

The background of the slide features a large, faint watermark of the University of Edinburgh seal. The seal is circular and contains the text 'THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH' around its perimeter. In the center, there is a shield with various symbols, including a book and a sunburst.

Library in your laptop: the subject librarian's role in supporting online learning

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Outline

- Context
- Online learning in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
- Our current support of online courses
- Survey aims and methods
- Survey findings
- Discussion
- Future developments

Context

- Colleges at the University of Edinburgh (UoE)
 - Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)
 - Science and Engineering
 - Humanities and Social Sciences
- 20 Taught (Masters/Diploma/Certificate) online-only programmes across UoE
- 12 programmes (excl. online CPD courses) in CMVM
- Student numbers in CMVM (excl. CPD)
 - 673 total taught postgraduate
 - ~500 total online-only taught postgraduate

Online learning in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

- Strategy to increase PG student numbers by 50% (online or 'traditional')
- Taught postgraduate student numbers increased by 92% over the last two years (from 350 in 2007/8 to 673 in 2009/10)
- 2004 – first online-only MSc
- 2009 – 12 online programmes
- 2010 – 4 new online programmes to begin

Our current support of online courses

- Preparation of new materials
 - Challenge of writing for online delivery
- Induction for new students
 - Varies from none to e.g. Adobe Connect desktop virtual meeting or face to face induction
- Access to resources
 - Facilitated by e.g. Ezproxy, ILLiad (including free scans from print holdings), e-reserve, Shibboleth
- Information skills development
 - Varies from none to integrated, assessed coursework
- Problem solving
 - Email, Skype, phone, VLE discussion boards

Survey aims

The aim of the survey was to gather from our online learners feedback on:

- how they access the remote library
- what resources they use
- their views on strengths and weaknesses of the service.

Survey methods

- Main survey via Bristol Online Survey tool <https://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/>
 - 27 questions, run for 10 weeks
 - Quantitative and qualitative
 - 72 responses (plus 10 incomplete returns)
 - Disseminated by email and VLEs via course organisers
- Subset of 9 survey questions included within course evaluation for Law programmes
 - 23 responses
- Overall response rate 12% (95 out of 773)
- No questions were mandatory



What are your experiences of using Library services for your current studies?

13. When you access library resources, do you access them via:

	Almost always	Quite often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a. An external web page (e.g. Google search)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Your course's virtual learning environment (e.g. WebCT, eScript, eSurg, moodle)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. A MyEd channel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The library ejournal search facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. A library subject database	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. If you selected Other in question 13, please indicate the access route(s) here

Survey respondents (1)

Data from complete returns:

- 60% (n43) from the UK
- Other 40% from 20 different countries
 - 9 in Europe
 - 8 in North America
 - 5 in Africa
 - 4 in Asia
 - 1 in South America
 - 1 in Australia

(excludes Law students)

Survey respondents (2)

Data from complete returns:

- 66% (n47) have English as their first language
- 38% (n27) 6 years or more since previous formal programme of study
- 82% (n58) no previous formal online learning

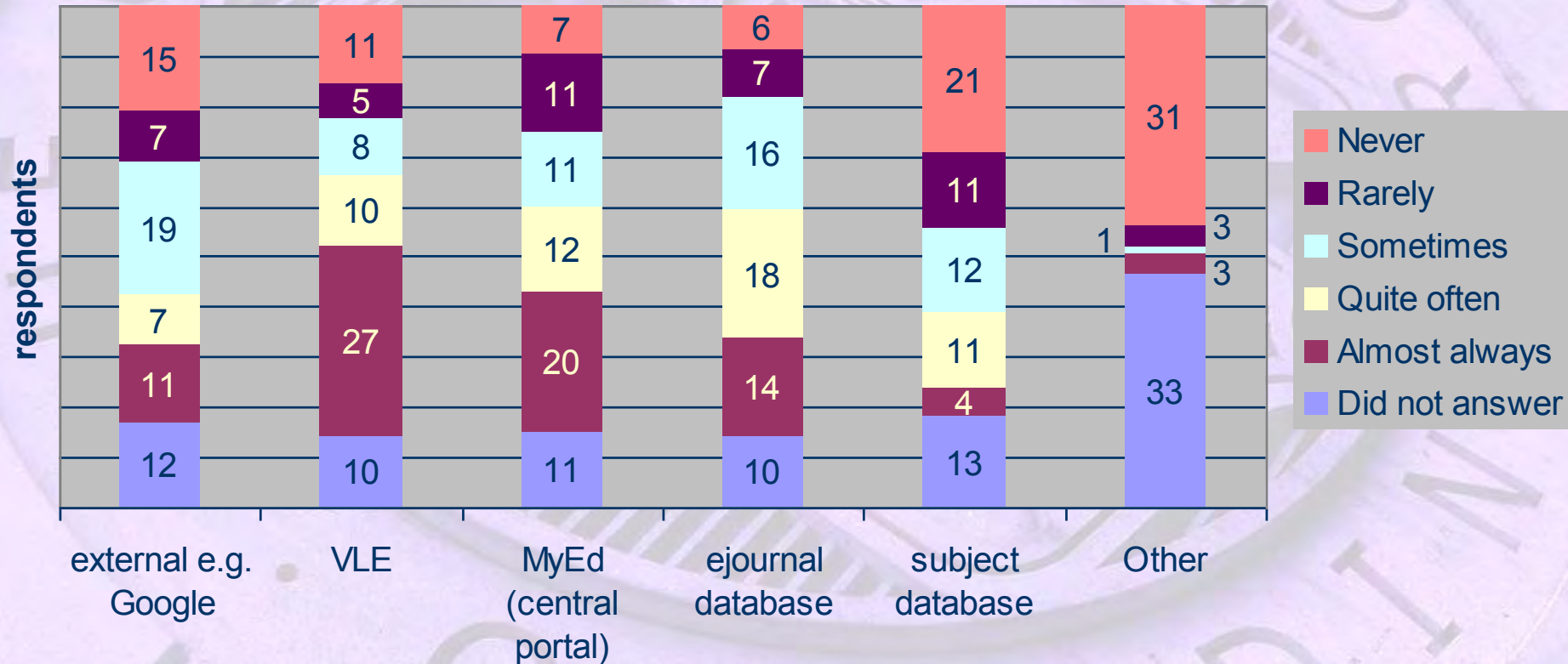
(excludes Law students)

