

HOLY GOOGLE SCHOLAR, BATMAN!

Assessing the Needs of Science & Engineering Graduate Students

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Outline



- **LI Needs Assessment**
- **Faculty Focus Groups**
- **Graduate Survey**
- **What we did wrong**
- **Where are we going**

2005/2006 LI Needs Assessment



- **Quite a low response from science & engineering**
- **Clearly underserved**
- **Some faculty response**

2005/2006 LI Needs Assessment



- **Many Unanswered questions:**
 - ❖ Amongst Science & Engineering students, who is doing library research and at what level?
 - ❖ What are graduate students doing?

Talking to Faculty



- **What kinds of research were they expecting of their students?**
- **Could the students fulfill these expectations independently?**
- **Where did they feel students were struggling?**
- **How could we help?**

Focus Group Questions



- **What kinds of library-related research are your students doing, if any?**
- **What kinds of information sources do you expect your students to use in their research, and at what level?**
 - ❖ Do you think your students have the skills to find that information independently?
 - ❖ Are you satisfied with the quality of sources that your students are using?
 - ❖ What part of the research process do you believe your students struggle with the most?

Lessons from Faculty



- **Students were being asked to find and use primary literature.**
- **Students couldn't evaluate the quality of what they found.**
- **Students did plagiarize, though not always on purpose.**
- **Faculty would like our help! No consensus on the form of that help!**

Focus Group Questions



- **What format for library instruction would be most useful to you and your students (one-on-one meetings, full/part classroom sessions, lab-time sessions, online tutorials, other)?**
 - ❖ How would you like us to communicate with you about instruction and other library-related matters?
- **Think about your library-related experiences at other universities where you have studied or worked. Were there services there that were particularly useful to you, and that you would like to see here?**

Talking to Graduate Students



- **Are Graduate Students as confident of their abilities to find relevant literature as their Faculty supervisors think they are?**
 - ❖ What tools are they using?
 - ❖ Where are they turning for help?

Survey Questions



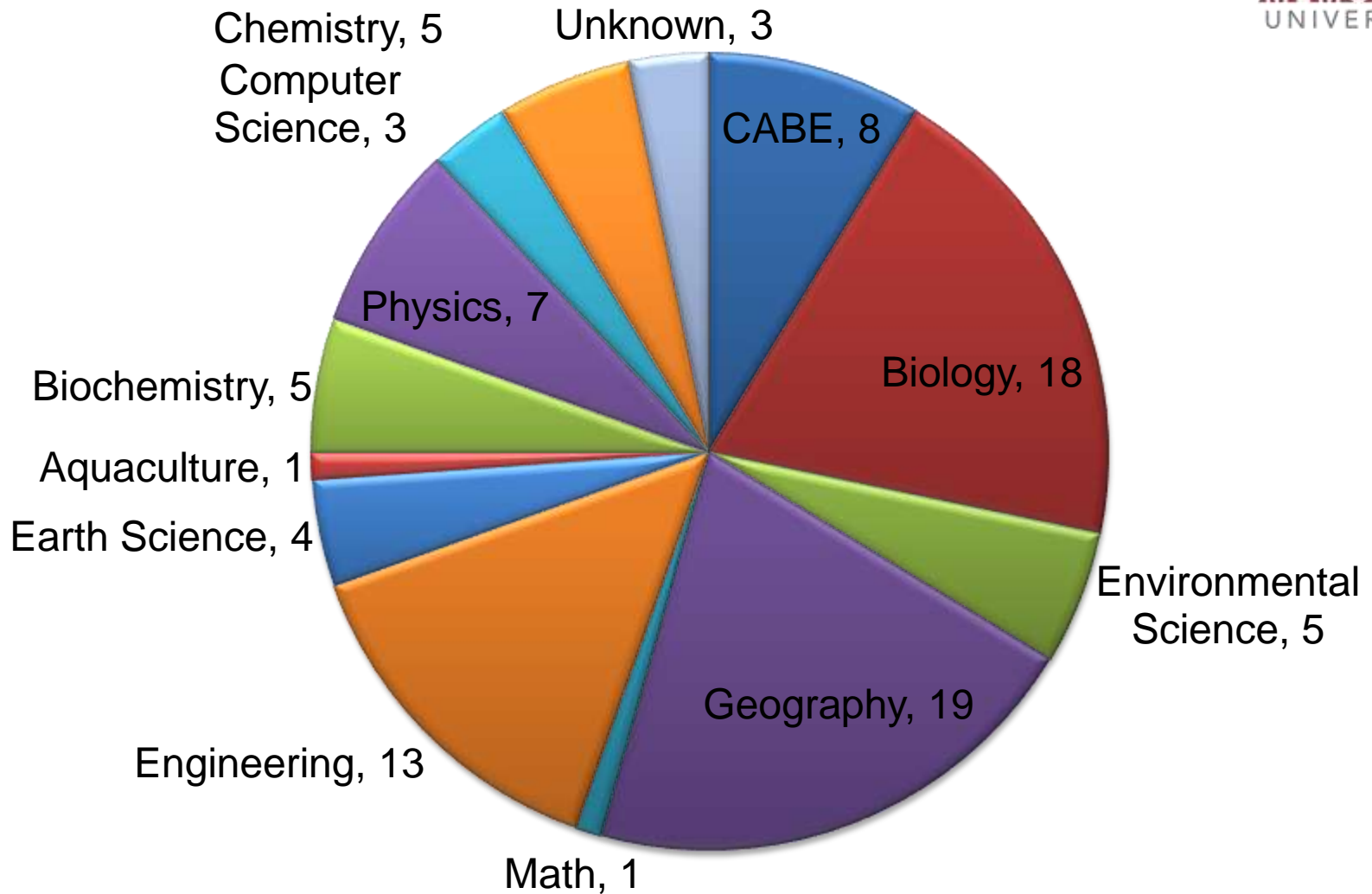
- **Mix of questions.**
- **Brevity.**
- **Incentives to answer.**

