library, a study of the online catalog's subject search transaction log revealed that patrons overwhelmingly

searched for fiction by genre as opposed to character, setting, or topic (Kreider 132).

While separate shelving can categorize a book into a single genre, use of the *Guidelines* headings can allow a book to be assigned multiple genres simultaneously.

Although patron habits may vary from one library to another, some conclusion might be drawn and applied to cataloging practices with further studies at both academic and public libraries. Many of the *Guidelines* headings have been adopted into *LCSH* and continue to appear in records in national bibliographic databases. Because so many libraries use records from national databases, the *Guidelines* headings can now be found in most libraries where fiction is currently collected.

Application of the *Guidelines on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, Etc.* raises concerns about the consistency of subject analysis. Nonfiction catalogers have many clues and guidelines when assigning subject headings. However, fictional works are not only open to interpretation, but often encourage multiple interpretations (Saarti 50). In a study using the Danish subject thesaurus *Kaunokki*, librarians assigned a greater number of keyword terms to classic novels such as those of Fyodor Dostoyevsky than to popular romance novels. Among a group of thirty librarians, keywords were rarely repeated; Saarti found only 19.9% indexing consistency among the librarians (59). Librarians who had previously indexed fiction were found to be more consistent indexers as a group (57). In the study, novels that were unambiguous and clearly belonged to a genre received the most consistent indexing across test groups (59). The variance in the number of terms assigned by each indexer illustrated the importance of establishing guidelines on the number of terms to use (60).

Researchers assert that reconsideration of the MARC indexing is needed in addition to expansion of subject heading vocabulary. The indexing structure of online catalogs and MARC records means that users must not only know search terms but also which index to select. Fictitious characters, for example, do not clearly fall into one of the standard author, title, or subject indexes, but are indexed as topical subject headings in the 650 fields rather than as names (Yee and Soto 8). Yee and Soto polled reference librarians and asked where they believed users would most likely look for fictional and real-life characters. They found that 88% of librarians polled believed users would search in the name index for Sherlock Holmes as a character when offered the choice between a name and subject index. When only a subject or author index would be available, 83% of the librarians polled believed users would select the subject index (7).

The reference librarians in Yee and Soto's study urged the creation of a general index, such as keyword, rather than multiple indexes. Possible solutions proposed by the researchers included a general index for small collections, or a double coding of the MARC fields (Yee and Soto 8). Recoding of MARC fields would permit users who have a greater understanding of MARC indexing to have greater precision in their searches while at the same time facilitating access to the less experienced searcher (9).

Keyword access is now a reality in most online public access catalogs, but research assessment of third generation OPACs has focused on nonfiction retrieval in academic libraries (Slone 758). Nonfiction searches differ greatly from the retrieval of fiction, which is most commonly done through an unknown item search. This research study will investigate public library patrons' use of a modern OPAC and explore the



validity of Baker's finding that 86% of patrons who had borrowed fiction had not used the catalog ("Chapter Six" 128).

## **Methodology**

This study is designed to answering the following research questions:

1. How do public library patrons search for fiction?
2. Do public library patrons use the OPAC to find fiction?
3. In what ways do library patrons use the OPAC to find fiction?
4. What improvements would library customers like to see in the OPAC?

While examination of transaction logs from an OPAC could answer questions two and three, patron input was needed to answer the first and fourth questions. A patron survey was therefore designed to answer these questions.

One of the main suppositions in conducting this study is that fiction collections are heavily used at public libraries. While circulation statistics show that works of fiction circulate heavily, they cannot show whether fiction checkout is widespread across the patron base or concentrated with a small subset of the library's population. Therefore, the first question of the survey was inserted to gauge what portion of patrons check out fiction materials and thus assess the relevance of interest in fiction librarianship.

The survey (see Appendix C) was designed following guidelines for self-completed surveys in *The Survey Kit*. The survey was pre-tested by nineteen individuals with varying reading interests and experience with libraries. Based on their suggestions and analysis of how they completed the survey, several changes were made to the initial survey instrument. First, the language in question two was changed because the original wording was deemed to use library jargon unclear to most patrons. In question four, the category "did not know exists" was added to more accurately gauge patrons' use or non-use of the different search strategies. A completion check was added to the electronic

survey format to inform the interviewee that they had missed answering a question and needed to click on their web browser's "back" button to fully answer the question on the previous screen. The electronic survey was designed using a CGI web page form with radio buttons and check boxes; pre-testers frequently clicked in the area of the form without actually selecting a response.

For this study, the five regional libraries in the Wake County Public Library system were chosen as the study sites. Wake County Public Library has the second highest rate of adult fiction circulation in North Carolina, with over 1.5 million circulations in 2001-2002 (State Library of North Carolina). Instead of a single central library with branches, the Wake County system consists of five regional libraries and eleven community branches. The regional libraries each have over 160,000 volumes and are open seven days a week.

The Wake County Public Library System has had a fully automated circulation and catalog system since 1992. Its collection development policy maintains an emphasis on providing popular reading materials; this commitment is echoed in the Readers' Advisory Librarian position established at each regional library. The system's commitment to technical services is not as evident, however, with just two professional catalogers for the entire system. Fiction is cataloged when possible with copy from a vendor database, with original records created when necessary. Many of the downloaded fiction records contain subject headings for genre, fictional characters, and themes; only limited subject access is assigned to original records because the catalogers rarely have the book in hand as they catalog, making analysis difficult. The fiction collections within the system are identified by genre to varying degrees; the books are labeled with stickers

according to the broad genre into which they fall and each regional shelves at least one genre separately.

Library customers were selected for this study at random as they approached the exit of the library. The interviews were voluntary and anonymous and interviewees gave oral consent prior to the beginning of the interview process. A copy of the oral request for consent statement is included in Appendix A. Included in Appendix B is a letter given to each participant providing the researcher's contact information and additional explanation of the study.

Participants were given the choice between the print and electronic format of the survey. Those participants who chose the print format completed the survey at the library; a copy of the print survey is included in Appendix C. The electronic format was administered via the World Wide Web. Participants were given a slip of paper with the URL for the survey and a random code that allowed them to access the website and under which their data was stored. Screen shots of the web format survey are included in Appendix D. In both cases the interviewee was encouraged to ask questions or make suggestions to the researcher in person, via email, or over the telephone.

