

Extension's Information Use and Need: Surveying , Analyzing, and Planning Outreach to Extension Staff

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BACKGROUND

This poster seeks to extend previous research around outreach by libraries to Extension staff by:

- examining the information seeking strategies of the Extension staff
- finding the effectiveness of existing information systems and services and the extent to which they meet the information requirement of Extension staff
- identifying the information sources and types of publications used by the Extension staff with particular reference to secondary and tertiary sources and
- identifying the problems faced by the Extension staff while gathering information and to provide appropriate suggestions to overcome them

METHODS

The sixteen-question survey of Extension information use and need was sent out to program area staff.

Distribution: MNEXT-PS listerv (372 members)

Area: Minnesota

Response rate: 41.66%

DISCUSSION

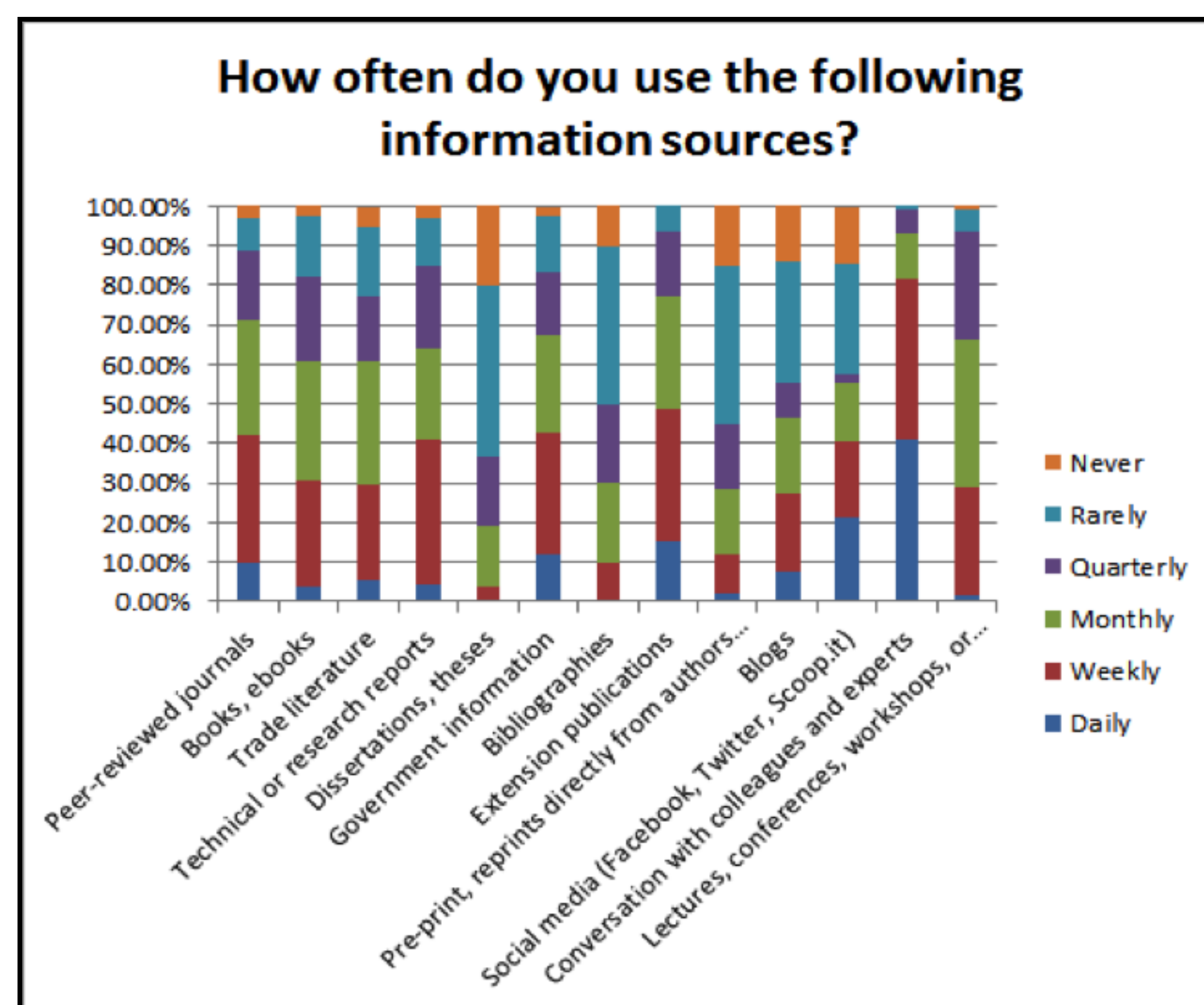


Figure 1

DISCUSSION

Providing access to these resources electronically (Figure 1) for staff that work and/or serve in remote areas is a priority for libraries. The top sources used on a daily or weekly basis are:

- Technical or research reports (41.2%)
- Government information (42.7%)
- Peer-reviewed journals (42%),
- Extension publications (48.9%)
- Conversations with colleagues and experts (81.6%)

Many respondents commented about how they find articles more easily using Google Scholar than library databases. This may be an opportunity to raise awareness of advanced search features in databases, federated searching, and SciVal Experts@Minnesota, a scholar profile resource.

