

# IReL Impact Survey

March 2007



## Report and Analysis

### **IReL Monitoring Group, July 2007**

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### **IReL Member Institutions**

<i>University</i>	<i>Web site address</i>
Dublin City University	<a href="http://www.library.dcu.ie">www.library.dcu.ie</a>
National University of Ireland, Galway	<a href="http://www.library.nuigalway.ie">www.library.nuigalway.ie</a>
National University of Ireland, Maynooth	<a href="http://www.nuim.ie/library">www.nuim.ie/library</a>
University College Cork	<a href="http://www.booleweb.ucc.ie">www.booleweb.ucc.ie</a>
University College Dublin	<a href="http://www.ucd.ie/library">www.ucd.ie/library</a>
University of Dublin, Trinity College	<a href="http://www.tcd.ie/library">www.tcd.ie/library</a>
University of Limerick	<a href="http://www.ul.ie/~library">www.ul.ie/~library</a>

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## Foreword

The decision to establish a national service delivering peer-reviewed research findings in electronic journals was an ambitious and ground-breaking initiative. The need to provide current information to support investigation teams under the Science Foundation Ireland programme was identified as an urgent requirement by Principal Investigators and was strongly supported by the Higher Education Authority.

The Irish University Association Librarians' Group has managed the selection of resources and the negotiations for the acquisition of journals and electronic books, delivered as the service now known as **IReL – The Irish Research eLibrary**. IRIS, a limited liability company, is used to process accounts and to manage finance. The detailed work of rolling out the range of resources has been led by the IReL Steering Group.

The choice of resources has been determined by the views of researchers, gleaned from detailed questionnaires and the establishment of good local communications in the individual universities.

The service providing resources in Information Technology and Biotechnology has been jointly funded by SFI and HEA for a five year period 2004-08. In 2006, the initial subject coverage was widened to include Humanities and Social Sciences and this extension to new fields is wholly funded by the HEA.

IRel now delivers desk-top access to 6,000 titles in Science and Technology, and 18,000 titles in Humanities and Social Sciences – more than 40 million articles in full text to researchers in all seven universities. IReL also provides access to almost 42,000 electronic books. The total investment in the service is €36 million.

The need to monitor the value, use and impact of such an investment has been to the forefront of thinking and the IUA Librarians established a Monitoring Group to carry out this work.

This report documents the findings of a survey, carried out in the first quarter of 2007, to assess the impact of IReL for researchers. The evidence of 2,266 returns provides valuable information which will assist in the planning for the extension and refinement of the service beyond its initial phases. The report points up very strong support for IReL amongst the research community and identifies areas for future development.

The IUA Librarians' Group gratefully acknowledges the strong support of Science Foundation Ireland and the Higher Education Authority in enabling this exciting and innovative project.

The Group thanks the IReL Monitoring Group under its Chair, John Cox, for its work in delivering the report and Fiona McGoldrick, Manager of IRIS for her support and management of the IReL service.

Robin Adams  
Chair, Irish Universities Association, Librarians' Group  
August, 2007

## Introduction

The IReL Monitoring Group undertook a survey of researchers at the seven Irish universities with access to IReL (the Irish Research e-Library) between 12 and 31 March 2007. A small number of SFI-funded researchers working at other institutions also participated. The survey population consisted of four groups: research-only staff; staff combining research and teaching; PhD students; Research Masters students.

The survey aimed to:

- Establish uptake of IReL by discipline
- Obtain a picture of the impact of IReL on the work of researchers
- Identify any areas for improvement
- Influence future funding
- Increase awareness of IReL

Respondents completed an online questionnaire (Appendix 1), comprising 29 questions in five sections: demographics; use of IReL resources; nature of IReL use; awareness of IReL; further comments. The questionnaire was informed prior to the survey by focus groups at DCU, NUIG and TCD and by feedback from each university to a pilot version.

This report presents and comments on the survey data. It begins with a summary of key findings and recommendations. There follows an outline of the overall response rate. The main body of the report examines the responses to each question, highlighting significant patterns such as variations according to institution, discipline, role or experience of researcher. The IReL Monitoring Group divided the analysis among its members as follows:

Questions	Analysed By
1-8	John Cox
9	John Cox, Fiona McGoldrick
10-13	Ailish Brady
14, 29	Arlene Healy
15-16, 18	Niall McSweeney
17	Valerie Payne
19-20	Rosarii Buttimer
21-25	Aoife Geraghty
26-28	Siobhan Dunne

## Key Findings

1. The survey achieved a **response rate** of 18.9%, with 2,266 respondents nationally.
2. The **respondent population** comprised 56.5% staff and 43.5% students:

Response	Count	Percent
Staff: research and teaching	981	43.6%
Student: PhD	818	36.4%
Staff: Research - only	291	12.9%
Student: Research Masters	160	7.1%

3. Response by **discipline** showed a balance of 61.4% Science Technology and Medicine (STM) and 38.6% Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS):

Response	Count	Percent
Biological and Medical Sciences	580	25.7%
Arts/Humanities	403	17.9%
Physical Sciences and Mathematics	354	15.7%
Social Sciences	297	13.2%
Engineering	182	8.1%
Computer Sciences	153	6.8%
Business/Commerce	100	4.4%
Law	71	3.1%
Earth, Atmospheric and Ocean Sciences	67	3.0%
Agricultural Sciences	47	2.1%

4. 51.5% of respondents indicated **multidisciplinary** research
5. Just over half of respondents belong to a **research centre or institute**
6. In terms of **experience** 37.9% had been researchers for more than five years and 62.1% had been engaged in research for up to four years

## IReL Resources

7. Respondents cited a total of almost 4,000 journals when asked to name the **top five journals** they consult for their research; **IReL provides access to about three-quarters of these titles.**
8. The most commonly used IReL **STM journal collections** are:

Springer	Academic Press	Wiley Interscience
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9. Researchers cite most frequent use of these **STM non-journal resources**:

Web Of Knowledge	Journal Citation Reports	Scifinder Scholar
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10. These **IReL AHSS journal collections** are most frequently used:

JSTOR	Blackwell Synergy	Oxford University Press
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11. Use of the following **AHSS non-journal resources** is most common:

Web Of Knowledge	Oxford English Dictionary	Psycinfo
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12. Uptake of non-journal resources, including e-books, was noticeably lower than for e-journals.
13. In terms of **gaps in coverage**, researchers typically cite the need for more backfiles, eg full-text journals from more than ten years ago. A tendency to call for resources already provided by IReL, eg Springer, is also evident. Some researchers also cited freely available resources, eg Google Scholar, PubMed. There is some interest in better newspaper coverage, primarily archival. SPIE Digital Library and Scopus are specifically cited by a number of respondents, along with a range of individual journal titles. AHSS researchers noted gaps in foreign-language titles as well as material published in Ireland.

## Using IReL

14. **Routes of access** to IReL resources are varied, in some instances resulting in a loss of association with IReL and non-recognition of that provenance:

Response	Count	Percent
Library website/portal	1,622	71.6%
Search engines, eg Google	1,257	55.5%
Library Catalogue	1,138	50.2%
Databases, eg PubMed	883	39.0%
University Portal	809	35.7%
Publisher websites	761	33.6%

15. Suggestions for **access improvements** include: better linkage to journals, including specific articles, from a number of locations (eg PubMed, Google); easier and more comprehensive identification of available journals; simpler off-campus access; more journals online/wider subject coverage; single point of access (“one-stop shop”); simpler interface for some resources; more training/marketing.
16. A small majority (55%) of respondents indicates that it no longer needs to consult the **printed copy** of journals supplied online by IReL, but 59% of Arts/Humanities researchers hold the opposite view. The long-term future of IReL is a consideration for some respondents.

17. Researchers use IReL for a **range of purposes**:

Response	Count	Percent
Literature searching	1,780	78.6%
Selecting a publication, eg journal, in which to publish	1,067	47.1%
Current awareness	991	43.7%
Writing thesis	915	40.4%
Preparing research proposals	872	38.5%
Undergraduate teaching	799	35.3%
Supervising research	733	32.3%
Postgraduate teaching	695	30.7%
Measuring impact of own publications, eg number of times cited	648	28.6%
Publishing	640	28.2%
CV preparation	311	13.7%
Inter-institutional collaboration	245	10.8%
Identifying a funding source	170	7.5%
Other	24	1.1%

18. IReL has **impacted very positively on research** according to researchers. Key benefits include: speed; ease of online access; stronger coverage; greater competitiveness; more comprehensive referencing; ability to research in previously impossible areas; facilitation of multidisciplinary research; greater currency.
19. The **impact on teaching** has also been noted, eg: faster transfer of ideas to lecture hall; integration of e-journals into VLEs like Blackboard; easier access to course readings; concurrent multiple user access; wider choice of sources; updated teaching materials.
20. Over three-quarters of respondents agree that IReL has delivered enhanced **multidisciplinary coverage** for their research.
21. Almost half of respondents do not know whether or not IReL has facilitated **collaboration between institutions**, but those who have a view agree by 4:1; IReL itself is viewed as a positive collaboration.
22. One third of survey participants do not know if IReL has increased the **competitiveness of Irish research internationally** but only 4% believe that it has not. Respondents note that IReL makes it easier to recruit new staff and research students, to attract visitors and to improve research productivity.
23. There is a strong majority view (86% to 7%) that **IReL is a necessity** not a luxury.
24. Any **discontinuation** of IReL would be viewed very negatively, with many respondents citing this as disastrous and a return to the dark ages. The loss of the advantages noted earlier would have serious implications for research quality and productivity. Researchers would be unable to afford individual subscriptions;

some would change career. Respondents not based in universities want to see an extension of access to IReL.

## Awareness of IReL

25. Just over half of respondents gave a definite indication that they had **received information about IReL** prior to participating in the survey. Some noted a previous awareness of an increase in the e-resources on offer locally but not of the IReL connection.
26. **Awareness appears to have doubled** since the CONUL survey of researchers in 2005.
27. Libraries proved to be the most common **sources of information about IReL** through their websites, newsletters and staff.
28. Two thirds of respondents see e-mail updates as the best way of **keeping up to date with IReL developments**, followed by the Library website which is cited by more than half of the survey participants. The next most popular option at 28% is an IReL website. In general there is a definite preference for virtual rather than face-to-face approaches.
29. Many participants used the general comments question at the end of the survey to draw attention to the **need for greater awareness** of IReL's resources, with more promotion and more guidance on how to exploit its resources fully.

## Recommendations

**Note:** Some of the actions recommended below merit local consideration; others may be best progressed by national collaboration.

### Coverage

1. Seek continued funding for IReL collections in STM and AHSS in view of strong researcher dependence on these resources.
2. Investigate funding for priority backfile purchases.
3. Review in more detail the list of non-IReL journals identified as being in their top five by individual researchers and prioritise for possible future subscription; investigate any other gaps identified by researchers.
4. Continue to monitor and report uptake through usage statistics for individual resources, including e-books.
5. Review or re-negotiate resources as appropriate.
6. Investigate the range of subscription models, eg pay-per-view, in relation to individual journal titles outside major publisher packages.

### Branding

7. Ensure presence of IReL logo or appropriate text in library-mediated e-resource lists and descriptions of individual resources.
8. Investigate approaches to embedding IReL entitlements in services like Google Scholar, PubMed etc.

### Promotion

9. Promote new or changed resources through a variety of channels, especially online.
10. Create a national IReL website to promote uptake.
11. Promote the use of newer multidisciplinary resources, in AHSS particularly.
12. Maximise expertise of, and current awareness by, library staff with IReL.
13. Align training to the range of uses made of IReL by researchers.
14. Maximise the SIF Graduate Skills programme, especially its information literacy module, to promote IReL to PhD students

15. Promote the uptake of e-books, datasets and reference sources.
16. Support wider access to IReL resources for teaching and learning purposes by embedding in VLEs, course websites etc.
17. Emphasise the role of IReL in promoting multidisciplinary research, inter-institutional collaboration and international competitiveness.

### **Access**

18. Engage in dialogue with vendors to satisfy researcher needs for more functional and simpler user interfaces.
19. Investigate further the viability of, and funding for, a federated discovery, search and retrieval interface for IReL resources. This has been submitted to IUA as a SIF2 proposal.
20. Review off-campus access arrangements at each university to simplify procedures and maximise reliability of connections from multiple locations.

## Response Rate

The survey achieved a response rate nationally of 18.9%, with 2,239 questionnaire submissions from a target population totalling 11,856 researchers across the seven institutions, summarised as follows:

Institution	Target Population	Responses	Response Rate
DCU	1,007	190	18.9%
NUIG	1,648	443	26.9%
NUIM	802	205	25.6%
TCD	3,125	485	15.5%
UCC	1,554	325	20.9%
UCD	2,367	337	14.2%
UL	1,353	254	18.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,856</b>	<b>2,239*</b>	<b>18.9%</b>

\* an additional five respondents submitted questionnaires without indicating their affiliation, while 22 SFI-funded researchers outside the Irish universities participated, giving an actual total of 2,266 responses.