Because this study is grounded in the belief that fiction is a heavily used part of public libraries, the first question asked whether or not the participant had checked out fiction within the last month. This time period was determined to be short enough to be easily recalled by customers while maximizing the chance that they had visited the library on more than one occasion. All subsequent questions in the survey used the one-month period as the time frame.

Question two was designed to assess the methods patrons used to search for fiction. The most popular four methods, based on reviews of the literature, were listed and survey participants were asked to rate the frequency at which they used each method on a scale of one to six. A fifth line was provided for participants to specify and rate any method(s) they used to find fiction that was not provided on the survey. Question three then asked patrons to share any problems they encountered in their search for fiction.

Questions four, five, and six focused on the use of the online catalog. Question four asked participants whether or not they had used the online catalog in the past month to search for fiction; those that indicated they had used the online catalog were then asked to rate the frequency at which they conducted different types of searches. Online catalog users were also asked to identify problems they encountered in searching or browsing the online catalog, and suggest modifications they would like to see in the Wake County Public Library web catalog. The final question of the survey asked readers to identify why they did not use the online catalog to search for fiction. Four choices were provided, including an option for the survey participant to provide their own reason not listed on the survey.

Based on the desire for statistical significance tempered by the time and budgetary constraints of this project, the original goal was to interview a minimum of 100 library patrons. Data collection took place over a one-month period in February 2003. Working with library staff's knowledge of the traffic patterns of their libraries, the researcher conducted data collection during various hours throughout the day to maximize the variety of the sample pool of patrons considered for participation. The specific data collection schedule was as follows:

Cameron Village Regional  
 Wednesday, February 19th 3:30-7pm  
 Saturday, March 1st 1-5pm

East Regional  
 Thursday, February 20th 3-7pm  
 Sunday, February 23rd 1-5pm

Eva Perry Regional  
 Saturday, February 22nd 10am-1pm  
 Thursday, February 27th 3-7pm

North Regional  
 Saturday, February 22nd 2-5pm  
 Tuesday, February 25th 3-7pm

Southeast Regional  
 Saturday, February 15th 1-5pm  
 Monday, February 24th 10am-3pm

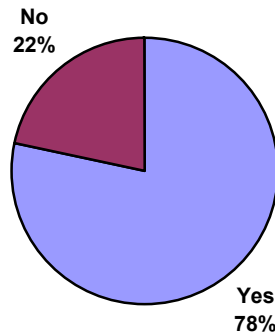
Seven hours were spent at the three largest regional libraries; more time was spent at Southeast Regional and East Regional Libraries to compensate for their slightly lower traffic volume. At the end of the data collection period, 256 people had been approached and asked to participate in the study. Of those, 206 gave consent; 150 people elected to complete the survey in print while 56 requested to complete the survey online. Less than half of those who accepted an online access code completed a survey. In total, 174 surveys were completed and 152 were found to be usable for analysis. Of these, 131 had been completed in print and 21 had been completed online. Problems with the remaining 22 surveys making them unusable included:

- technical problems with electronic survey resulting in lost data
- electronic surveys abandoned before completion
- print surveys incompletely filled out
- major logical inconsistencies in the information entered on the survey

At the end of each data collection effort, results from the print surveys were reviewed to gauge the number of completed surveys gathered on that day and the quality of survey completion. A unique code was assigned to each print survey for entry into electronic format. Data from the print surveys was transferred to the same server pulling results from the online surveys. The data entry was structured such that an error message appeared if all information was not filled in on the webpage. A second quality control check was made by producing a spreadsheet with all data elements present and then comparing it to the original print surveys to check for data entry errors.

## Results and Analysis

### Question One: Borrowing Fiction



**Figure 1- Respondents checking out fiction**

Of the 152 participants, 119 indicated that they had selected fiction to check out within the last month. Those surveys were further analyzed for trends question by question.

### Question Two: Methods of Finding a Novel

The second question of the survey was designed to evaluate how study participants look for fiction and examine the data for trends in combined search strategies. First, the data was analyzed for frequency within individual search strategies.

#### *Browsed or Searched Online Catalog*

	Number (n=119)	Percentage
Never	27	22%
Almost Never	13	11%
Sometimes	20	17%
Fairly Often	19	16%
Very Often	19	16%
Always	21	18%

**Table 1- Frequency readers browsed or searched online catalog**

The average frequency which respondents said they browsed or searched the online catalog was 3.4, falling halfway between “sometimes” and “fairly often.” This



reflects the distribution as shown in Table 1, with 59 respondents using the catalog at least fairly often, and 60 using it sometimes or less frequently.

### *Browsed Shelves*

	<b>Number (n=119)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never	6	5%
Almost Never	4	3%
Sometimes	21	18%
Fairly Often	18	15%
Very Often	25	21%
Always	45	38%

**Table 2- Frequency readers browsed the shelves**

As can be seen in Table 2, most respondents browsed the shelves. Approximately 92% of respondents reported browsing shelves at least sometimes. Just over one-third of respondents indicated that they always browsed the shelves when looking for fiction.

### *Asked Library Staff for Assistance*

	<b>Number (n=119)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never	37	31%
Almost Never	36	30%
Sometimes	30	25%
Fairly Often	9	8%
Very Often	7	6%
Always	0	0%

**Table 3- Frequency readers asked staff for assistance**

Frequency distribution of asking library staff for assistance was focused at the lower half of the frequency scale, as shown in Table 3. In contrast to browsing the shelves for fiction, few respondents reported asking library staff for assistance. As can be seen in Table 3, 61% of respondents indicated that they never or almost never asked library staff for help. Of the 46 individuals who reported asking staff for assistance, two-thirds asked only sometimes. This is similar to Sharon Baker's findings that 84% of browsers did not turn to staff for help ("Chapter Six" 130).

*Used Guide Such as Booklist or NoveList*

	<b>Number (n=119)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never	40	35%
Almost Never	22	18%
Sometimes	26	22%
Fairly Often	11	9%
Very Often	16	13%
Always	4	3%

**Table 4- Frequency readers used guides**

As can be seen in Table 4, just over half, 53%, of respondents used guides never or almost never. Of those who used some type of guide, frequency of use was concentrated at the lower end of the scale, with 65% reporting using them sometimes or fairly often. Sharon Baker's research suggests that booklists and other guides are effective, but must be in high traffic areas or distributed to patrons directly ("Overload" 324-25). Promotion of the available electronic resources at Wake County Public Library is currently prominent; public terminals have shortcut links on the desktop to both *NoveList* and *What Do I Read Next*, two electronic reader's advisory databases. Print booklists are also widely available, most often as part of a display or at a service desk, which readers must approach on their own. A more active distribution and instruction on how to use these resources might lead to greater usage.