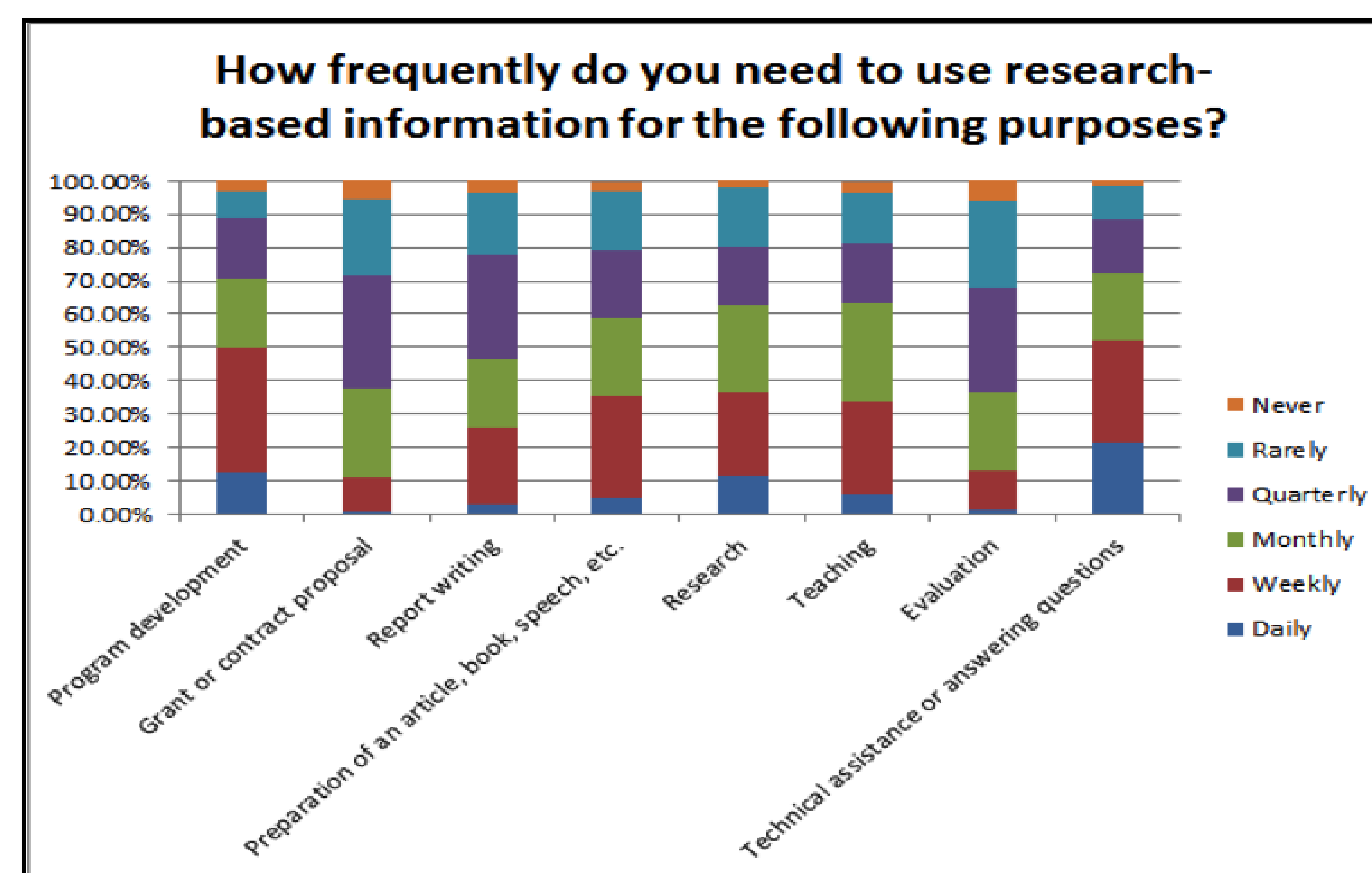


Figure 2

The following purposes required the most research-based information on a daily or weekly basis (Figure 2).