The overall response rate was satisfactory, although below the 26.3% achieved for an earlier survey of the same population in April-May 2005 on library support to researchers. Survey fatigue was cited as a factor in a number of institutions where this survey coincided with other online questionnaires. Submission deadlines for PRTL1 4 phase 1 and EU FP7 funding may also have impacted on the response rate. Although the introductory text to the questionnaire itself (Appendix 1) described the time limit on initial funding for IReL, the opening email and subsequent reminder sent out to the target population did not do so, simply noting “Your feedback about how IReL has impacted your research will influence the future funding of IReL.” Greater emphasis on the threat of possible discontinuation may have generated a stronger response. Nevertheless the survey reflects the opinions of a representative group of over 2,200 researchers.

Each institution was dependent on locally available email lists in order to publicise the survey to its target audience. Variations in terms of list comprehensiveness, accuracy and granularity will have affected the local and overall response rates. Obtaining full lists of members of research centres proved to be a common difficulty.

## SECTION

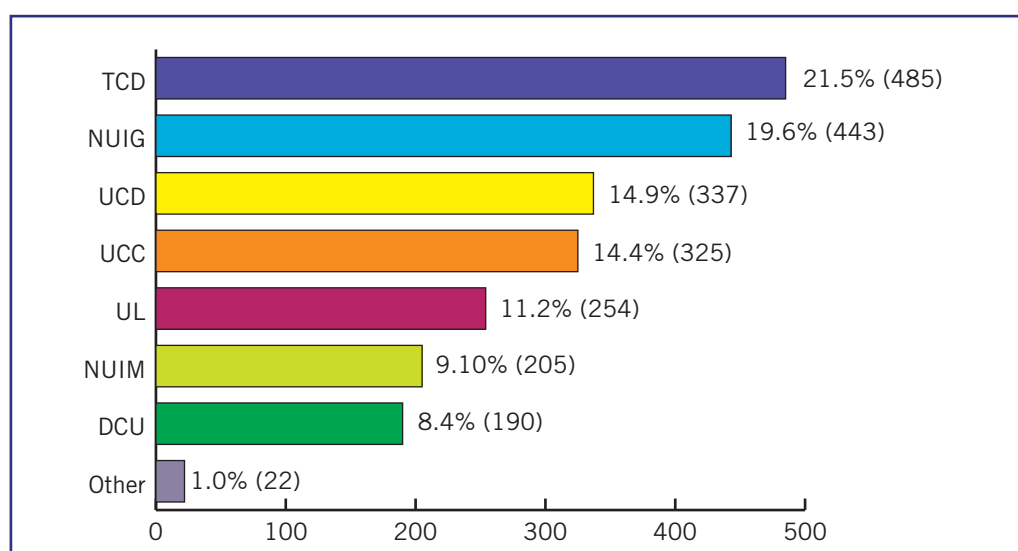
# 1

## About You

Section One of the survey aimed to find out some background information about researchers, including institution, research discipline, role and top five journals.

### Question 1. Institution

The opening question asked researchers to name their **current institution**; all but five out of 2,266 respondents did so.

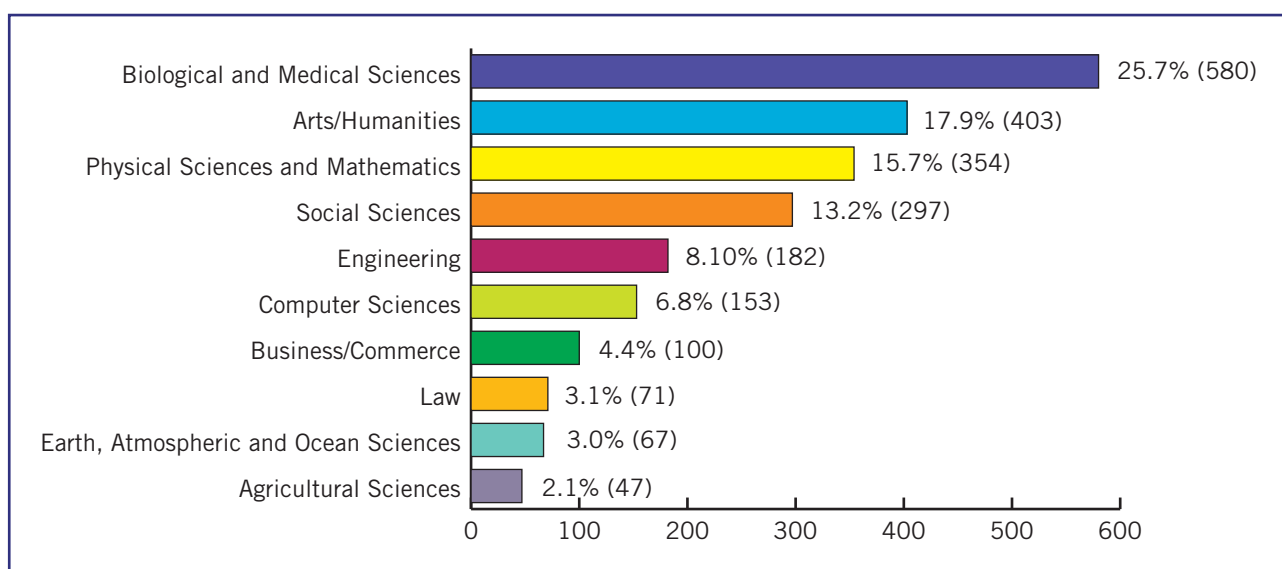


Question 1. Institution

Variations in response rates, and possibly in local mailing list coverage, meant that returns per university did not necessarily correspond with the relative size of the research population at each institution; thus, for example, respondents from NUIG outnumbered those from UCD. A few SFI-funded researchers from outside the universities (eg Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland) participated.

### Question 2. Major Research Discipline

This question asked respondents to indicate the **discipline they considered most applicable** to their research; only one discipline could be ticked from a choice of ten offered. The categorisation used corresponded closely to that employed in the HEA report *Research Infrastructure in Ireland- Building for Tomorrow* [<http://tinyurl.com/32y9zr>], published in 2007.



### Question 2. Discipline

Response by discipline showed a balance of 61.4% for Science Technology and Medicine (STM) and 38.6% for Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS, including Business/Commerce and Law). Biological and Medical Sciences yielded the highest percentage of respondents at five of the seven universities.

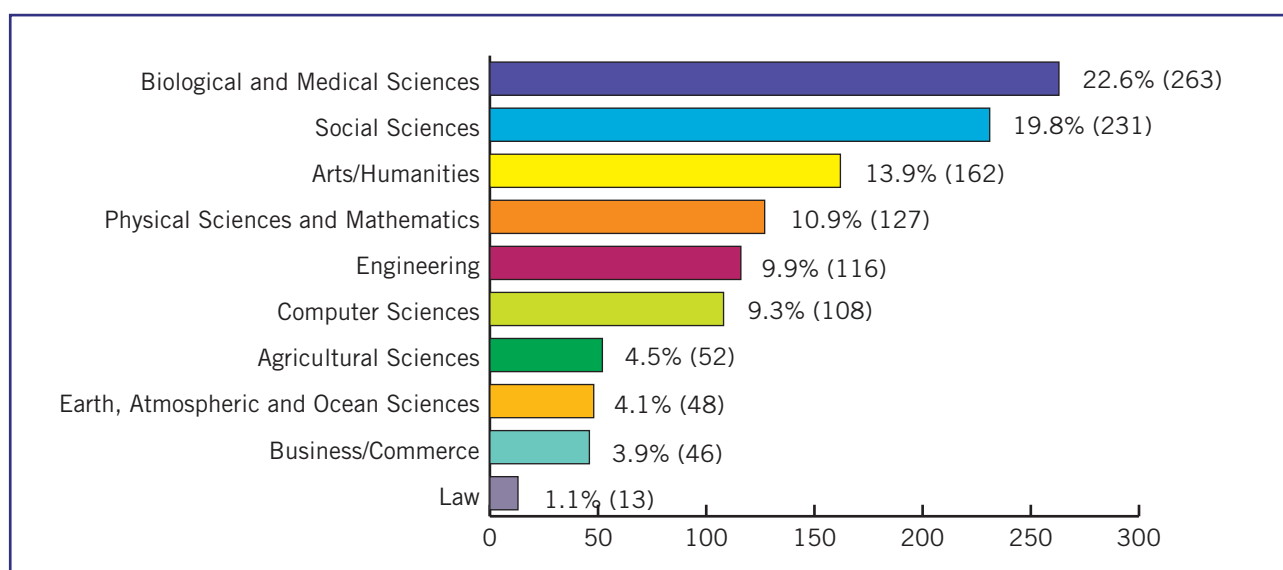
	DCU	NUIG	NUIM	TCD	UCC	UL	UCD	Other
Arts/Humanities	8.9%	15.8%	30.2%	15.7%	19.1%	15.4%	22.8%	0%
Business/Commerce	7.4%	4.3%	0%	2.7%	5.8%	7.9%	4.2%	4.5%
Computer Sciences	15.3%	6.1%	6.3%	7.2%	0.6%	9.4%	6.2%	9.1%
Earth/Atmos/Ocean	0.5%	5.4%	2%	3.9%	3.1%	0.4%	0.9%	13.6%
Agricultural Sci	0.5%	0%	0%	0.4%	1.5%	2.4%	9.2%	9.1%
Engineering	11.6%	7.2%	5.9%	4.9%	3.1%	23.6%	6.5%	0%
Law	0.5%	3.6%	0%	0.8%	8.6%	3.9%	2.7%	9.1%
Physical Sci/Maths	17.9%	16.5%	17.6%	16.5%	20.9%	12.2%	8.3%	18.2%
Biol/Medical Sci	24.2%	29.8%	21%	33.6%	21.5%	11.4%	26.4%	31.8%
Social Sciences	11.6%	11.1%	16.6%	13.8%	14.8%	13%	12.8%	4.5%
Total Counts	190	443	205	485	325	254	337	22

## Question 3. Multidisciplinary Research

Identification of multidisciplinary research was the purpose of this question which was worded: **If your research is multidisciplinary, which discipline other than that ticked above is most significant?** It offered the same list of disciplines as Question 2, along with a “Not Applicable” option, selected by 396 respondents. These need to be discounted, along with the 704 participants who did not answer this question, when calculating the number of respondents indicating multidisciplinary research. It was, however, decided to retain the 9% of respondents who indicated the same discipline in Questions 2 and 3 on the grounds that these participants considered their research to be multidisciplinary in terms of the actual subjects combined.



1,166 out of 2,266 respondents, 51.5%, consider their research to be multidisciplinary, generating the following chart of secondary disciplines:



*Question 3. Multidisciplinary Research: secondary disciplines*

Biological and Medical Sciences proved the most popular secondary as well as primary discipline. The most common combinations in numerical terms (primary discipline named first) were:

Arts/Humanities – Social Sciences

Biological and Medical Sciences – Physical Sciences and Mathematics

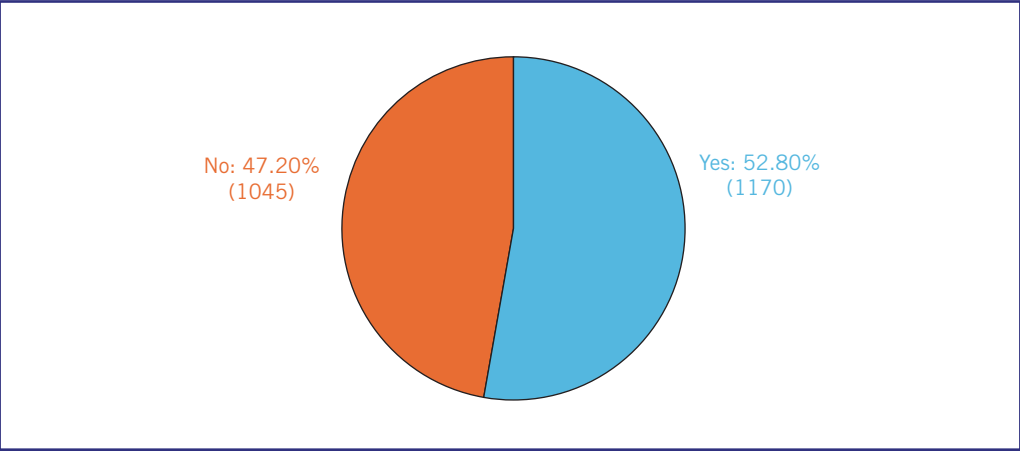
Biological and Medical Sciences – Engineering

## Question 4. Department

This question enabled respondents to specify their **department name** in the free-text box provided. There was no intent to analyse responses to this question on its own; rather its purpose was to facilitate a further level of subject analysis than permitted by the previous questions about broad discipline. This proved helpful for a number of later questions, eg 10-13 in which it can be used to show uptake by departments of each of the IReL journal or non-journal collections nationally or locally. Including variant names, the departments most commonly cited by respondents to this question were chemistry, physics, history and computer science.

# Question 5. Membership of Research Centre/Institute

Respondents were asked if they belonged to a **research centre or institute**.