*Other*

	<b>Number (n=119)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never	86	72%
Almost Never	1	1%
Sometimes	4	3%
Fairly Often	7	6%
Very Often	13	11%
Always	8	7%

**Table 5- Frequency readers used other search strategies**

The category of other was designed into the survey to allow for participants' input and to gather together less frequently used search strategies. Twenty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they used a search strategy other than the specific ones listed in the survey. Of the 33 respondents who did indicate use of "other" search strategy, two-thirds used it very often or always. Those respondents who specified an alternate method of looking for fiction frequently listed more than one.

The most commonly specified way to search for fiction was by recommendation; 13 participants identified using friends' recommendations, and 5 listed print recommendations such as favorable *New York Times* and *News and Observer* book reviews. Six respondents indicated that they simply knew what they wanted before they entered the library; one of these said he was reading in a series, but the remaining five offered no elaboration. Other strategies mentioned by two or fewer respondents included:

TV bookclubs

Websites

Looking on the cart of recently returned books

#### *Use of multiple search strategies*

Yu and O'Brien's research indicated that most library users combine multiple search strategies, so the data from this study was analyzed for patterns of combined searched strategies.

First, the data was analyzed to see what percentage of participants used multiple strategies to search for fiction. This does not mean that the participants necessarily used these strategies in tandem; it meant only that the participant at least sometimes relied on each search strategy. One hundred and seven, or 90%, of participants were found to have

used at least two search strategies. Of those 107, 69 used three or more search strategies at least sometimes. Of those, 25 were found to have used four or more search strategies. Only one participant was found to have used five different search strategies at least sometimes.

### *Combined search strategies*

Next, the data was analyzed for what could be considered combined search strategies. Participants were not asked how frequently they used combined searched strategies; however, based on the structure of the question it was assumed that if a participant indicated using two or more strategies almost always or always, these searched strategies were in fact being used together. Thus, responses were filtered to show only combinations of almost always and always.

<b>Number of Search Methods</b>	<b>Respondents (n=42)</b>	<b>Frequency of Each Combination</b>
2	42	Catalog/Shelves(21), Shelves/Guide(11), Shelves/Other(9), Guide/Other(7), Catalog/Guide(6), Catalog/Other(6), Catalog/Staff(3), Shelves/Staff(1), Staff/Guide(1), Staff/Other(1)
3	12	Catalog/Shelves/Guides(4), Catalog/Guide/Other(2), Shelves/Guide/Other(2), Catalog/Shelves/Other(2), Catalog/Staff/Other(1), Catalog/Shelves/Staff(1)
4	0	None
5	0	None

**Table 6- Use of combined methods to select fiction**

With this analysis, forty-two respondents were found to have combined search strategies. Thirty of those respondents used two strategies in combination. A small portion of participants, 12 respondents, or 10% of the individuals who reported checking

out fiction, indicated that they used three or more searches in combination. No respondents were found to have used four or more search strategies in combination.

### Question Three: Difficulties Encountered in Looking for Fiction

Question three asked participants to identify problems they encountered in their selection of fiction. One-third of fiction readers in this study reported encountering problems when looking for a novel to check out. Of those 40, 39 specified the problem(s) they faced.

<b>Type of Problem Encountered</b>	<b>Frequency (n=40)</b>
Desired book checked out or not owned by library	27
Conflicting information regarding availability	5
Problems with physical layout of library	4
Failed online catalog search	3
No reason specified	1

**Table 7- Problems encountered when trying to find a novel**

Sharon Baker's research shows that readers frequently complain that the books they want are not on the shelf or that the library has too few copies of current works ("Chapter Six" 129). This was found to be the most frequent problem in this study as well, cited by 27 of the respondents. Several respondents specifically mentioned best sellers as challenging books to obtain from the library.

Five respondents identified conflicting information regarding availability in the online catalog and availability on the shelf as a problem they faced. Four respondents specified problems with the physical layout of the library. These respondents either stated that they were unfamiliar with how the library was arranged or that the layout changed unexpectedly.

Three respondents, 8% of those specifying problems with their searches, described problems with searching the online catalog. One person identified spelling errors as an impediment to his ability to search the online catalog. A different person expressed general dissatisfaction with the online catalog. While the root of his problem is unclear, the individual's frustration is apparent in his comment:

The on-line catalog does not come up with the correct item being looked for. The catalog software needs to be updated or re-done. I often have to jump between subject and title to find what I am looking for.

Interestingly, this respondent reported in question two that he always browsed or searched the online catalog.

The next respondent, who also reported always using the online catalog, was more specific in the problem he had:

I was trying to find a copy of a book named "Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West" and the online catalog would not bring the book up. I had to type it in about 15 different ways and go through 4 pages of listings before I found it.

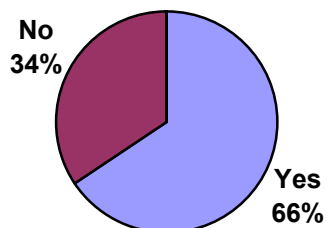
When the researcher conducted a title search to see if "wicked: the life and times of the wicked witch of the west" was in Wake County's OPAC, the desired title appeared in the recalled list. It is unclear, therefore, why this respondent experienced problems finding the title. Had this patron not been diligent in his search, it seems that he would not have found the book. It is worth noting that this patron chose to plow through the online catalog rather than ask for assistance; in fact, this respondent reported in question two that he never asked library staff for help.

#### Question Four: Use of the Online Catalog

The fourth question, designed to gauge participants' use of the online catalog, consisted of two components. The first part of the question asked fiction readers if they

had used the online catalog to find fiction; the second part then asked respondents who used the online catalog to rate the frequency at which they conducted different kinds of searches.