- Technical assistance 51.9%
- Program development 50%
- Applied research 38%

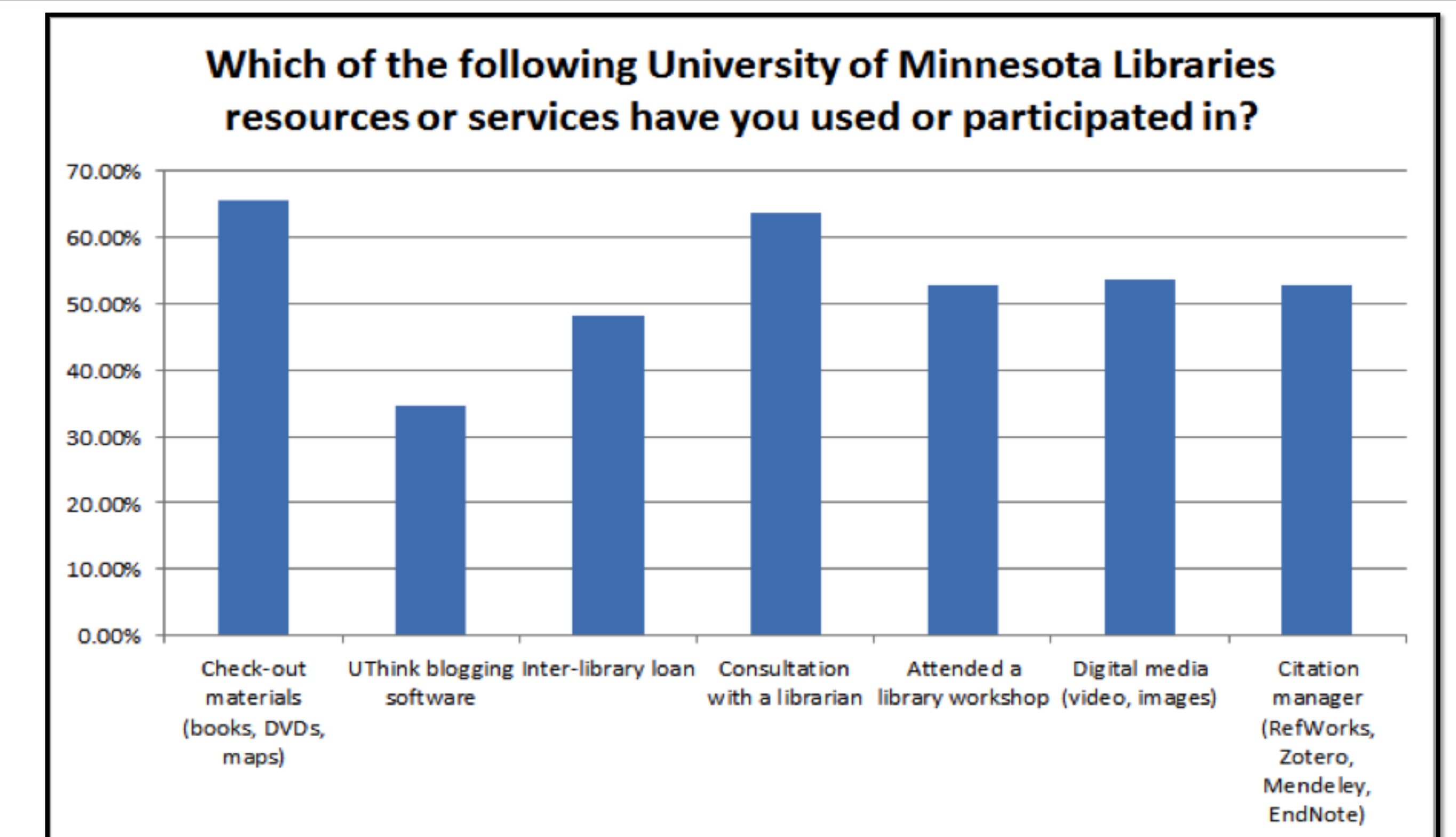


Figure 3

The top three library services used were (Figure 3).

- Check-out materials 65%
 - Regional staff use the statewide library delivery service .
- Consultation with a librarian 63.6%
- Attended library workshops 52.7%
 - We offer numerous webinars throughout the year on copyright, library searching, h-index, and more.

CONCLUSION

Since the preeminent information-seeking tool is a search engine, libraries must position themselves to inform extension staff how to setup Google Scholar to link to library licensed materials. Additional tools to make the library presence seamless into extension's workflow are needed. Extension staff members would welcome professional development and assistance with advanced information seeking tools and techniques. Areas of particular interest include database searching tips and ticks, and productivity or workflow tools, such as note taking, syncing documents among devices, and PDF organizing. Librarians must integrate themselves into all areas of extension work, in order to disseminate and integrate library resources and services into extension's daily activities.

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