Question 5. Research Centre/Institute membership

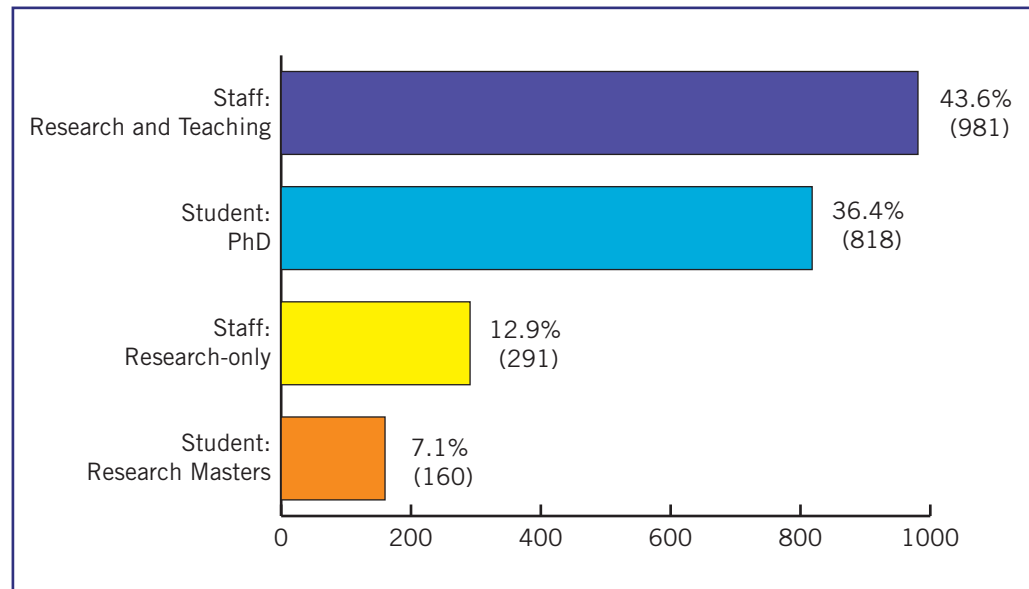
**A small majority indicated membership of a research centre or institute.**

Respondents did not necessarily belong exclusively to a research centre. Membership is noticeably more common in STM than AHSS disciplines. Seventy five per cent of the research-only staff in the survey are members but they only constitute 18.7% of the research centre population (219 out of 1,170).

	DCU	NUIG	NUIM	TCD	UCC	UL	UCD	Other
Yes	70.5%	58.2%	41.5%	44.1%	43.1%	65.0%	46.9%	63.6%
No	28.4%	40.9%	56.1%	52.0%	54.8%	33.5%	51.3%	27.3%
Total Counts	190	443	205	485	325	254	337	22

## Question 6. Role

This question asked about the respondent's **role** according to four choices offered – research-only staff, research/teaching staff, PhD students and Research Masters students.



Question 6. Role

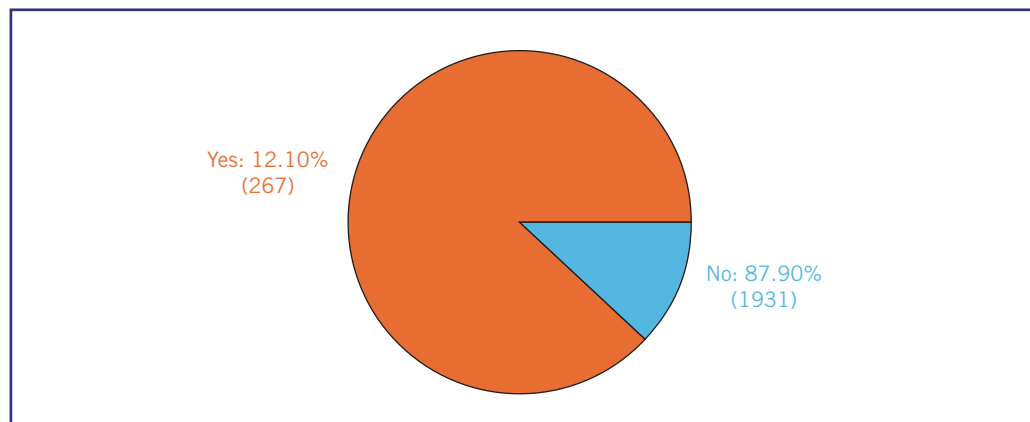
**Staff respondents accounted for 56.5% of the survey population, with research students at 43.5%.**

	DCU	NUIG	NUIM	TCD	UCC	UCD	UL	Other
Staff: research-only	12.6%	16%	8.8%	16.9%	13.2%	3.9%	14.2%	18.2%
Staff: research & teaching	40.5%	41.8%	38.5%	42.3%	47.1%	39.5%	53.1%	59.1%
Student: PhD	40.5%	35%	45.4%	34.2%	29.5%	46.6%	26.4%	18.2%
Student: Research Masters	5.8%	6.5%	6.8%	5.8%	9.2%	9.5%	5.9%	4.5%
Total Counts	190	443	205	485	325	337	254	22

Within the staff groupings research-only staff represented 22.9% of the total staff response, although for this survey this figure was significantly lower at UCD. PhDs accounted for 83.6% of the student category. Research-only staff feature far more strongly in STM than AHSS disciplines.

## Question 7. Postdoctoral Researchers

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they were postdoctoral researchers, enabling filtering of other data in the survey accordingly.



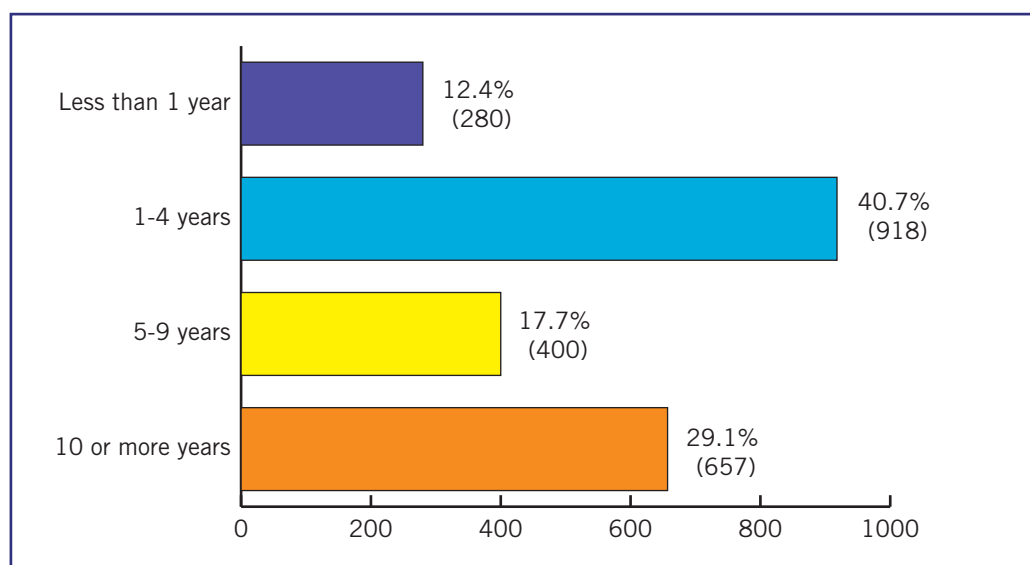
Question 7. Postdoctoral Researchers

**12.1% of respondents were postdoctoral researchers, and all but 31 of these 267 respondents belonged to STM disciplines**

	DCU	NUIG	NUIM	TCD	UCC	UL	UCD	Other
Yes	13.7%	15.1%	8.3%	15.1%	10.5%	13.0%	4.7%	4.5%
No	82.6%	84.0%	88.3%	81.9%	86.2%	82.3%	92.0%	95.5%
Total Counts	190	443	205	485	325	254	337	22

## Question 8. Research Experience

Four choices were available to participants in response to the question: **How long have you been engaged in research?**



Question 8. Research Experience

There was a fairly even spread of experience in the response; 53.1% of respondents had been engaged in research for no more than four years, while 46.8% indicated five or more years' experience.

As would be expected, staff are far more experienced than student researchers, with 77.5% of staff having five or more years' experience. Locally, institutional patterns mirror the national trend but UCD had a noticeably less experienced survey population than elsewhere, followed by DCU.

	DCU	NUIG	NUIM	TCD	UCC	UCD	UL	Other
Less than 1 year	8.9%	12.2%	8.8%	11.8%	14.8%	19.3%	7.5%	9.1%
1-4 years	47.9%	37.5%	43.4%	41.2%	34.2%	42.7%	42.9%	18.2%
5-9 years	16.3%	19.2%	19.0%	17.5%	18.2%	12.2%	21.3%	27.3%
10 or more years	26.8%	30.9%	27.3%	29.3%	32.0%	25.5%	28.0%	45.5%
Total Counts	190	443	205	485	325	337	254	22

## Question 9. Top 5 Journals

Question 9 asked researchers to name the **top five journals that they consult for their research**. It had a number of purposes, primarily the calculation of IReL's percentage of coverage of the journals most important to researchers in this survey. Other outcomes include the identification of most cited titles and the generation of lists of titles included and not currently included in IReL.

Analysis of this question proved to be a detailed and lengthy process, primarily due to the free-text response which resulted in many variations in the way respondents cited titles, necessitating a lot of interpretation to identify the intended journal. Its output was transferred to Excel for sorting and de-duplication. There were 10,263 titles prior to de-duplication, indicating that most respondents participated, although in some cases researchers opted to cite fewer than five titles. De-duplication involved the use of Excel followed by considerable human intervention, eg to consolidate the same title cited differently. The number of unique titles proved actually to be just below 4,000, representing 1.76 titles per respondent. **There appears to be a strong degree of clustering among the top five journals identified in the survey.** This tendency is more obvious for STM than AHSS titles, as indicated in the tables below:

Title	Entries in Question 9
Nature	225
Science	143
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences	77
Physical Review	72
Journal of Biological Chemistry	71

*Most frequently cited STM titles among respondents' top five journals*

Title	Entries in Question 9
Academy of Management Journal	18
Eire-Ireland	18
Irish Historical Studies	17
Past and Present	16
British Journal of Sociology	14

*Most frequently cited AHSS titles among respondents' top five journals*

A key focus of Question 9 was the opportunity it afforded to calculate the extent to which IReL covers the titles prioritised by researchers. This involved checking all unique titles cited against a list of IReL titles supplied by the IRIS Office (STM, 18 April 2007 and AHSS, 26 March 2007). Again Excel automated some of this process, identifying exact matches between the two lists, but a major human effort was needed to check each title in order to arrive at reasonably accurate figures and listings. Variant citation of titles proved a significant issue and it was difficult to identify all titles. As a result, there may be some journals on the list of titles not covered by IReL which do not exist or in fact were intended to represent titles actually provided by IReL. A check of titles beginning with the letters A to I inclusive indicates 61 titles unidentifiable at this stage. The figure cited in the next paragraph may therefore be a slight underestimate of IReL's coverage.

**Overall, 3,004 of 3,987 titles cited in Question 9 are included in IReL's coverage. This represents just over 75% of researchers' top five journals in this survey** and, as noted earlier, the actual figure is probably a little higher. This is a very encouraging finding and reflects very well on the work of various parties, including the IUA Librarians, the IReL Steering Group, IRIS Office and local library staff in consulting with researchers in order to prioritise IReL's coverage. It also demonstrates a massive dependence on IReL by researchers and the depth of feeling in Question 25 about the consequences of any discontinuation is not surprising.

The survey has generated lists of titles subscribed and not subscribed by IReL. It is worth noting that all of the titles in the earlier tables of most cited STM and AHSS journals in this question are accessible via IReL. A further check of 77 of the titles with 10 or more citations in Question 9 revealed that 67 (87%) are offered by IReL. The exceptions are:

Journal	Citations in Question 9
Environment and Planning	20
Journal of Geophysical Research	18
NEJM	15
Peritia	14
Stem Cells	14
Geophysical Research Letters	13
Celtica	12
Eigse	12
Journal of Dairy Science	10
Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy	10

Sixty nine of 217 single and learned society titles specifically requested by researchers and provided by IReL were cited in this question.

The full list of titles not included in IReL merits further study. It contains a range of Irish journals, including local history titles. Some of these, along with others on the list published worldwide, may not be available online; a check of titles in the list beginning with the letters A to I inclusive indicates 59 titles only available in print. In the case of Irish-published titles, is there a copyright entitlement to those that are online? It is important to note that the list also includes titles available on open access and not therefore identified for acquisition by IReL. Over 40 titles were identified in the *Directory of Open Access Journals* [<http://www.doaj.org/>] and other sources. Another caveat is that some of the titles cited, eg *New England Journal of Medicine* are commonly provided locally rather than through IReL.

A priority action is to examine the frequency of citation in this question of titles definitely not accessible via IReL and to identify online availability to inform possible future subscriptions.





# IReL Resources

Section Two focused on use of IReL resources and sought to identify any gaps in provision.