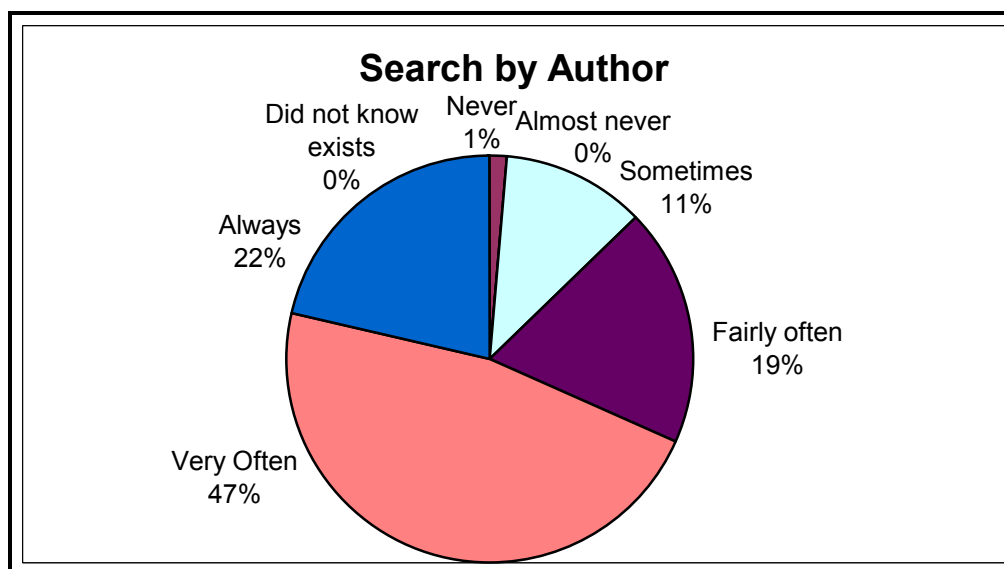
**Used online catalog within the past month**



**Figure 2- Use of online catalog**

Seventy-eighty respondents, approximately two-thirds of the fiction readers in this study, marked that they had used the online catalog within the past month. This approximately equals the number of respondents (79) who, in question two, indicated that they used the online catalog at least sometimes.

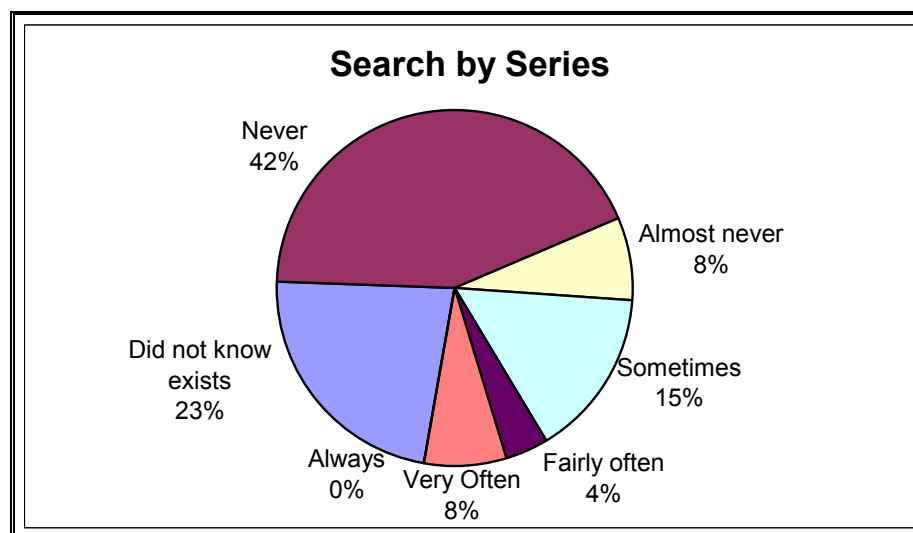
#### *Search by Author*



**Figure 3- Respondents reporting searching by author**

Searching by author was the most common type of online catalog search, with 99% of respondents who used the online catalog responding that they at least sometimes searched by author. The search was heavily used at the individual level; 69% of respondents used the author search always or very often.

#### *Search by Series*

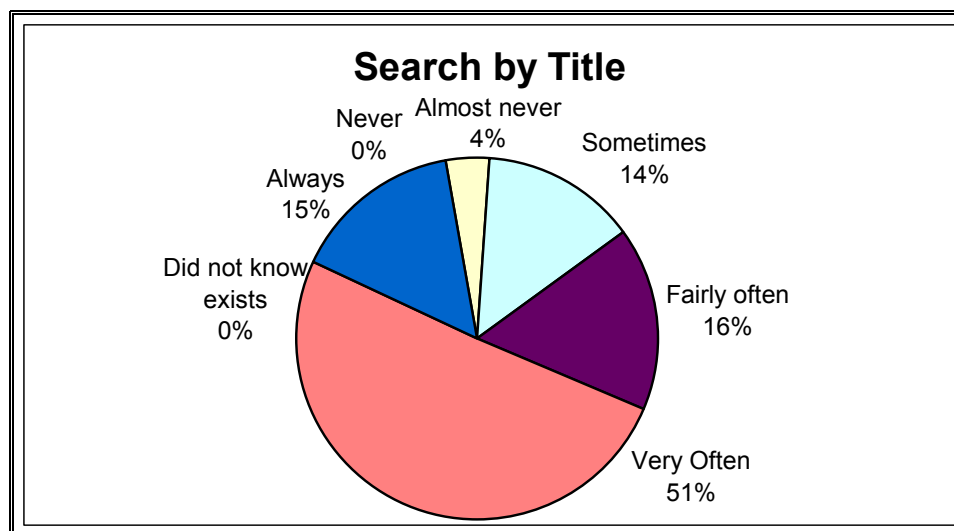


**Figure 4- Respondents reporting searching by series**

Searching by series was the least popular known-item search type. Frequency distribution, shown in Figure 4, is clearly weighted toward never or infrequently searching by series. Only 35% of respondents indicated that they ever search by series.