Findings: access (1)

- Internet connection type
 - 63% (n44) use broadband internet connection
 - 31% (n22) use wifi or mobile phone network
 - 3% (n2) use dial-up internet connection
- Location of access (daily or several times a week)
 - 93% (n86) home
 - 69% (n58) work
 - 10% (n7) other location
- Equipment used to access course materials (daily or several times a week)
 - 65% (n57) desktop computer
 - 84% (n76) laptop/netbook
 - 8% (n6) mobile phone
 - 3% (n2) iPod/MP3 player

Findings: access (2)

When you access library resources do you access them via ...?



(excludes Law students)

Findings: access (3)

Do you use information services other than the University of Edinburgh online library?

NHS elibrary/Knowledge Network	19
RCVS Trust Library	5
International Veterinary Information Service	7
SCONUL access for local UK academic libraries	2
Public libraries	9
HINARI/AGORA	2
Other physical libraries (employer, hospital, university not mentioned as SCONUL)	14
Intute	1
JISC	1
PubMed	2
Open access journals	1
African Journals Online	1
Google, Google Scholar, Google Books, Amazon Search Inside	6
No response	22

(excludes Law students)

Findings: access (4)

- These online learners use multiple information services in addition to UoE
 - ‘...access is easier and no login – so quicker and easier if working from office’.
- Poor ease of access, lack of seamless links to full text
 - ‘I find the ease of access of online information services at Edinburgh to be quite poor compared with my own university. I regularly had problems [...] to actually connect with full text [...] often I would get strange errors and never get to the full text.’
- Collection coverage – positive and negative
 - ‘... so comprehensive it is a disappointment when something is not available.’
 - ‘many of the journals that I require [...] are not available. We should be able to borrow textbooks via post at no extra charge.’

Findings: induction (1)

- Previous information skills training
 - 26% (n19) previous course
 - 18% (n13) self taught
 - 19% (n14) none/very little
 - However, no difference in frequency of use of resources
- Information skills training on current programme
 - 51% (n36) do not remember receiving training
 - However, does not always correlate with our involvement