## Question 10. Use of STM Journal Collections

**Note:** Questions 10-13 presented researchers with lists of STM and AHSS journal collections and other information resources. To keep the survey length manageable the lists included most, but not all, of IReL's resources. It is important to note that pre-survey focus group feedback emphasised the tendency for researchers to recognise journals by their individual titles rather than their publishers or other online collection names. Results may therefore indicate perception of use rather than actual usage of the resources listed. They are likely to represent an underestimate of actual usage and need to be viewed in conjunction with the annual usage statistics collected by the Monitoring Group.

In Question 10, researchers were asked to choose any/all of the STM journal collections they use in their research. The question was open to all respondents and some AHSS researchers participated. The final column in the following table refers to the percentage of total respondents to the survey.

Do you use any of the following IReL SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY/MEDICINE JOURNAL collections? (please select all that apply)		
Response	Count	Percent
Springer	1,010	44.6%
Academic Press (via Science Direct)	874	38.6%
Wiley Interscience	871	38.4%
Blackwell Synergy	859	37.9%
JSTOR	610	26.9%
Nature Publishing Group	600	26.5%
Oxford University Press	595	26.3%
Cambridge Journals Online	510	22.5%
Annual Reviews	405	17.9%
IEEE/IEE	404	17.8%
British Medical Journal Online Journals Collection	321	14.2%
American Chemical Society	250	11.0%
Cell Press	200	8.8%
Institute of Physics	197	8.7%
ACM Digital Library (Association for Computing Machinery)	194	8.6%
Academic Search Premier	178	7.9%
American Institute of Physics	173	7.6%
Royal Society of Chemistry	170	7.5%
American Medical Association	131	5.8%
American Physical Society Reviews	122	5.4%

SIAM (Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics)	119	5.3%
American Society for Microbiology	115	5.1%
American Association for Cancer Research	94	4.1%
Optical Society of America	80	3.5%
Wilson OmniFile	59	2.6%
GeoScience World	55	2.4%
American Society of Mechanical Engineers	52	2.3%

Six out of the eight large multidisciplinary collections (Springer, Wiley Interscience, Blackwell Synergy, JSTOR, Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press) made it to the top ten with Wilson OmniFile and Academic Search Premier in the bottom half of the table, the latter probably due to its recent purchase (Jan 2007). The prominence of Academic Press journals may have been influenced by their association with the well-known ScienceDirect.

It is important to note that in many instances ranking in this table does not correspond with usage statistics for these resources in 2005. Thus Springer is at the top of the table but its downloads in 2005 (60,159) are half of those for Nature Publishing Group (123,860) which ranked sixth in the table. The American Society for Microbiology titles, sixth last in the table, accounted for 81,126 downloads in 2005. As already noted, these are instances of differences between perceived and actual usage, often caused by variations in the degree of brand recognition per resource.

The bottom five, with less than 100 hits, are specialist collections, with the exception of Wilson Omnifile which only 2.6% of STM respondents reported using. As this resource had been acquired before the start of the 06/07 academic year, its showing indicates low awareness and the need for advertising/marketing.

There is considerable scope for further analysis of indicated uptake of each resource in Question 10 (and indeed Questions 11-13) to gain further insights according to a range of criteria, including institution, discipline, department and role.

## Question 11. Use of Other STM Information Sources

This question asked researchers to indicate their use of STM non-journal resources such as databases and reference works. In general, uptake is somewhat below the levels indicated for journal collections in the previous question.

Do you use any of these other IReL SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY/MEDICINE information sources? (please select all that apply)		
Response	Count	Percent
Web of Science	880	38.8%
Web of Knowledge	688	30.4%
Science Citation Index	604	26.7%
Journal Citation Reports	334	14.7%
SciFinder Scholar (Chemical Abstracts etc)	191	8.4%
Wiley Reference Works	183	8.1%

Faculty of 1000: Biology (Biomed Central)	141	6.2%
Inspec (physics, electronics, computing)	125	5.5%
MathSciNet	114	5%
Current Protocols	107	4.7%
Faculty of 1000: Medicine (Biomed Central)	106	4.7%
Embase (Excerpta Medica)	105	4.6%
Beilstein	99	4.4%
Compendex (Engineering Index)	89	3.9%
Biosis Previews (Biological Abstracts)	78	3.4%
Index to Scientific and Technical Proceedings	54	2.4%
CAB Direct (Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau)	51	2.3%
Zentralblatt Math	51	2.3%
SourceOECD	47	2.1%
Engineering Sciences Data Unit (ESDU)	43	1.9%
Essential Science Indicators	39	1.7%

ISI Web of Knowledge (WoK) emerged as a clear leader with the top four sources all being WoK products. However, Essential Science Indicators, another WoK product showed lowest awareness and Biosis Previews was also well down the list, corroborated by 2005 publisher usage statistics (€21.81 per search), indicating that not all of the WoK package is being used to its fullest potential. The high position of Journal Citation Reports tied in with the indicated use of IReL for identifying journals in which to publish, reported in Question 18.

Wiley Reference Works (WRW) was in the top ten even though there had been doubts about its renewal due to low usage statistics for 2005 (€45.19 per download). The 183 who indicated using WRW were spread fairly evenly among the Universities, coming from Biological and Medical Sciences (33.9%), Physical Sciences and Maths (25.1%), Engineering (15.3%) and Social Sciences (8.7%). It is important to note that information had been circulated to researchers about this product and its possible cancellation shortly before the survey began, and this could explain its stronger than expected showing.

SourceOECD featured low in the table for this question. However, it is also a relatively new resource (Oct 2006) and perhaps more applicable to AHSS disciplines. It features more prominently in Question 13. Nevertheless, this and the other resources in the bottom three, ESDU and Essential Science Indicators, might be expected to achieve higher recognition among STM researchers.

## Question 12. Use of AHSS Journal Collections

In Question 12 researchers were asked to select any/all AHSS Journal collections they used. This question was also open to responses from all participants but the majority of responses came from AHSS disciplines. This group accounted for a lower proportion of the survey response than people did the STM research community and the numbers completing this question were correspondingly lower.

Do you use any of the following IReL ARTS/HUMANITIES/SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL collections? (please select all that apply)		
Response	Count	Percent
JSTOR	721	31.8%
Blackwell Synergy	566	25.0%
Oxford University Press	510	22.5%
Cambridge Journals Online	472	20.8%
Taylor and Francis	436	19.2%
Sage	395	17.4%
Springer	335	14.8%
Academic Search Premier	294	13.0%
Wiley InterScience Journals	257	11.3%
Project MUSE	234	10.3%
Emerald FullText	190	8.4%
Business Source Premier	179	7.9%
PsycArticles	148	6.5%
Wilson OmniFile	91	4.0%
Hein Online	83	3.7%

As with Question 10, eight large multi-disciplinary collections featured in the top ten with the exception of Wilson Omnifile. Three of the bottom five, Emerald Fulltext, Business Source Premier and Hein Online are specialist collections in Business/Commerce and Law and these disciplines amount to less than 8% of total respondents. There may be a need for marketing IReL more strongly to these disciplines.

Just over 10% of researchers indicated using Project Muse. Most of these belonged to History and English departments. It is one of the larger collections, but is one of IReL's newer resources (Jan 2007).

Again Wilson OmniFile fared badly, with only 4% recognition. Discussion within the Monitoring Group suggests that this could point to weaknesses in the interface/ functionality of the product itself as well as a need for marketing and promotion. Academic Search Premier would also seem to warrant a stronger marketing campaign, given the range of full text journals it offers.

## Question 13. Use of Other AHSS Information Sources

Question 13 asked researchers to select the non-journal AHSS information resources they used in their research. A larger number of AHSS resources fitted into this category, primarily journals and reference material.

Do you use any of these other IReL ARTS/HUMANITIES/SOCIAL SCIENCES information sources? (please select all that apply)		
Response	Count	Percent
Web of Knowledge	324	14.3%
Oxford English Dictionary	319	14.1%
Arts and Humanities Citation Index	270	11.9%
Social Sciences Citation Index	254	11.2%

Psycinfo	149	6.6%
Oxford Reference Online	146	6.4%
Journal Citation Reports	137	6.0%
Oxford Dictionary of National Biography	127	5.6%
MLA Bibliography (Modern Languages Association)	115	5.1%
Literature Online	104	4.6%
Historical Abstracts	102	4.5%
SourceOECD	89	3.9%
EconLit	84	3.7%
Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy	75	3.3%
JUSTIS (legal information)	64	2.8%
Philosopher's Index	63	2.8%
World Development Indicators (World Bank)	61	2.7%
Women Writers Online	53	2.3%
FactFinder Business/Social Sciences	48	2.1%
International Medieval Bibliography	41	1.8%
Film Index International	34	1.5%
GeoRef	34	1.5%
Making of Modern Law	29	1.3%
Global Market Information Database	11	0.5%

As in Question 11, Web of Knowledge proved very popular, with all WoK products featuring in the top 7 of 24 sources listed. PsycInfo ranks very highly for a specialist resource, making it into the top five. It gained multidisciplinary use, mainly from Social Sciences (47%), Arts and Humanities (24.8%), Biological and Medical Sciences (19.5%).

Again the lowest scores belong to specialist information sources; the least used, Global Market Information Database, was only acquired in February 2007. It should be noted that two other recently added services, Lexis Nexis and Westlaw, were not included in the list.

Taking Questions 10 to 13 as a whole, all resources listed showed some use and therefore visibility for researchers. Lack of recognition of e-resource names needs to be taken into account. Because some are relatively new (acquired since the start of the 2006/07 academic year), it is difficult to gauge their true take-up/value. More promotion of newly acquired resources would be beneficial. Also, issues regarding functionality/interface/coverage may have compromised usage levels achieved by some products and these matters need to be addressed with vendors. Specialist resources have also to be taken into account – their low showing on the tables can indicate a lower customer base rather lack of interest in the resource.

## Question 14. Additional Information Sources Required

Question 14 asked researchers what other information sources (including backfiles) not currently provided by IReL do they need on a regular basis. Approximately 750 (33%) of the 2,266 respondents supplied answers to this question. This response rate may indicate that researchers are relatively satisfied with the resources covered. There was some overlap between responses provided here and the top five journals consulted by researchers not currently available under IReL (Question 9).

In terms of gaps in coverage, researchers typically cite the need for more backfiles, eg full-text journals from more than ten years ago. Approximately 136 of the 750 respondents (18%) highlighted the need for greater backfile coverage. Many did not specify the exact publisher or title to which they required backfile access. The most frequently mentioned titles or publishers for which backfile access is required are:

Title	Frequency
Nature journals	11
Synthesis and Synlett	11
Elsevier Science Direct	10
Tetrahedron, and Tetrahedron Letters	8
Science	5
Cell	3
Springer	3
Wiley	3

The majority of requests for backfiles came from STM researchers.

Apart from backfiles the resources mentioned by respondents range from individual journal titles to bibliographic databases and publishers' journal collections. Below is a list of the most common sources mentioned.

Title	Frequency
SPIE* Digital Library	17
American Geophysical Union Journals	9
Scopus	9
American Institute of Mathematical Sciences Journals	6
European Mathematical Society Journals	6
Nature Clinical Practice Journals	5
Patent Databases	5
House of Commons Parliamentary Papers	4
Irish Newspaper Archive	4
Lippincott Williams & Wilkins Journals	4
Thieme Journals	3
Worldcat	3

\* International Society for Optical Engineering

Researchers identified a large number of individual journal titles which are required by them, but many also recognised the difficulties in providing access to more specialist titles.

*“Lots and lots of them - too numerous to mention. But I wouldn't expect IReL to provide them - they are quite offbeat”*

There is substantial interest among AHSS researchers for better coverage of international newspapers, from the nineteenth century. These researchers also felt coverage of foreign language journals could be improved and many highlighted the need to include material published by Irish publishers. These findings tally with responses to Question 9 (top 5 journals)

Researchers in Computer Science expressed a desire for improved access to international conference proceedings

A tendency to call for resources already provided by IReL (for e.g. Springer online journals and Blackwell Synergy) is also evident. This reveals a need for improved marketing and promotion of the available resources. A number of researchers also cited freely available resources, e.g. Google Scholar, PubMed.

Some respondents also listed resources available to them under individual library subscriptions (e.g. ScienceDirect, CINAHL) and expressed surprise that these resources did not appear under the lists of the IReL available titles in questions 10 to 13. This highlights a lack of awareness among researchers regarding the IReL initiative and the difference between locally funded electronic information resources and those funded under IReL. Given the purpose of the survey it was necessary to make such a distinction and to limit the resources covered by the survey to those funded under IReL. However, the end user may see such a distinction as irrelevant.

A number of resources recently negotiated under IReL and made accessible shortly prior to the survey launch were mentioned by respondents, for e.g. Sage, Taylor & Francis, Lexis-Nexis, Westlaw and Project Muse. Datastream was also frequently mentioned as negotiations for this resource were ongoing at the time of the survey.

It is clear from the responses to this question, that the issue of purchasing journal backfiles will have to be addressed by the IUA Libraries and the HEA. However, a substantial one-off investment would be required to purchase journal backfiles and it is unclear how funding could be sourced for such an initiative.