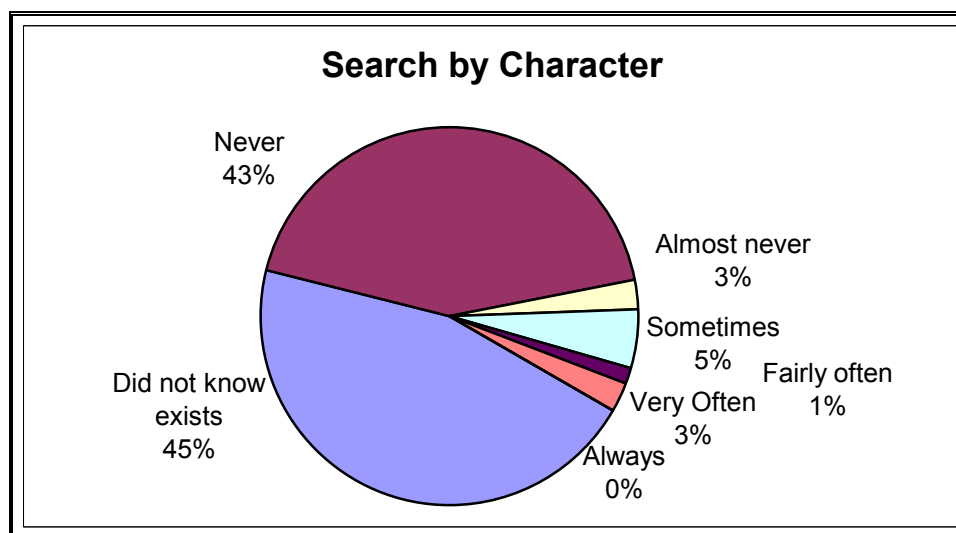
### *Search by Title*



**Figure 5- Search by title**

Searching by title was a popular method of searching the online catalog, as shown in the frequency distribution in Figure 5. All respondents knew that it was possible to search by title and reported that they had used this search. Two-thirds of respondents searched by title always or very often, ranking it just behind author search in terms of popularity.

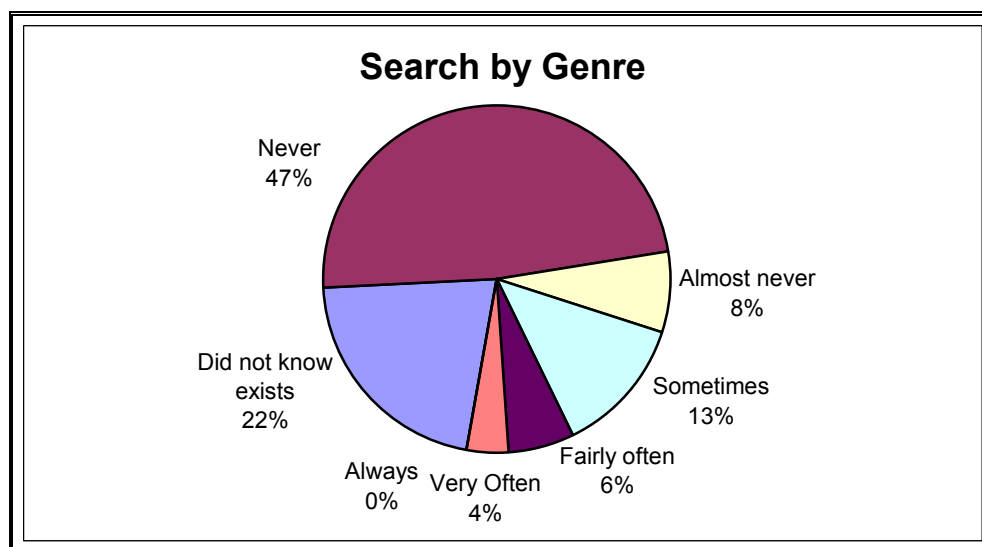
### *Search by Character*



**Figure 6- Respondents reporting searching by character**

Among the respondents to question four, searching by character was the least popular way to search the online catalog. Most survey participants either did not know it was possible to search by character (45%) or indicated that they never search by character (43%). Only 10 respondents reported searching by character at least sometimes.

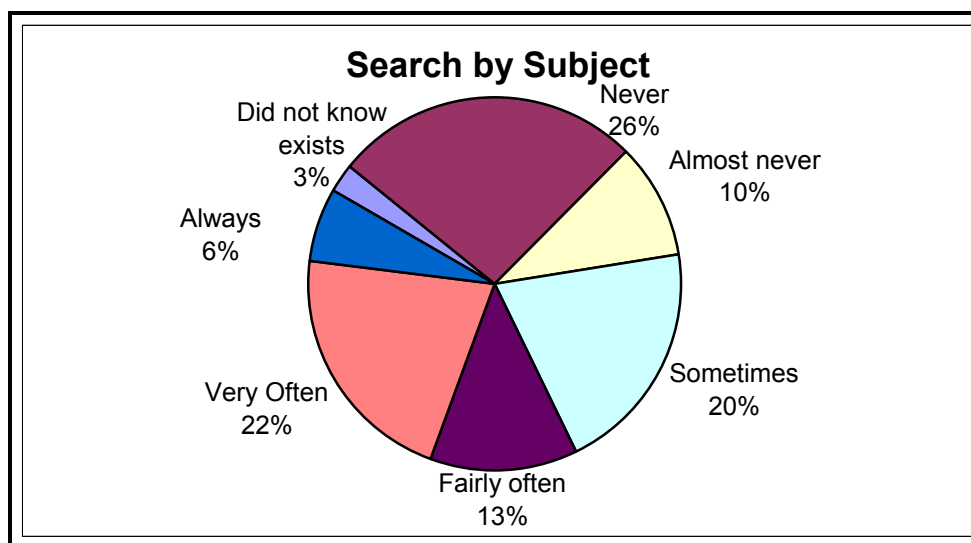
### *Search by Genre*



**Figure 7- Respondents reporting searching by genre**

Wake County Libraries' Horizon public catalog has two ways to search by genre. Novels cataloged after the approval of *Guidelines for Subject Access to Individuals Works of Fiction, Drama, Etc.* often have a genre subject heading and can be found by conducting a subject search in Wake County's OPAC. The second way is to limit the search by collection, because many of the genres have been assigned a genre location code. Despite these two ways to search by genre, only 31% of respondents marked that they ever search by genre. Although not as high as with search by character, a significant 22% of respondents did not know it was possible to search by genre.

### *Search by Subject*



**Figure 8- Respondents reporting searching by subject**

Searching by subject was the most popular type of unknown-item search.

Seventy-one percent of respondents searched by subject in the past month, with 61% searching by subject at least sometimes.

### *Known-Item Searching Versus Unknown-Item Searching*

All 79 respondents who used the online catalog reported using a known-item search (author, title, series) at least sometimes. Ninety-six percent of respondents reported using more than one type of known-item search at least sometimes. Fewer respondents, approximately 25% of those using the catalog, reported searching by all three types of known-item search at least sometimes.

A lower but still significant number, 54, also reported using an unknown-item search at least sometimes. Most of these respondents, 40, used only one type of unknown-item search. While 26% of those who conducted unknown-item searches did use two or more different types of search, only 6% used all three types of unknown-item search sometimes or more frequently.