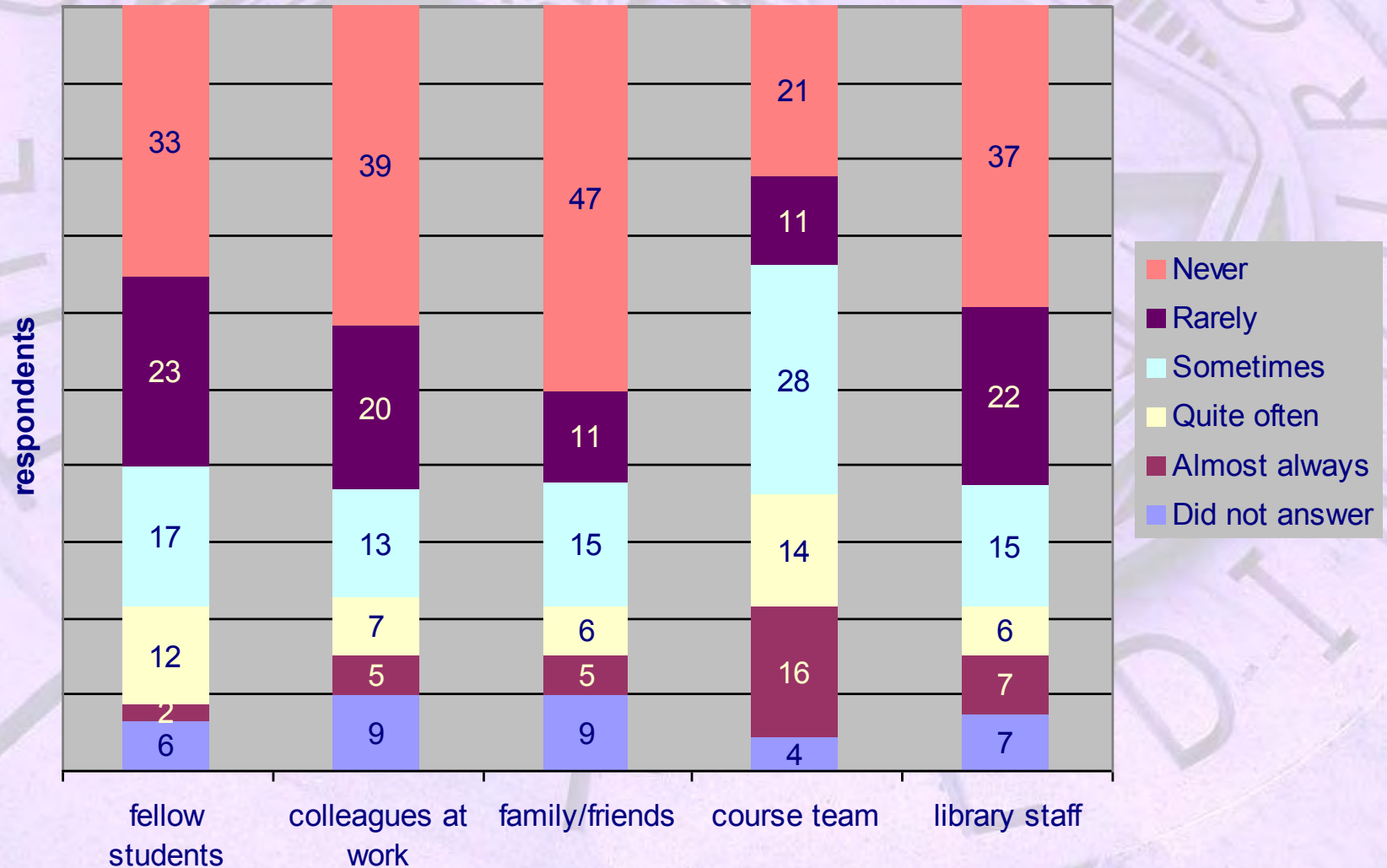
(excludes Law students)

Findings: induction (2)

- Found overall to be helpful, and recommended induction to new students
- Identified a learning curve
- Found that perseverance and practice are necessary
- Suggested refreshers and online tutorials for revisiting
- Important to ask for help in early stages

Findings: support frequency

If you need help accessing or using library resources how regularly do you ask ...?



Findings: support preferences

- Library staff and Course team were indicated as equally preferred sources of help
- Library staff 'knowledgeable and helpful'
- Course teams perceived as approachable, understanding and responsive: 'always there for me'
- Fellow students are like support network

***Most* helpful aspect of Library**

- Access to wide range of electronic resources (books, journals, databases)
 - ‘access to e-journals, e-books as well as literature databases constitutes an absolute necessity...without this, access to vital information for the course would require copious efforts.’
- Course readings
 - ‘All the material has already been collated and saved in an easy to download format’.
- Training and support
 - ‘assistance of literature research and help with references...effective communication via mail’

***Least* helpful aspect of Library**

- **Technical problems, lack of support**
'Unreliability of the online library resources such as full text connectivity'.
- **Library's online presence and search tools**
'I find accessing text through the library a frustrating experience' and 'there are so many dead ends on the Univ online library site'
- **Limited selection of resources**
'Lack of access to text books. Very few relevant books seem to be held in e-form.'
- **Limited services for the remote student**
'Unable to access MD theses without attending library in person.'

Discussion

- Concern that frustrating first experiences prevent full use of available resources
- Are students really aware of what is available to them?
- Learning technologies are developing swiftly, but we must bear in mind those students with wireless, mobile, or dial-up access.
- Providing efficient access to collated readings versus the development of discovery skills
- Proliferating VLE locations has big impact on support time

Future developments

- Target areas of misunderstanding (e.g. document delivery)
- Adjust induction schedule (e.g. Equine – week 1 focus on access; week 2 on using resources, info skills)
- Promote Library induction to programmes currently without one
- Create short video clips that can be revisited
- Feed results into wider review of finding aids to improve functionality and usability
- Further integrate support in learning environments (e.g. VLEs, Second Life)

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