It is also evident that there are some gaps in coverage outside of backfile collections, ranging from individual journal titles to bibliographic databases and publishers' journal collections. This highlights the need for continuous monitoring of resource usage, and regular consultation with researchers on resource selection to ensure electronic information needs are being met. Difficult decisions regarding the cancellation of resources will have to be made, and subscriptions replaced as researchers' needs change, and as new resources are released onto the marketplace. The selection of

individual journal titles, not covered by the major journal packages, for inclusion under IReL represents a particular challenge. Researchers themselves recognise the difficulties in providing access to more specialist individual titles, especially ones which may not be used by a large group of researchers. It may be necessary, therefore, to investigate alternative subscription models, including pay-per-view, as an alternative, perhaps more cost effective way of providing access.

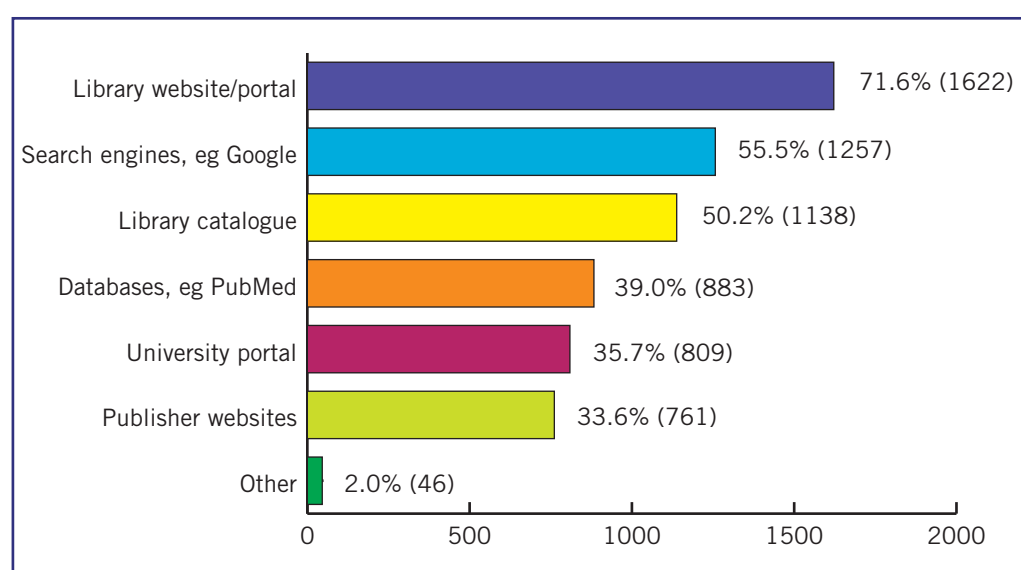


## Using IReL

Section Three looked at how researchers access IReL, the need or otherwise for printed equivalents, reasons for using IReL, and its impact on research and teaching.

### Question 15. Routes of Access to IReL Resources

This question sought to elicit ways in which researchers access IReL and was worded “How do you access IReL resources? (please select all that apply)”, offering a range of choices.




*Question 15. Routes of access*

The majority of respondents (71.6%) indicated access to IReL through the library website/portal, with 50.2% also citing the library catalogue as an access route. These figures are encouraging for libraries in terms of identification with IReL, but it is clear that researchers use a wide range of non-library routes, notably search engines, databases and publisher websites. Any branding of IReL or its libraries may be lost through these routes. Do libraries themselves provide too many access routes?

Further consultation with end users would be beneficial and libraries should look at embedding their entitlements via IReL, perhaps collaborating via a national task force, in services like Google Scholar, eg:

[Google Scholar: the pros and the cons](#) - [Full-Text @ NUI, Galway](#) - [all 5 versions »](#)  
P Jacsó - Online Information Review, 2005 - emeraldinsight.com



SFX Services for this record

**Title:** Google Scholar: the pros and the cons

**Source:** Online information review [1468-4527] Jacsó yr:2005 vol:29 iss:2 pg:208

⬆ **Basic**

**Full Text**

Full text available via **Emerald (IReL)**

Year: 
Volume: 
Issue: 
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## Question 16. Possible Access Improvements

This question asked for respondents' views (in free text) on **ways of improving access to IReL**.

791 of 2,266 respondents chose to answer this question. The vast majority of comments expressed some level of confusion or difficulty with access to IReL or asked for changes to individual resources, organization of resources or more help and training, to make accessing IReL a better experience. The most common themes and key issues are listed in the tables following.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Comments
Searching difficulties/ confusion and suggestions for improvement	1	186	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More user-friendly interface needed.</li> <li>• Search process difficult, cumbersome. Many express getting lost.</li> <li>• Cross-search mechanism for all resources</li> <li>• Same interface for all searching</li> <li>• Unsure which resource to search</li> <li>• Access prohibited to many journals</li> <li>• Single Portal needed</li> <li>• Single list divided by subject</li> <li>• More interactive with web 2.0 features</li> <li>• Problems with speed</li> <li>• Unhappy with recent titles not being available</li> </ul>

Off-campus access-related issues	2	121	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties with authentication.</li> <li>• Simpler process</li> <li>• Athens log-on creating difficulties</li> <li>• Fewer passwords. One log-on for all</li> <li>• Generally logon process too slow and cumbersome.</li> <li>• General confusion about access possibilities</li> </ul>
More resources required	3	83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many respondents requested more resources without specifying what they meant.</li> </ul>
More information or promotion needed	4	78	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More updates on new resources, ideally by e-mail</li> <li>• Notification on site problems, down times etc.</li> <li>• Little information on how to use effectively</li> <li>• Clarify what IReL is and what it does.</li> <li>• Difficult to know where to find information.</li> <li>• Information on who to talk to about new titles.</li> <li>• Promotion of specific titles. Many unsure on what titles meant</li> </ul>
Some uncertainty, but fine, OK	5	66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General feeling of being just OK or fine for now.</li> </ul>
Very good, excellent	6	53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressions of being very happy with IReL and finding it excellent</li> </ul>

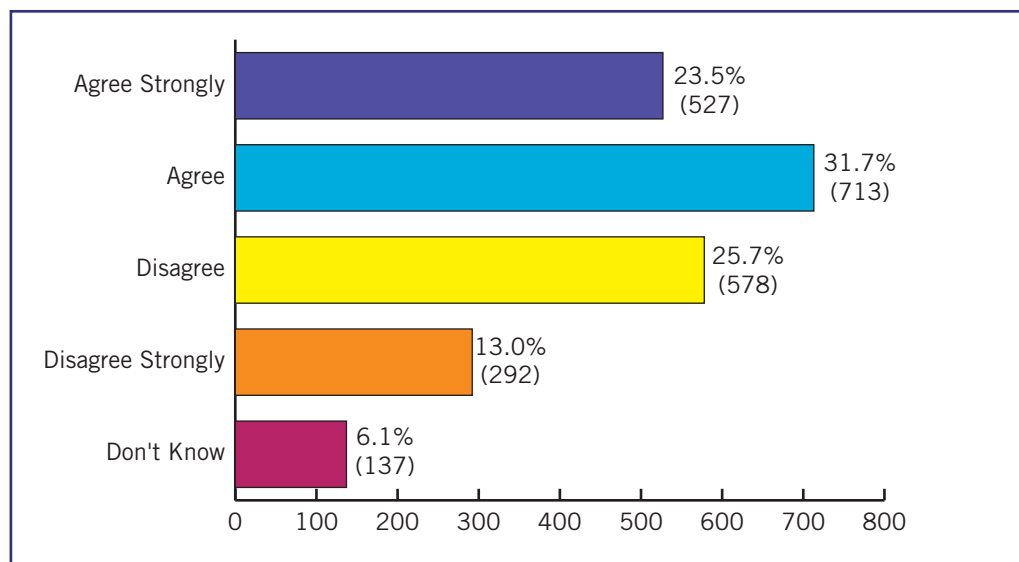
## Question 17. Use of IReL Print Equivalents

Question 17 asked respondents to agree or disagree with the statement “**I no longer need to consult the printed copy of journal issues supplied online by IReL**” according to a scale provided.

This question was posed in order to find out whether it is still necessary to retain print copies (hardcopies) of journal issues for consultation in a library when IReL supplies them online. If respondents no longer need to consult the printed copies then a case could be made for discarding them and in doing so, help relieve shelving space in libraries. This question specifically related to journal issues, so that, if the journal title was supplied online by IReL but not all its issues, only the issues supplied online would be considered for discarding. The question was included at the request of the CONUL Subcommittee on Collaborative Storage and its findings will be analysed

further by that group.

The result was a small majority (55.2%) who no longer need to consult the printed copy of journal issues supplied online by IReL. Those who disagreed with the question totalled 38.7%, with 6.1% unsure. A breakdown of the figures is provided in the chart following.



*Question 17. Print equivalents no longer required*

The breakdown by discipline presented a different picture with significant variations. There was agreement of 61.4% on average in the sciences but only 34.5% of respondents in the Arts and Humanities agreed. There was also minority agreement in Agricultural Sciences (34.1%) and Law (40.9%).

However, this question allowed for additional comments and the comments of some of the respondents indicate that they interpreted the question in a different way. They took it to mean that they do not need to consult the print out of an article from the online version. These respondents do not consult the original hardcopy, rather they consult a printed copy derived online. These comments represented 5% of the additional comments and if this is extrapolated it could be argued that those agreeing with Question 17 might be higher by up to 5%.

### **Additional Comments**

There was a box for additional comments but uptake was not large with 361 comments from the 2,247 respondents (17%) to the question. However, the responses did give some insight into how the respondents felt about the print and online formats and some of their concerns.

Many of the comments (23%) related to the online format and its benefits. They came from all disciplines but with the strongest support from Biological and Medical Sciences and Computer Sciences.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Issues
Online - benefits	1	88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much faster, easier and effective to use</li> <li>• Great for courses where large numbers of students are using one or two articles</li> <li>• Great facility for saving time</li> <li>• Have never been in the library in 2 years</li> <li>• If it is e-format, that is perfect, can print if needed</li> <li>• Online journal access from anywhere in the world is a powerful tool</li> <li>• If an article is available only in hardcopy, I will ignore it!</li> </ul>

The availability of back issues featured in the comments with 22% making reference to them. There is awareness that often back issues are not available online and that if they are not available, then print back issues need be maintained. As in Question 14 some wanted more back issues to be made available online.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Issues
Back issues	2	79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only need to consult older issues of journals supplied online</li> <li>• In some cases our university subscription does not cover some of the older issues</li> <li>• Only true as long as all backfiles are also available in JSTOR or on individual websites</li> <li>• The older journals are often not online and need to be</li> <li>• As long as back issues (not available online) are maintained</li> <li>• But back issues MUST be accessible</li> <li>• Some old journals volumes are only available in printed version, could you do something about that?</li> </ul>

Many comments related to a general preference for print and some were more specific (18%).

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Issues
Print – general & specific preference	3	66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It still good to have a hard copy available</li> <li>• Need hardcopies of select core area journals only</li> <li>• Mature students are still more comfortable with paper</li> <li>• For research purposes it is essential to retain print runs of journals</li> <li>• Depends on the journal and nature of the article</li> <li>• Editorials? Special topic issues? These don't work online</li> <li>• Graphs and diagrams (especially from older issues) do not always transfer well to e-journals</li> <li>• Online copies sometimes do not have the page numbers of articles for citation purposes</li> </ul>

The ability to browse printed issues and to find unexpected material was cited by 8%.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Issues
Browsing print	4	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates the wonders of serendipity in terms of finding new articles</li> <li>• Browsing is easier and quicker with hard copies</li> <li>• Still easier to get overview of contents</li> </ul>

There were a number of comments relating to the long-term availability of online issues (6%). Some referred directly to IReL and the uncertainty of its long-term future, others to the long-term viability of the online copy itself.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Issues
Online – long-term availability	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One never knows when the electronic copy will disappear...</li> <li>• Concern about IReL in long term</li> <li>• Print copies vital reserve against computer failure or cessation of online service or the financial blackmail of online publishers</li> </ul>

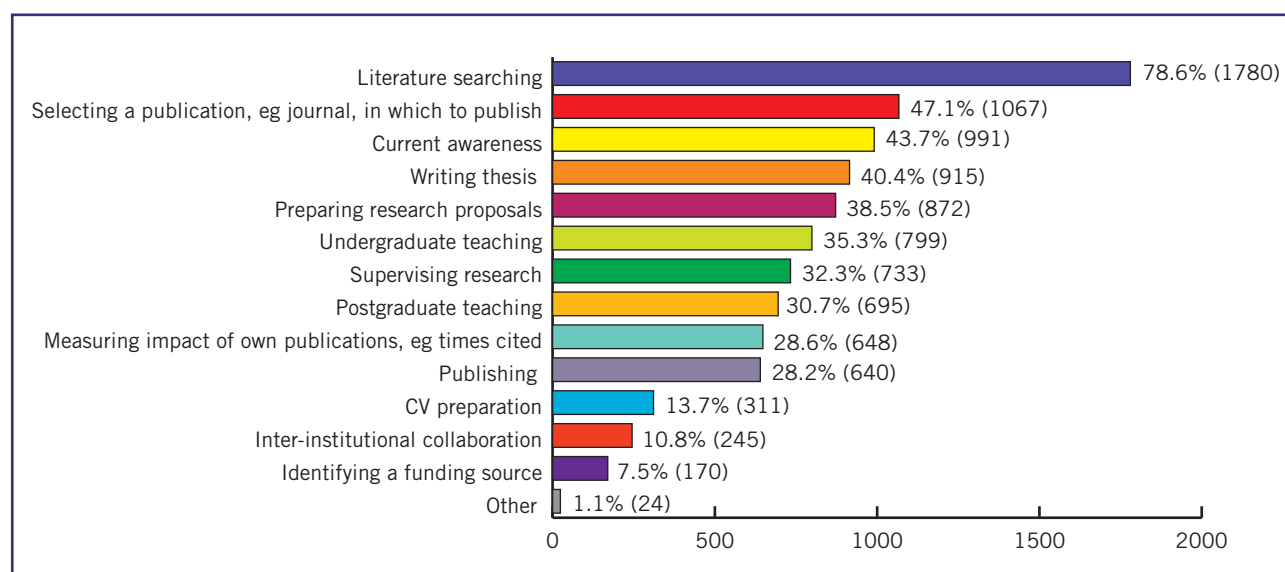
### Summary of Remaining Comments

A small number of respondents (4%) referred to the undesirable time lag between online access and print publication. This relates to titles in packages where there is an

embargo on access to current issues. For 4% of respondents access to online remains a problem with too few PCs, printers and registration issues. The question is irrelevant to some (3%) because the material is just not available online or IReL does not subscribe to it. Finally, some respondents (2%) would willingly give up print for access to more online journals.