Because all respondents used known item searches and two-thirds reported using unknown-item searches sometimes or more frequently, it seemed likely that a significant number of respondents frequently combined unknown and known item search strategies. The data was then analyzed to test this hypothesis; answers were sorted to find how many people used at least one known-item search (author, series, title) and one unknown-item (character, genre, subject) search very often or always. Despite the high percentage of respondents indicating that they used known and unknown-item searches with some frequency, only 19, or 24% were found to use unknown and known item searches in combination. Interestingly, one respondent was found to use all six types of searches very often.

#### Question Five: Desired Online Catalog Functions

Participants who indicated that they used the online catalog to select fiction were asked if they had any functions they would like to see added to the online catalog. Thirty of the 79 catalog users indicated that there were functions they would like to see. Of those 30, 26 elaborated and 2 wrote that they could not think of any functions at the moment. The desired functions were evaluated and found to be divisible into four categories: borrower requests, database contents, customization, and aspects of searching.

Borrower requests and customization relate to the circulation functions of the integrated library system rather than to the online catalog itself. Of the six respondents who specified borrower requests, four said they would like to place interlibrary loan requests online and two said they wanted to place holds online. Currently, patrons must fill out an interlibrary loan request in person at a library's adult services desks. Holds, however, can be placed online with the use of a borrower's card number and PIN when

the desired book is checked out but cannot be placed on books that are listed as available in the online catalog. The two respondents indicating their desire for the ability to place holds did not specify what type of material they wanted to reserve; either they are unaware of the hold function for charged materials, or they wanted the ability to put available materials on hold.

Of the two respondents who wanted increased customization, one wanted the library system to retain a record of all books they had checked out so that they could avoid checking out the same book twice. The second wanted an Amazon.com-like functionality that recognized the borrower's reading habits and suggested new books. Either functionality would conflict with current privacy standards in place in Wake County's Horizon library system.

Seven respondents listed desired functions that pertain to the searching function of the online catalog. Two of these responses were vague expressions of functions; one respondent indicated desire for the "ability to search by genre or subject in fiction more easily than now," while the second wanted improved keyword searching. The remaining requests were, in the words of the respondents:

- Yes, the ability to put word in quotes i.e. "entertaining games" for more detailed info so I don't have to go through hundreds of items
- Special area for N.C. writers, women writers etc- groupings
- If specific subject does not come up, perhaps some way or hint to see similar subjects
- Ability to search by genre of subject in fiction more easily than now
- Faster. Broader search- spelling and exactness (don't always know the exact title)
- Improve keyword search functionability (category)
- Sort by call number

The first three functions in the above list are currently available in Wake County's online catalog. All searches in Wake County's Horizon system are either keyword or

alphabetical, meaning the searcher does not receive an exact match for a search. Terms in the keyword search (author keyword, title keyword, etc.) can be enclosed in quotation marks for more exact searching, however. When the search in the first bulleted suggestion above is tried in the catalog, 17 records are retrieved without quotes and one hit is retrieved with the phrase entertaining games placed within quotation marks.

The ability to search by groupings exists in two possible ways in the online catalog. First, there are genre and topical subject headings. Second, the web catalog's general and expanded search functions allow the searcher to limit by collection. The list consists of over 150 pre-existing collections, including divisions by genre, reading level, location, and date of acquisition. The list of current collections includes: board books, Cameron series romance, paperback fiction, North Carolina fiction, and new adult fiction. While the list of collections is not exhaustive, it is extensive.

The third suggestion that hints be provided in subject searches is currently addressed with "see" and "see also" references in the subject authority records. Because each cross-reference must be added by hand, the number of references is generally limited. Catalogers might consider studying subject search logs and asking for input from reference librarians to improve cross-referencing to be more closely in line with how patrons are searching.

Nine respondents wanted to see changes in the online catalog related to the content of individual bibliographic records or the database as a whole. To individual record, study participants wanted to see added:

- Links to book reviews
- Links to similar books (read-alikes)

- Synopsis of the book
- Author biographies
- Series numeration

Series numeration is currently included in some of the bibliographic records in Wake County's system, but is not uniformly present. The other suggested additions are generally considered outside the scope of the library OPAC; Wake County Libraries attempts to satisfy user desire for these functions through provision of the electronic databases *NoveList* and *What Do I Read Next?*.

Two participants who responded to question six had very differing opinions about what materials should be included in the OPAC. One respondent wanted the catalog to include a list of all books published within the last 75 years, even if the library does not own them. At the other extreme, one respondent suggested that records should not be in the catalog when the library does not own the title; these bibliographic records most likely linger in the system even after individual holdings have been withdrawn. Clearly, this illustrates a case where not all patrons' desired online catalog functions could be fulfilled.

#### Questions Six: Reasons for Not Using the Online Catalog

Those study participants who answered in question four that they did not use the online catalog were asked to provide in question six their reasons for not using the catalog. Based on responses in other studies and feedback from pre-testers, four choices were provided:

- Computer system too hard to use
- Have tried catalog in past and did not find it helpful

- I did not know about the online catalog
- Other (please specify below).

Forty participants answered question six, equal to the number of participants who answered that they did not use the online catalog in question four.

<b>Reason for Not Using the Online Catalog</b>	<b>Frequency (n=40)</b>
Satisfied with other search strategies	12
Computer system too hard to use	8
Have tried catalog in the past and did not find it helpful	5
I did not know about the online catalog	5
Desire to examine physical copy of book	5
Catalog used for nonfiction searches but not found suitable when looking for novels	3
Normally use catalog, but not within last month	2

**Table 8- Reasons for not using the online catalog to select fiction**

Eleven individuals marked their choice from the three specific reasons provided, including five people who indicated that they did not know about the online catalog. It is possible that at least some of these respondents do in fact know about the online catalog but use a different term for it; at least one participant asked the researcher what was meant by the online catalog but recognized the resource upon explanation. The shortcut icon on the libraries' terminals says "book catalog" in addition to "online catalog." Five people said that they had tried the catalog in the past and did not find it helpful. One of these respondents elaborated, stating:

I usually pick novels by author, or browsing subject matter; in the case of authors, I know their names. Re subject matter, the online catalog does not help much in that respect.