What we Expected

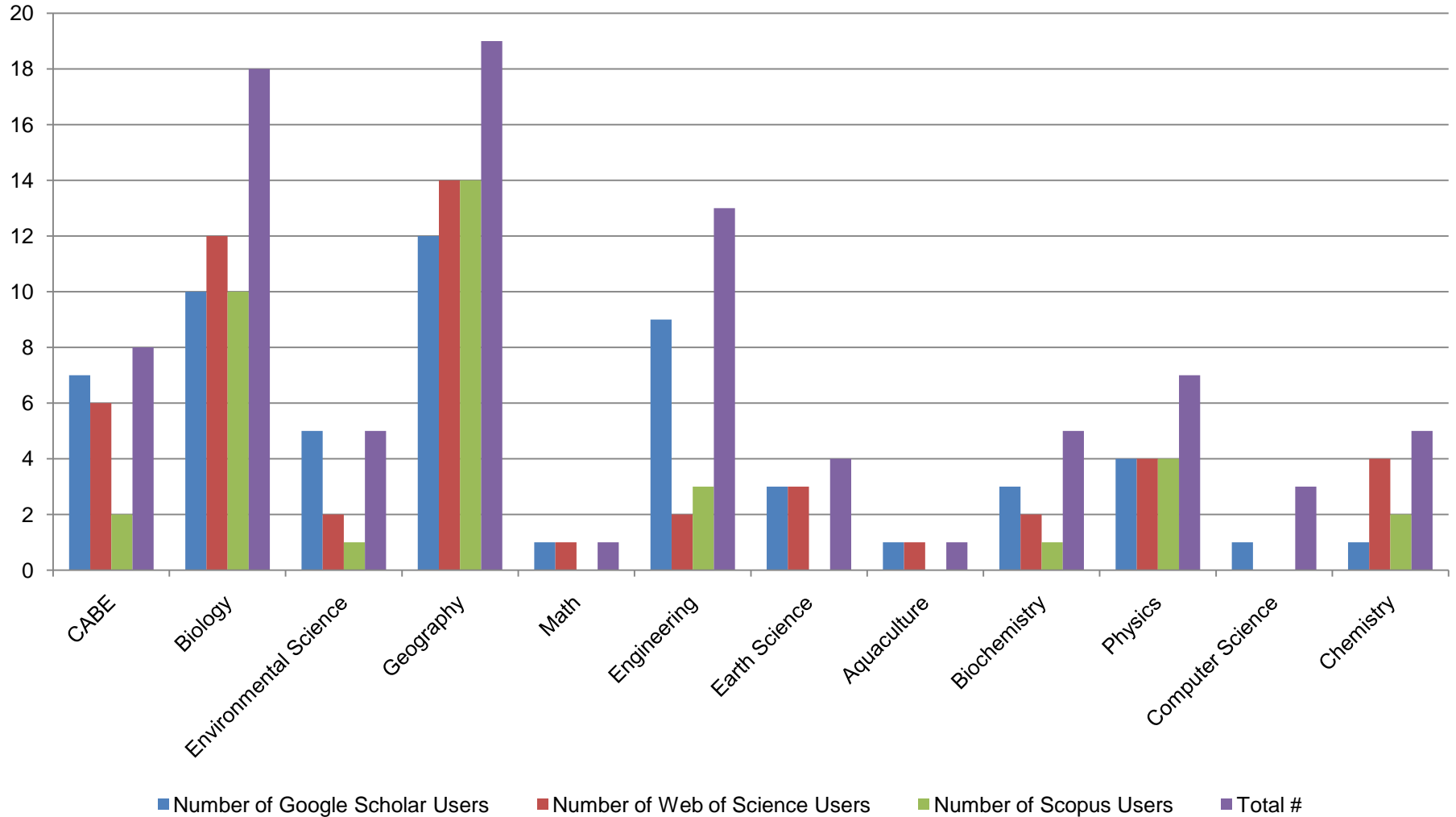


- **Biology domination.**
- **Mixed bag experience with LI.**
- **Library instruction = more confident searchers.**
- **Their supervisor would be their primary contact for help.**
- **They taught.**

Survey Participants by Department, N=93



The tools they use



Library Instruction



- **2/3 of respondents had library instruction sometime in the past**
- **The 1/3 with no library instruction claimed to feel more prepared to do research required for their graduate studies**

More curious



- **The 1/3 who hadn't had library instruction also reported to be more satisfied with the information they were finding when searching**

The Biggest Challenge?



- **Searching**
 - ❖ Getting started
 - ❖ Finding relevant things
 - ❖ Finding obscure things
 - ❖ Finding everything
- **Using the physical collections**
- **Stuff we can't help them with**

How do they prefer to seek help?



- **63% ask a colleague / classmate**
- **59% come to the research help desk**
- **43% ask their professor**

What do they want help with?



- **Searching**
- **Document Delivery**
- **Refworks**
- **Using the physical collections**

What would we do differently?



- **Focus Groups:**

- ❖ Moderation

- ❖ Recruitment?

What would we do differently?



- **Survey:**
 - ❖ Timing was actually great
 - ❖ Incentive
 - ❖ Asking about teaching
 - ❖ Holy Google Batman?

A la Carte Library Instruction

The librarians at the QE2 Library can be as flexible as you need them to be when it comes to building a customized library instruction session

Name *

Email *

1. Using the Catalogue

- Catalogue - 10 minutes
- Finding Items - 10 minutes

2. Searching

- Developing a Search - 10 minutes
- Finding an article from a citation - 10-15 minutes
- Searching a topic - 25 minutes

3. Specific Databases

- Searching Basics - 20 minutes
- Searching across databases - 25 minutes
- Advanced database - 35 minutes
- Specialized database - 40 minutes

4. Critical Evaluation

- Popular vs. Scholarly Sources - 10 minutes
- Evaluating Websites - 10 minutes

More to act on...



- **Course syllabus collection project**
- **Lab group liaison**

Thanks



- **Questions please.**