## Question 18. Reasons for Using IReL

Respondents were asked to indicate any of a range of possible **uses of IReL** listed, with the option of noting any other uses.



*Question 18. Reasons for using IReL*

The most common usage of IReL is for literature searching at 78.6%. This is a good indicator that current Information Literacy approaches are correctly designed in terms of emphasizing good literature searching techniques.

It is followed somewhat behind by selecting a publication, eg journal, in which to publish at 47.1%. This indicates a very precise usage of IReL by respondents, and an opening to promote greater consultation of *Journal Citation Reports* beyond the levels indicated in Questions 11 and 13. Also scoring highly are current awareness and thesis writing. Usage of IReL as a resource for teaching is clearly significant and explored further in Question 20; training programmes for undergraduates and taught postgraduates should take this into account. IReL is used by many researchers to prepare funding proposals, but less commonly to identify a funding source. Perhaps of concern is the relatively low usage of IReL for measuring impact of own publications at 28.6% and this facility should be further promoted.

The small number of other uses of IReL included: refereeing and editing; information about research groups; assessing job applicants; preparing courses.

## Question 19. Impact of IReL on Research

This question invited free-text comments on **how IReL has impacted on respondents' research**.

1,624 of 2,266 respondents (72%) provided comments. Approximately 95% of respondents' comments were very positive regarding the impact of IReL on their research. The most common themes and key issues raised by the respondents are highlighted in the tables following.

Approximately 40% of respondents commented on the speed and ease of access to research information because of IReL. Many commented that this allows them more time to focus on their research.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Comments
Ease and speed of access to research information	1	654	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Makes literature review much faster and more comprehensive</li><li>• Irish researcher is now on par internationally</li><li>• Improved research efficiency</li><li>• Makes the difference between being able to do research or possibly none at all</li></ul>

Around 27% of respondents were impressed with the breadth and depth of resources available through IReL. Many felt that the IReL resources allowed them to compete at the same level as international counterparts.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Comments
Breadth and depth of research	2	436	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significantly increases both the breadth and depth of research opportunities</li><li>• Positively influences the decision to perform research within Ireland</li><li>• Access to sources that are up to date and cutting edge in an extremely efficient way</li></ul>

Some 18% of respondents directly attribute their research productivity to the availability of research information through IReL resources.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Comments
Increased research productivity	3	297	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assists in ability to situate own research within multiple fields</li><li>• Allowed the ability to select potential collaborators</li><li>• Range of online journal resources through IReL greatly improves research capacity</li></ul>



Approximately 14% of respondents link the availability of IReL resources to an improvement in the quality of their research output.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Comments
Improved research quality	4	226	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates world class research</li> <li>• Facilitates the writing of (inter)nationally competitive grant applications and subsequent publishing in high impact journals</li> <li>• Plays a vital element in the maintenance of progressive research</li> </ul>

About 5% of respondents were either unsure or didn't know what IReL is. Some commented that they were awaiting to see if IReL would have an impact on their research, while others were unsure of the IReL brand and did not distinguish whether the resources they had access to were their own institutions or IReL resources.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Comments
What is IReL? Not sure of impact	5	84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuously use resources listed above but have not used IReL to access them</li> <li>• Not aware of IReL per se</li> <li>• Too soon to say</li> </ul>

In the latter context it should be noted that over 600 respondents did not offer any comments in this question - an indicator possibly of unawareness of IReL and its impact?

## Question 20. Impact of IReL on Teaching

This question invited free-text comments on **how IReL has impacted on respondents' teaching**.

1,081 of 2,266 respondents (48%) provided comments. Approximately 63% of these respondents reported that IReL has had a very positive impact on their teaching. Some 28% of respondents indicated that either they do not currently teach or the question was not applicable to them. Some respondents felt that IReL has had little or no impact on their teaching as yet.

Approximately 6% of respondents replied "same as above" referring to answers they provided in the previous question regarding impact on research. The respondents discussed how access to journal articles has positively impacted their teaching but did not refer to e-books as part of this impact. Is there a need to consult more widely with academics regarding e-book requirements and to raise awareness of the potential of e-books to support teaching and learning?

The most common themes and key issues raised by the respondents are highlighted in the tables following.

Approximately 21% of respondents commented on the ability to access quality information through IReL, reporting that IReL enhanced their teaching abilities.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Comments
Access to wider range of information	1	226	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allows learning to be cutting edge: good feedback from students on articles from top journals</li><li>• Allows students free and rapid access to journal articles, which can be used to underpin teaching.</li><li>• It means that students have access to a range of materials unimaginable in the past. Therefore one can address issues in a depth which would have been impossible before.</li></ul>

Around 15% of respondents emphasised that ease of access to IReL resources has had a very positive impact on their teaching. Many felt that the IReL resources allowed them to teach their students more effectively.

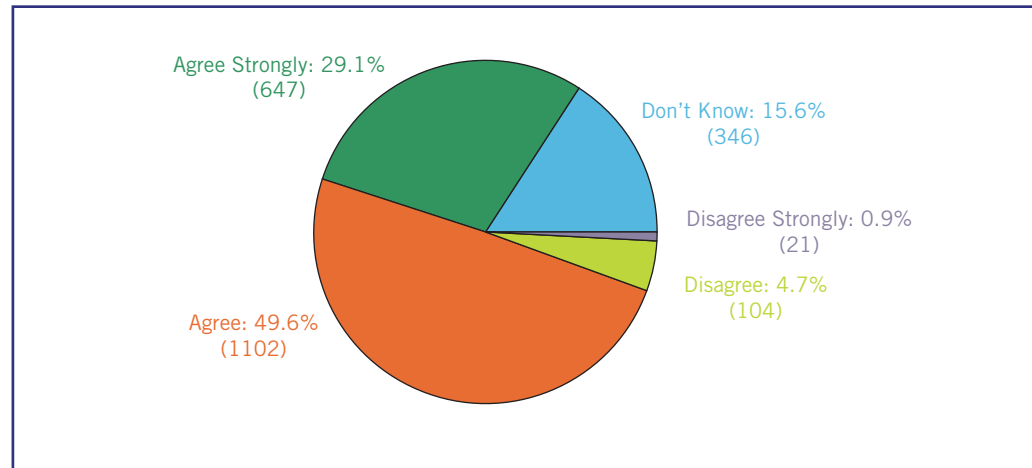
Theme	Rank	Frequency	Comments
Ease of linking to information	2	163	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ease of linking to on-line resources is essential for the teacher and the student</li><li>• Gives students more opportunities and relieves pressure on books in library</li><li>• Easier to find material to illustrate important concepts</li></ul>

Some 15% of respondents associate IReL with the improvement in the quality of the student learning experience, whereby the most current information is now available to students through IReL resources.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Comments
Current and up-to-date	3	161	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An essential resource to encourage students to read and learn about subject topics</li><li>• Entire courses now designed around IReL resources</li><li>• It has led to more current and topical research informed teaching</li></ul>

## Question 21. Multidisciplinary Coverage

Question 21 presented respondents with the statement “**IReL has delivered multidisciplinary coverage for my research**”, and offered a five-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.



*Question 21. IReL has delivered multidisciplinary coverage*

78.7% of total respondents agree that IReL has delivered enhanced multidisciplinary coverage for their research. Only 5.6% disagree, while 15.6 % are unsure.

51.5% of survey respondents considered their research to be multidisciplinary in Question 3. Of these, 83.2% agree that IReL delivers enhanced multidisciplinary coverage for their research, 4.5% disagree, and 12.3% don't know.

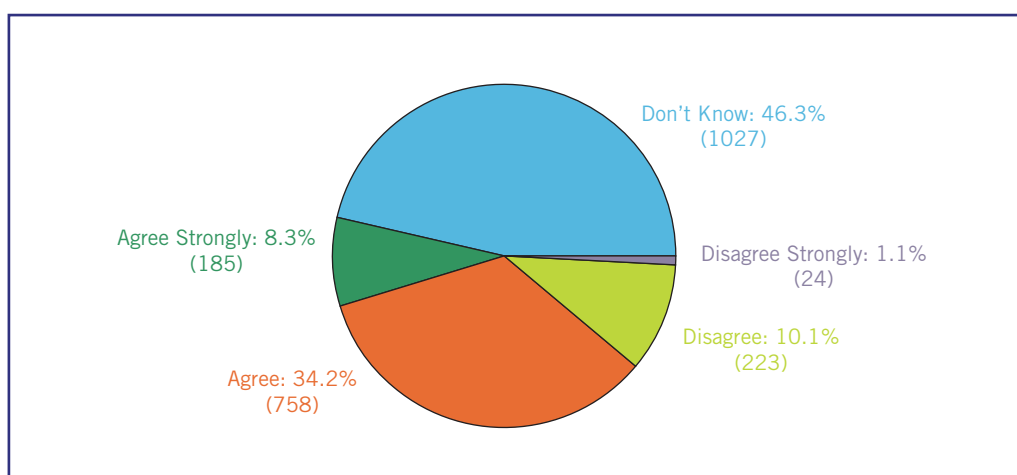
Comments suggest that 'Don't Knows' feel that they are not yet familiar enough with IReL to judge, or that, as their own area is not multidisciplinary, that they are not in a position to comment.

Those who disagree feel that there are still gaps that will need to be filled before it can be said that IReL enhances their multidisciplinary research.

Computer Science staff disagree with this statement more strongly than any other discipline. By role 18.8% of research-only staff, and 14.9% of research and teaching staff disagree with this statement, reflecting higher staff than student disagreement overall.

## Question 22. Inter-Institutional Collaboration

Question 22 presented respondents with the statement “**IReL has facilitated collaboration between institutions**”, and offered a five-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.



*Question 22. Collaboration between institutions has been facilitated by IReL*

There is overall agreement that IReL has facilitated inter-institutional collaboration but a large number of respondents – 1,027 (46.3%) - is unsure. Comments clarify that there is some confusion around the meaning of the question. Respondents feel that they cannot judge without seeing data, and a need for clarification on the meaning of ‘collaboration’ is expressed. This lack of certainty is not peculiar to any discipline.

943 (42.5%) agree that IReL has facilitated collaboration. Comments show that researchers see IReL itself as a good example of collaboration. By ensuring common access to the same comprehensive information sources, the playing field is seen to have been levelled, making researchers more willing to work as a community. IReL is also seen as useful in identifying potential collaborators.

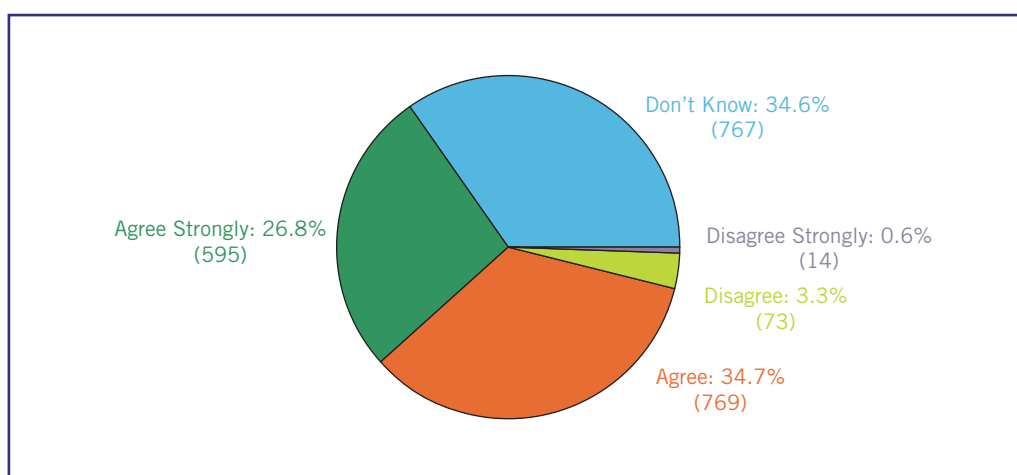
247 (11.2%) do not agree that IReL has facilitated collaboration, largely because they feel that that the question does not apply to their research, or because they have seen little or no impact so far.