The most popular reason for not using the online catalog was successful use of other search strategies, including browsing the shelves for an author or by genre. The second most commonly given reason for not using the online catalog involved lack of



experience with computers. While only one respondent marked that the computer system was too hard to use from the provided list of choices, analysis of the responses specified under “other” revealed that a greater number of respondents faced challenges in using the computer. Seven additional responses marked under the category of other in question four indicated problems with the online catalog. One respondent identified himself as “computer illiterate,” another as “an idiot when it comes to using computers.” One respondent explained that while he did not know how to use the online catalog, he would like to take a class specifically about the online catalog, or have a printout that he could use as a guide while searching the online catalog. Not all patrons are interested in learning how to use the online catalog or computers in general, however. In their own words, they “have no interest in learning how to use the computer” or “often go out of my way NOT to use one!!!”.

For five respondents who reported not using the online catalog, the act of browsing the shelves fills a role that cannot currently be replaced with use of the online catalog. These respondents reported a preference in examining the physical copy of the book, be it to read the book jacket, use the physical copy to jog their memory and make sure they have not read the book before, or to let something physically catch their eye. Six other individuals reported a style of shelf browsing that did not necessitate using the catalog. These respondents read according to either genre or author, and are familiar with where the books are shelved. Because most Wake County Libraries either sticker or shelve their genres separately, and shelve in alphabetical order by author, these browsers do not need to use the online catalog.

## Conclusions

Patron responses gathered from this study lend credence to the belief that provision of fiction is indeed a well-used function of the public library. Other findings cited in the literature were upheld by this study, including patron reluctance to consult library staff for assistance in finding fiction and the frequent complaint that popular novels are unavailable for checkout.

Patrons in this study were found to use multiple search strategies when looking for fiction, frequently combining two or more types of searching. Browsing the shelves was found to be the most common mode of searching, with use of the online catalog also high. When using the online catalog, participants in this study heavily used both known and unknown-item searches, with author, subject, and title searches the most commonly used.

Apart from these frequently used searches, other functions of the online catalog were not found to be heavily exploited, even among those readers who acknowledged using the online catalog very often or always. Most new functions suggested by the online catalog users in this study either pertained to circulation functions or referred to functions of the online catalog that already exist. While a significant one-third of readers in this study did not use the online catalog, the lack of awareness regarding the online catalog's capabilities makes it probable that patrons would benefit from instruction in use of the online catalog. Because readers infrequently approach library staff with problems, as found in this and other studies, library staff must take a proactive role in instruction.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

This study focused on establishing general patterns of searching and use of the OPAC by fiction readers in Wake County Public Libraries. Now that some patterns have been established for the population, in-depth interviews would be useful for highlighting the reasons for readers' actions. In particular, it would be useful to observe readers and discuss their searches with them as they use the online catalog; results from this study indicate that even frequent users of the online catalog are not fully aware of available functions. A study similar to that conducted by Slone, but focused on retrieval of fiction, could lead to recommendations for effective instruction or interface design.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Oral Statement Requesting Participation and Consent**

I am a master's degree candidate in the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The topic of my master's paper is an assessment of Wake County Public Library customers' use of the online catalog to find fiction. I am asking approximately 150 library customers to assist me by voluntarily completing a survey.

- The survey can be completed in print or online.
- Either version takes approximately 5 minutes to complete.
- Your willingness to share your opinions will be of value to my research, and may provide the libraries with suggestions on how to enhance services to customers.
- Your participation is completely voluntary; there is no penalty if you decline.
- The service you receive at Wake County Public Libraries will not be affected by participation in this survey.
- Your responses to the questions will be taken as indication of your consent to participate.
- You are free to stop your participation at any time.
- **All information gathered from this survey will be kept in strictest confidence.**
- I will not be asking you for any identifying personal information.
- The data presented in my master's paper will not be linked to you in any way.

## **Appendix B**

### **Written Consent Given to Library Customer**

Dear Reader:

I am a master's degree candidate in the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The topic of my master's paper is an assessment of Wake County Public Library customers' use of the online catalog to find fiction. For this study, I am asking approximately 150 library customers to assist me by voluntarily answering a survey. The survey is available in print and online, and takes approximately five minutes to complete. By collecting data on how people find fiction, I am hoping to determine how the online catalog can be made to better suit readers' needs.

If you have questions regarding this survey, please do not hesitate to contact me at (919) 225-8102 or by e-mail at [whisl@email.unc.edu](mailto:whisl@email.unc.edu). You may also address your concerns to my research advisor, Dr. Barbara B. Moran, at 200 Manning Hall, CB#3360, UNC-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3360; telephone (919) 962-8067; e-mail address [moran@ils.unc.edu](mailto:moran@ils.unc.edu).

You may also contact the UNC-CH Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board at (919) 962-7761 or [aa-irb@unc.edu](mailto:aa-irb@unc.edu) at any time during this study if you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant.

Thank you for your time and input. Again, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this survey.

Thank you,

Alicia Whisnant



## Appendix C

### Print Survey

1. Over the last month, have you selected any fiction to check out?

☐ Yes



If you answered yes,  
please proceed to question 2.

☐ No → If you answered no, stop  
here. Thank you for  
your assistance.

2. Over the last month, how frequently did you use each of the following methods to find a novel to check out? Please circle one number for each line.

<b>Method</b>	<b>Always (1)</b>	<b>Very Often (2)</b>	<b>Fairly Often (3)</b>	<b>Sometimes (4)</b>	<b>Almost Never (5)</b>	<b>Never (6)</b>
Browsed or searched online catalog	1	2	3	4	5	6
Browsed shelves	1	2	3	4	5	6
Asked library staff for assistance	1	2	3	4	5	6
Used guide (such as a booklist or <i>Novelist</i> )	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other (please specify)_____	1	2	3	4	5	6

3. In the last month, did you ever encounter difficulties when trying to find a novel?

☐ Yes



If you answered yes, please describe difficulty below:

☐ No

4. In the last month, did you ever browse or search the library's catalog to select a novel for checkout?

☐ Yes

☐ No (Please skip to question 6)



How frequently did you use each of the following searches? Please circle one number for each line:

Search	Always (1)	Very Often (2)	Fairly Often (3)	Sometimes (4)	Almost Never (5)	Never (6)	Did Not Know Exists (7)
Author	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Character	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Genre	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Series	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Subject	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Title	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Are there functions you would like to see made available in the library's online catalog?

