

**Web Polls**

**Imperial College London**

**Library Services**

***About the organization***

**Organisation:** Imperial College London

**Department:** Library Services
**Industry Sector:** Higher Education

Library Services conducted their first poll in March 2009 with the aim to get quick feedback from their customers in an engaging way. They created the poll using an online poll creation website called Twiigs, and embed the poll code within the library website. The Twiigs website allows them to control the length of time that the web poll is active.

***First Web Poll – March 2009***

The first web poll aimed to look at what type of environment students liked to study in (e.g. Quiet space or Group/Social area). The first poll was run for approximately one month and received 552 respondents.

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| --- |
| **How do you like to study?** |
| **In a Quiet Study space** | **In a Group/Social Area** |
| 87% | 13% |

The initial Poll was used to confirm the suitability of our existing study space distribution, and informed an overall review of the study environment, signage, zoning and guidance as part of a wider student survey in 2009.

Changes were made in relation to this review, including new signage to improve the visibility of silent, quiet, and group study areas. The Web Poll provided a useful snapshot to confirm aspects considered within the review.

Following the completion of the first web poll, Library Services decided to run polls once a month, with the topics decided at Marketing and Website Steering Group. Each following poll was run for a shorter period of time, only 2 weeks.

As numbers of respondents dwindled it was decided to extend the times between polls and do them as occasional one-offs.

***What web polls were used for?***

Library Services at Imperial used web polls to:

* Promote changes to services
* Get feedback on the Library services
* Explore how student used services and spaces
* Engage with students.

***Example web polls questions***

* How would you like to hear about our services?
* How do you usually access our electronic resources?
* What do you think about e-books?
* How did you get to our website today?
* Do you find the Core Text Collection useful?
* Will you be studying in the Library over Easter?
* What do you think about our e-books?
* When you need help from the Library, what do you do?

Full results for each of the web polls is available in [Appendix A](#AppendixA)

***Changes and improvements made***

The usefulness of data obtained from these Polls varied, depending on the question asked, and the level of response.

The response to the web poll on e-books was particularly useful as it demonstrated that these resources could benefit from increased promotion, and a review of the ranking for e-books within retrieved results while using the library search.

***Lessons learnt from using web polls***

* Select an appropriate length of time to run the web poll
* Strategically select the theme/topic of the web poll
* Running too many web polls can cause fatigue
* Use occasionally rather than regularly
* Useful to get quick and dirty feedback
* Difficult to evaluate the validity of the feedback especially when respondent numbers are low.

***Future use of web polls***

Due to changes in the University’s content management system and the redesigning of the website, Library Services was unable to continue to embed Twiigs polls.

**Appendix 1**

**Imperial College London - Web Polls Results**

1. **March 2009 - How do you like to study?** (552 respondents)
* In a quiet space (87%)
* In a group / social area (13%)
1. **April 2009 - How would you like to hear about our services?** (52 respondents)
* RSS feeds (15%)
* Our website (51%)
* Twitter (23%)
* Social network sites (11%)
* Email (34%)
* Blogs (5%)
* No thanks (15%)
1. **May 2009 - How do you usually access our electronic resources?** (88 respondents)
* Library electronic journals / databases web page (65%)
* MetaLib (23%)
* Subject guides (3%)
* Web search (21%)
* Library catalogue (31%)
* Bookmark direct link (4%)
1. **Oct 2009 - What do you think about e-books?**  (281 respondents)
	* Love them (44%)
	* Hate them (16%)
	* Never use them (27%)
	* What are they? (11%)
2. **Jan 2010 - How did you get to our website today?**  (118 respondents)
	* Imperial homepage (33%)
	* Browser bookmark (16%)
	* MyImperial (0%) (the student portal )
	* Web search (27%)
	* It’s my homepage (4%)
	* Other (17%)
3. **Apr 2010 - Do you find the Core Text Collection useful?** (91 respondents)
	* Yes (57%)
	* No (19%)
	* What is it? (23%)

1. **March 2011 - Will you be studying in the Library over Easter?** (66 respondents)
Linked to the first time Library would be open during the Easter closure period
	* Yes (81%)
	* No (13%)
	* Maybe (4%)
2. **Oct 2011 - What do you think about our e-books?** (56 respondents)
Following active promotion of e-books, the above question was asked again to see whether the response had changed in two years (October 2009). Response rate was much lower so did not provide a like for like comparison.
	* Love them (28%)
	* Hate them (3%)
	* Never use them (33%)
	* What are they? (33%)

1. **Nov 2011 - When you need help from the Library, what do you do?** (62 respondents)
A rerun of a question asked in the 2009 in the library student survey. Twitter was added to the results. Results were surprising as the Library Twitter feed is actually very popular and receives enquiries through it.
	* Look on the library website (48%)
	* Ask a friend or colleague (4%)
	* Ask staff at a library desk (33%)
	* Ask my librarian (8%)
	* Email or phone the Library (4%)
	* Send a Twitter message (0%)
2. **Oct 2012 - Which do you prefer?** (185 respondents)

As part of a bigger promotion activity at the start of the academic year, this web poll which aimed at promoting the different study zones within the library.

* + Silent study (49%)
	+ Group study (13%)
	+ Quiet study (37%)