DCU has the highest proportion of respondents agreeing to the statement at 50.3%, and the lowest proportion of Don’t Knows at 38.6%.

**Note:** exclusion of “Don’t Know” respondents gives agreement of 79.2% and disagreement of 20.7% overall.

## Question 23. International Competitiveness

Question 23 presented respondents with the statement “**IreL has increased the competitiveness of Irish research internationally**”, and offered a five-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.



*Question 23. International competitiveness has been increased by IReL*

Most – 61.4% - agree that IReL has increased the competitiveness of Irish research internationally, only 3.9% disagree, and a large 34.7% don't know.

Amongst those who agree, Engineering has the largest proportion in agreement at 73.1%. Physical Sciences & Mathematics at 72.2% also has a large percentage who agree, with 39.5% agreeing strongly. At the other extreme, only 46.7% of Agricultural Scientists agree, although 48.9% say that they don't know. The highest proportion of disagreement is in Law, with 7.2% disagreeing.

70.7% of those involved in research for 10 years or more agree, while only 49.4% of those involved for under a year (most likely to be research students) agree. 48% of this latter group 'don't know'. Significantly, less than 1% (0.7%) of research staff-only disagree.

Those who agree say that IReL makes it easier to recruit new staff and research students, to attract visitors and to improve research productivity. Researchers mention specific examples of successful technology transfers and publications directly as an outcome of the IReL initiative. One researcher comments that IReL is "the only place where our research infrastructure across the board is of international standards".

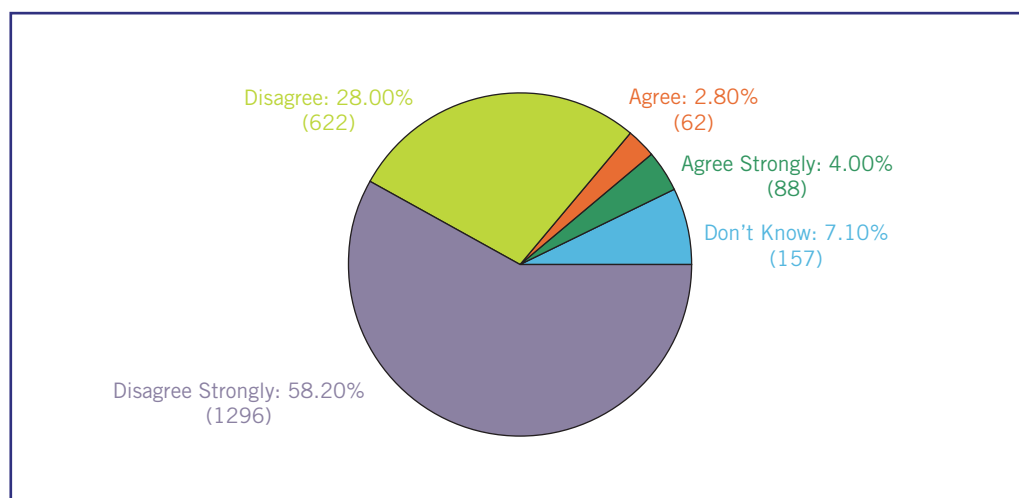
Those who disagree (3.9%) believe that IReL has brought us to the starting line competitively, but that there are still significant gaps in provision and in structural supports.

As with the question on collaboration (Question 22), those who 'don't know' feel either that they cannot judge without seeing data, or have difficulty with the terminology. For example, they do not like the word "competitive", or feel that competitiveness is a relative term.

**Note:** exclusion of "Don't Know" respondents gives agreement of 94% and disagreement of 6% overall.

## Question 24. IReL - Luxury or Necessity?

Question 24 presented respondents with the statement “**IReL is a luxury, not a necessity**”, and offered a five-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.



*Question 24. IReL is a luxury not a necessity*

86.2% disagree with this statement, 58.2% disagreeing strongly with a relatively small “Don’t Know” response relative to the previous three questions.

Accompanying comments are correspondingly strongly worded. 129 respondents added comments to stress the importance of IReL to their research, and to the future development of R&D and high-end employment.

89.6% of those belonging to Research centres or institutes, and 85.3% of those employed as postdoctoral researchers, disagree with the statement. The strongest disagreement with the statement is from Earth, Atmospheric and Ocean Sciences. 95.4% of those respondents disagree, with 66.2% disagreeing strongly.

6.8% of respondents agree with the statement, with most agreement (8.5%) coming from Law and Social Sciences, and least from Agricultural Sciences where no respondents agree with the statement. In some cases accompanying comments suggest a misreading of the question. For example, a respondent who selected ‘agree stongly’ commented “100% necessity in my view”. Others, however, point out that for them IReL is a luxury not a necessity because there is little or no coverage in their discipline. One respondent comments that “IReL as currently run offers very little for arts/ humanities and nothing for Irish language research”, and another (presumably unaware of IReL’s recent funding of Lexis and Westlaw) that IReL “Needs more legal material to be really useful and necessary to me.”

7.1% of respondents don’t know whether or not they agree with the statement, the highest number of don’t knows (14.2%) being in Computer Science. Accompanying comments suggest that more information on alternatives to IReL would need to be made available before a judgment could be made on whether or not it is essential.

## Question 25. Effect of IReL Discontinuation

Question 25 asked respondents to comment on **how a discontinuation of IReL would affect their work**.

1,535 (67.8%) of 2,266 respondents provided comments. 95.1% of those respondents assert that a discontinuation would have a significant negative impact on their work. The remaining 4.9% have largely been unaware of IReL or expect to begin using it shortly. This correlates with the 5% of respondents to Question 19 who were unsure or did not know what IReL is.

Those who believe that a discontinuation would be negative word their comments very strongly, with 34% (521 respondents) using words like disaster, catastrophe, unthinkable and senseless. 71 respondents say explicitly that a discontinuation would be 'a disaster'. 47 respondents refer to a return to the stone age or similar.

- 35% (538) of respondents say that a discontinuation of IReL would severely impact the quality and effectiveness of their research
- 34% (521) believe that a discontinuation would be a retrograde step and is unthinkable
- 26% (397) say that a discontinuation of IReL would severely impact the efficiency of their research
- 6% (93) point out that a discontinuation would have a negative impact on Ireland's competitiveness
- 3.5% (53) say that a discontinuation of IReL would severely impact the quality and effectiveness of their teaching

The most common themes and key issues raised by the respondents are highlighted in the tables following.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Comments
Quality of research	1	538	<p>A discontinuation of IReL would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• severely affect the quality, effectiveness and impact of research</li><li>• reduce the ability to keep in touch with current research</li></ul>

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Comments
A backward step – unthinkable	2	521	<p>A discontinuation of IReL would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create a serious information deficit</li> <li>• slow down research development.</li> <li>• make high impact, cutting edge research impossible</li> <li>• make research in Ireland impossible</li> <li>• be the single biggest disaster that could befall research in Ireland</li> <li>• make it impossible to attract the best international researchers</li> <li>• make researchers re-consider their future in Ireland and/or in research</li> </ul>
Efficiency of research	3	397	<p>A discontinuation of IReL would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• result in a big increase in the amount of time spent away from research.</li> <li>• make research work significantly slower and more cumbersome.</li> <li>• cost money as funding would be needed for visits to other universities with better resources</li> </ul>
Competitive edge	4	93	<p>A discontinuation of IReL would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be an end to any attempt at making Ireland a globally competitive centre of technology</li> <li>• diminish beyond repair the attraction of Ireland as a destination for world class researchers</li> <li>• mark Ireland as a place with no commitment to high-quality research.</li> <li>• lead directly to the loss of the best researchers</li> <li>• make it impossible to compete on the world stage</li> </ul>

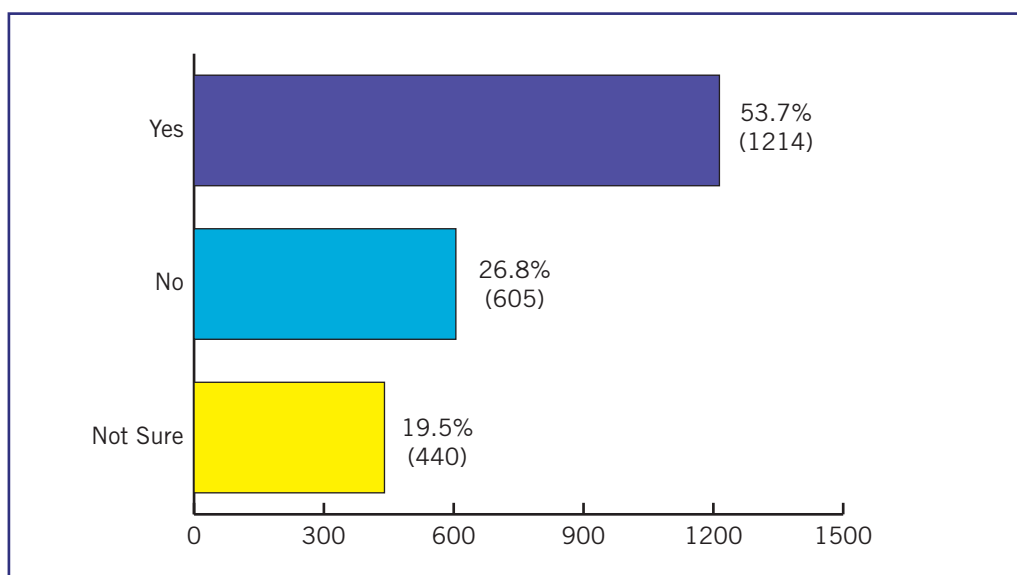


# Awareness of IReL

Section Four explored issues regarding current and future promotion of IReL to researchers.

## Question 26. Receipt of Information about IReL

Question 26 asked: “**Had you received information about IReL prior to participating in this survey?**”. This question was asked in order to identify what proportion of researchers had heard of IReL since its launch in 2004 and to inform libraries’ ongoing promotional strategies.



*Question 26. Information about IReL received prior to the survey?*

**More than half of the respondents had received information about IReL prior to the survey whilst just over a quarter had not. It is likely that the large “Not Sure” population either had not received information at all or at least not in recent times.**

There is an indication that awareness of IReL has doubled relative to 2005 when the CONUL survey of researchers [<http://tinyurl.com/yq9oj7>] showed that 26.7% of respondents had heard of IReL.

In terms of awareness by discipline, Physical Sciences and Mathematics recorded the highest rate at 62.2%, with Computer Sciences and Agricultural Sciences having the lowest values of 46.4% and 38.3% respectively.

By institution, DCU recorded the highest percentage of researchers who had received information prior to the survey. The presence of a research support librarian since 2005

may have influenced this finding and highlights the importance of investing in resource promotion as well as resource acquisition.

	DCU	NUIG	NUIM	TCD	UCC	UL	UCD	Other
Yes	73.2%	60.7%	50.7%	44.7%	60.6%	53.9%	41.2%	50.0%
No	13.7%	20.8%	30.2%	31.3%	22.5%	24.8%	37.1%	36.4%
Not Sure	13.2%	18.1%	18.5%	23.7%	16.6%	20.5%	21.7%	13.6%
Total Count	190	443	205	485	325	254	337	22

The more 'established' researchers, ie those who had been involved in research for the longest amount of time, recorded the highest instance of having received information about IReL prior to the survey. 69% of those who were engaged in research for 10 or more years had received information, with this percentage dropping exponentially according to the amount of experience in research. Membership or otherwise of research centres and institutes did not impact on the rate of receipt of information about IReL but figures were noticeably lower for student than staff researchers. Within the staff categories the percentage of research-only staff who had not received information (25.8%) was markedly higher than for research/teaching staff (18.5%). These findings may indicate a need for a concerted effort to make sure that library mailing lists for research-only staff and for newer researchers, notably students, are fully current.