☐ Yes

☐ No



If you answered yes, please describe function below:

**Stop here.** Thank you for participating.

6. Why do you not use the library's online catalog to find fiction?

☐ Computer system too hard to use

☐ Have tried catalog in past and did not find it helpful

☐ I did not know about the online catalog

☐ Other (Please specify below):

**Stop here.** Thank you for participating.

## Appendix D

### Screen Shots of Electronic Survey

#### Screen shot of introductory message:

The screenshot shows a Netscape browser window titled "Netscape: Survey". The address bar displays "http://survey.wirefall.org/". The main content area has a light blue background and contains the following text:

**Message from the survey administrator, Alicia Whisnant**

As I briefly explained at the library, I am a masters degree candidate in the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The topic of my masters paper is the degree to which public library customers use the online catalog to find fiction. For this assessment, I am asking library customers to assist me by voluntarily completing a brief survey.

Your willingness to share your opinions will be of value to my research, and may provide the libraries with suggestions on how to enhance services to customers. Your participation is completely voluntary; there is no penalty for not participating. The service you receive at Wake County Public Libraries will not be affected by your participation in this survey. You are free to stop your participation at any time. All information gathered from this interview will be kept in strictest confidence. I will not be asking you for any identifying personal information and the data presented in my masters paper will not be linked to you in any way.

To start the survey please enter the access code provided on your bookmark.

Access Code

### Screen shot of question one:

**Question 1:**  
Over the last month, have you selected any fiction to check out?

☐ Yes ☐ No

**Continue-->**

### Screen shot of question two:

**Question 2:**  
Over the last month, how frequently did you use each of the following methods to find a novel to check out? Please choose one number for each line:

Search	Always	Very Often	Fairly Often	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
Browsed or searched online catalog	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6
Browsed shelves	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6
Asked library staff for assistance	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6
Used guides (such as booklists or Novelist)	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6
Other <input type="text" value="Please specify"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6

**Continue-->**

### Screen shot of question three:

**Question 3:**  
In the last month, did you ever encounter difficulties when trying to find a novel?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, please describe difficulty here

Continue-->

### Screen shot of question four:

**Question 4:**  
In the last month, did you ever browse or search the library's online catalog to select a novel for checkout?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, how frequently did you use each of the following searches? Please select one number for each line:

Search	Always	Very Often	Fairly Often	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never	Did Not Know Exists
Author	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7
Character	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7
Genre	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7
Series	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7
Subject	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7
Title	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7

Continue-->

**Screen shot of question five:**

The screenshot shows a Netscape browser window with the address bar displaying `http://survey.wirefall.org/cgi-bin/newsurvey.cgi`. The main content area has a light blue background and contains the following text:

**Question 5:**  
**Are there functions you would like to see made available in the library's online catalog?**  
☐ Yes ☐ No

Below the radio buttons is a large text input field with the placeholder text "If so, please describe functions here". At the bottom of the form is a button labeled "Continue-->".

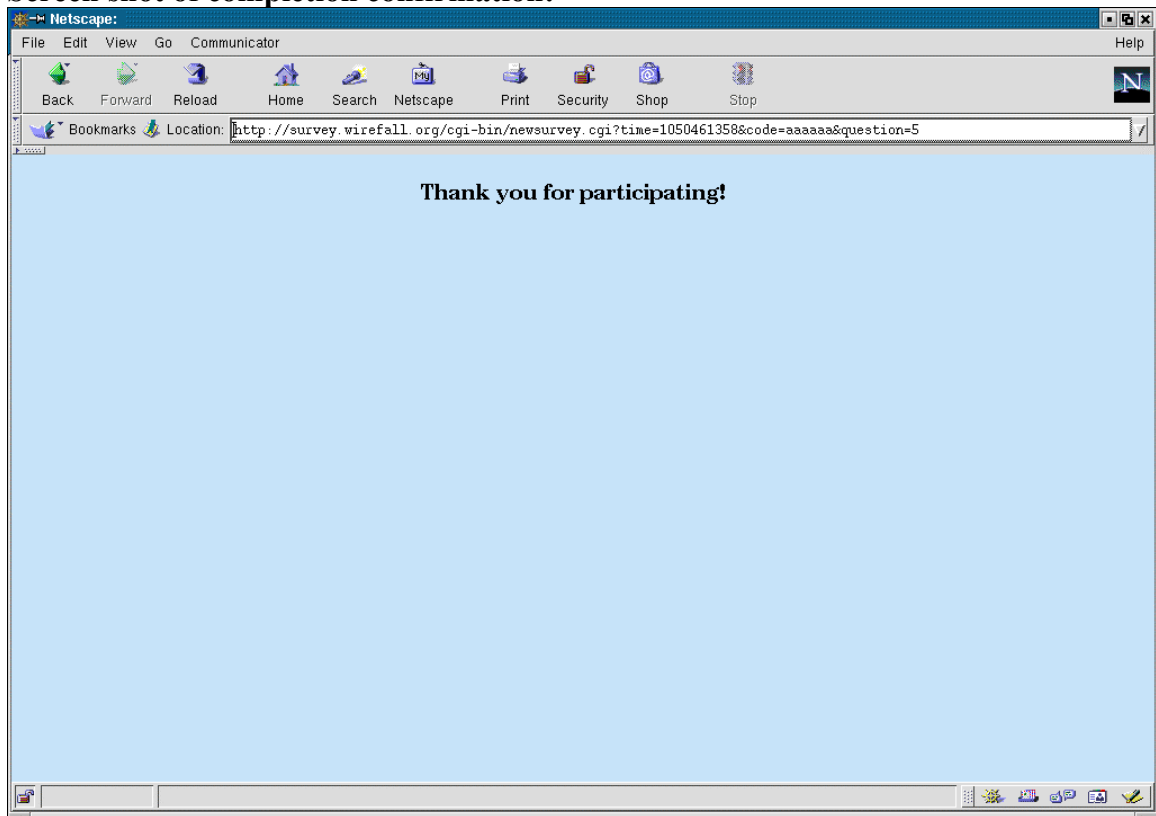
**Screen shot of question six:**

The screenshot shows a Netscape browser window with the address bar displaying `http://survey.wirefall.org/cgi-bin/newsurvey.cgi?time=1050461358&code=aaaaaa&question=5`. The main content area has a light blue background and contains the following text:

**Question 6:**  
**Why do you not use the library's online catalog to find fiction? Please select all that apply.**

- ☐ Computer system too hard to use
- ☐ Have tried catalog in the past and did not find it helpful
- ☐ I did not know about the online catalog
- ☐ Other (Please specify below):

Below the list is a large text input field with the placeholder text "Other reason". At the bottom of the form is a button labeled "Continue-->".

**Screen shot of completion confirmation:****Screen shot of example error message when incomplete answer submitted:**