### Additional Comments

This question allowed for additional comments and a very small minority of 3.3% - 73 respondents - took this opportunity. Although most of these answers dealt with issues that were raised in other survey questions, they provided some useful additional insights into researchers' understanding of the concept of IReL. Eighteen respondents did not attribute access to additional resources to IReL. Some comments include:

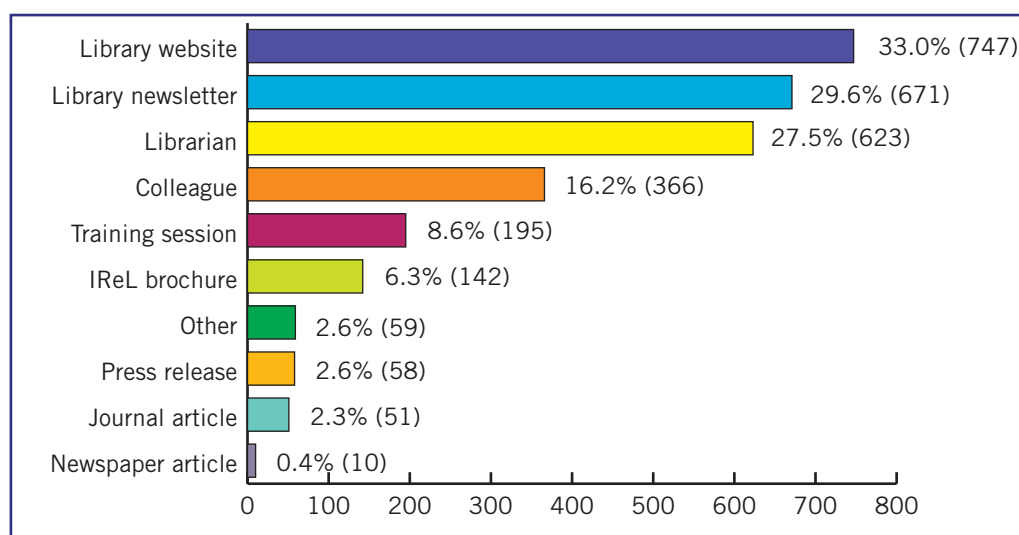
*'I had thought each individual university had and paid for a licence for online journal access'*

*'Remember seeing IReL written on posters, but hadn't quite linked it to the online databases'*

*'I didn't know it was the source behind my electronic access to materials'*

## Question 27. How Information was Received about IReL

Respondents were presented with a range of choices from which they could select as many as applicable in response to the question **"If you had received information, was this through any of the following channels?"**. The aim was to identify which promotional media best publicised the IReL initiative.



Question 27. Source of information about IReL

### Libraries were the most common sources of information about IReL through their web sites, newsletters and staff.

Of those who had received information about IReL prior to participating in the survey, almost a third (33%) had received it from a library web site. This tallies with findings from Question 15, in which the library website emerged as the top method for accessing IReL resources. The next most popular method for receiving information about IReL was through a library newsletter, with NUIG having the highest figure. The effectiveness of this channel declined in proportion to level of experience, however, again suggesting a need for libraries to improve their mailing list coverage of new researchers. Communication with library staff was the next most cited channel, followed by information received from colleagues which proved most significant in Law but least in Computer Sciences.

Training sessions ranked surprisingly low as a means of receiving information about IReL but this may change with the inclusion of an information literacy module in the SIF Research Skills initiative.

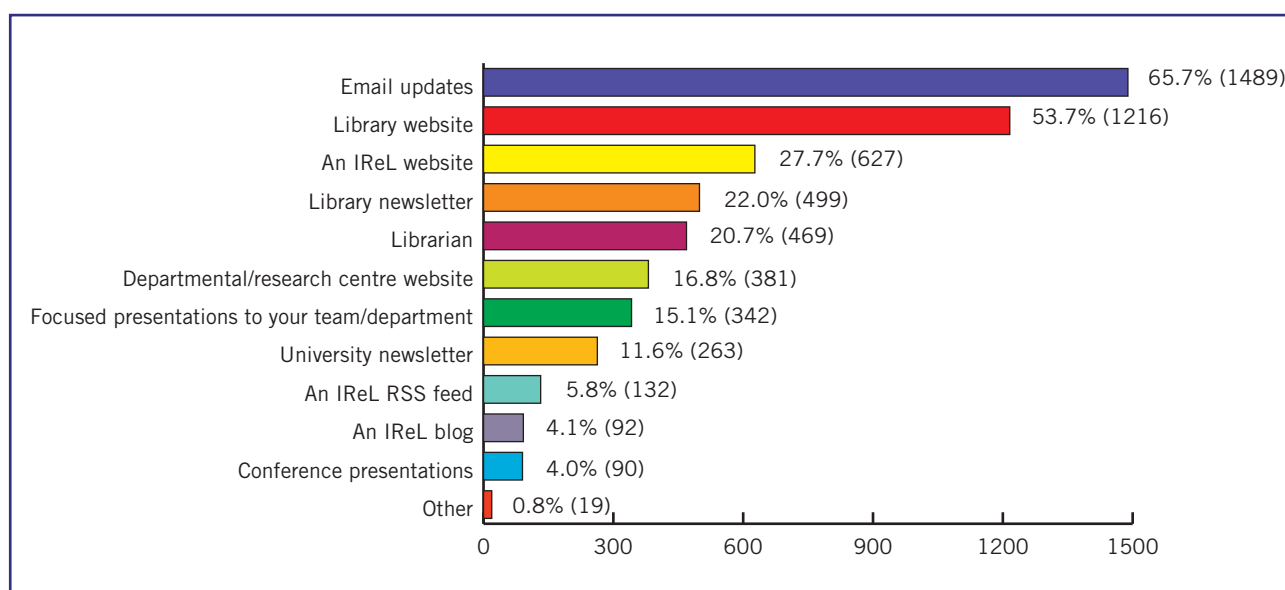
Effectiveness of the initial IReL brochure published to coincide with the official launch of IReL in June 2006 was relatively low and varied from institution to institution, proving highest at NUIG and UCC.

Overall, the fact that the two most frequently cited channels did not involve face to face contact is perhaps indicative of the independent research behaviour of many respondents.

## Question 28. How Best to Keep Up with IReL

Question 28 was asked in order to identify the most relevant methods for libraries to publicise future IReL resources. It asked “**What would be the best ways of keeping up**

to date with IReL developments?” and respondents selected all applicable media from the list provided.



*Question 28. Best ways of keeping up with IReL?*

**Almost two thirds of respondents cited email updates as the most appropriate method of keeping them informed of IReL developments, with more than half suggesting library web sites.**

The third most popular selection was an IReL website. At almost 28%, this demonstrates a need and strengthens the case for the development of such a facility to promote IReL resources. Newer facilities such as an IReL RSS feed and an IReL blog proved less popular, but an IReL website could itself add further value by syndicating RSS feeds to departmental or research centre websites (16.8% of respondents selected these sites in this question).

When the response rate is analysed according to whether respondents have a background in the Sciences or the Humanities, the latter category records higher percentages for three of the top four ways of keeping up to date with IReL developments as seen in this table:

	Email Updates	Lib Web Site	IReL Web Site	Lib Newsletter
STM	63.3%	49.8%	26.1%	21.0%
AHSS	68.3%	58.9%	25.5%	25.2%

The top three preferences all entail non-face-to-face communication. There is some interest in focused presentations to teams/departments, although this is well down the list, while only 4% of researchers want to receive information about IReL at conference presentations.

# Other Comments

Section Five sought any other comments that respondents wished to make about IReL.

## Question 29. Other Comments

The final question asked researchers to supply **general comments** on IReL, e.g. current service, future development etc. Approximately 708 of the 2,266 respondents availed themselves of the opportunity to comment. There was some overlap with comments made in Question 14 regarding the need for access to backfiles. Researchers also took the opportunity to list under question 29 resources which they would like to see provided under IReL. In general, the themes and issues raised by respondents in response to this question (summarised in the tables following) are familiar and appear in response to other questions the survey.

Respondents' comments varied from a few words on a single topic to a number of sentences on a range of topics. Some respondents simply entered 'no' or 'not applicable' as their response. The number of comments indicated in the following table is approximate in some instances, e.g. promotion and awareness, and access where terminology is not tight.

Approximately a third of all respondents who submitted comments were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about IReL and emphasised not only the need to continue the initiative, but also to expand on it.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Issues
Continuation & expansion of IReL	1	230	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IReL is an extremely important research infrastructure benefiting all Irish-based researchers, from postgraduate students through postdoctoral researchers and senior PIs</li> <li>• If Irish universities want to compete internationally in research and teaching, funding of IReL must continue</li> <li>• Discontinuation would be disastrous for academic research and teaching in Ireland</li> <li>• Future development should include access to earlier articles for each journal, and access to more journals and conference proceedings</li> <li>• Access to newly published journals also required</li> </ul>

Approximately 25% of respondents focused on the benefits of IReL and the positive impact it has on teaching and research. Many respondents expressed gratitude to all parties involved in funding, developing and managing the initiative.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Issues
Impact of IReL	2	175	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IReL is vital to academic research and teaching in Ireland</li> <li>• IReL is the single development with the greatest impact on research</li> <li>• A knowledge based society needs online access to information</li> <li>• IReL is an essential resource and funding must be put on a formal footing</li> <li>• IReL is a major selling point for recruiting staff and students from abroad</li> </ul>

Approximately 25% of respondents used this general comments question to draw attention to the need for greater awareness of IReL's resources, with more promotion and more guidance on how to exploit its resources fully. Many expressed confusion regarding IReL, and requested clarification on whether it is a portal or website, providing access to various full text journals. Given this confusion on defining IReL, it would appear essential to improve branding of it.

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Issues
Promotion & Awareness	3	175	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More discipline focused promotion of the available materials on IReL is required</li> <li>• Improve awareness of the extent of the resources available and how to access them in a meaningful way</li> <li>• Researchers are accessing resources, and aware of greater availability but they are unaware of the IReL initiative. Some do not see awareness of the initiative as relevant</li> <li>• Promote to staff and student during induction sessions</li> <li>• More promotion to undergraduates is required</li> <li>• Training sessions, e-mail alerts and a website were thought to be the most effective promotional tools</li> <li>• The survey served as a means of promoting IReL</li> </ul>

## Summary of remaining comments

Theme	Rank	Frequency	Issues
Access	4	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a dedicated web page with simple search procedures</li> <li>• Google and other tools used to search for full text articles</li> <li>• Existence of multiple access points to content is confusing</li> </ul>
Training	5	65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include IReL in induction programmes for staff and students</li> <li>• Training required in advanced and specialist searching</li> <li>• Group sessions and online tutorials were the preferred training methods mentioned</li> </ul>
Selection Process	6	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researchers wish to be consulted on resource selection on a regular basis</li> <li>• Impact factor and usage statistics are seen as the most important selection criteria</li> </ul>
Widening Access	7	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researchers called for a widening of access to IReL to include all HE institutions and research centres in the country</li> </ul>
Open Access	8	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IReL seen as influential in promoting open access initiatives</li> <li>• Funding agencies encouraged to mandate open access publishing</li> </ul>





# Survey Questionnaire

## Irish Research e-Library (IReL) Impact Survey

This survey seeks to establish the impact and levels of uptake achieved to date by the Irish Research e-Library (IReL), and to get suggestions for improvements. IReL provides access to online information services, including 20,000 e-journals and 29,000 monographs. Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) jointly funded IReL initially but the HEA is gradually taking over the full cost.

HEA funding is for an initial fixed period, until 2008 in Science Technology and Medicine and 2009 in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Without continued funding current access to online information will be severely reduced. **Your feedback regarding the impact IReL is having on your research is vital.**

This survey consists of 5 sections and should take about 10 minutes to complete online. Individual responses will be treated confidentially and the results of the survey will only be presented collectively. When you enter your e-mail address and click the **Submit Survey** button at the end you will enter a draw for 7 sponsored prizes - a digital photo frame, an iPod and five gift vouchers worth €90 each.



### Section 1 (of 5): About You

Information supplied in this section will enable us to examine patterns according to different types of researcher. Data will be treated in confidence.

#### 1) At which institution are you based?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Dublin City University                   | <input type="radio"/> University College Cork   |
| <input type="radio"/> National University of Ireland, Galway   | <input type="radio"/> University College Dublin |
| <input type="radio"/> National University of Ireland, Maynooth | <input type="radio"/> University of Limerick    |
| <input type="radio"/> Trinity College Dublin                   | <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)    |

If you selected other please specify:

#### 2) Major Research Discipline

(please tick one only, indicating the discipline you consider to be most applicable to your research work)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Agricultural Sciences           | <input type="radio"/> Earth, Atmospheric and Ocean Sciences |
| <input type="radio"/> Arts/Humanities                 | <input type="radio"/> Engineering                           |
| <input type="radio"/> Biological and Medical Sciences | <input type="radio"/> Law                                   |
| <input type="radio"/> Business/Commerce               | <input type="radio"/> Physical Sciences and Mathematics     |
| <input type="radio"/> Computer Sciences               | <input type="radio"/> Social Sciences                       |

#### 3) If your research is multidisciplinary, which discipline other than that ticked above is most significant?

(please tick one only)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Agricultural Sciences                 | <input type="radio"/> Engineering                       |
| <input type="radio"/> Arts/Humanities                       | <input type="radio"/> Law                               |
| <input type="radio"/> Biological and Medical Sciences       | <input type="radio"/> Physical Sciences and Mathematics |
| <input type="radio"/> Business/Commerce                     | <input type="radio"/> Social Sciences                   |
| <input type="radio"/> Computer Sciences                     | <input type="radio"/> Not Applicable                    |
| <input type="radio"/> Earth, Atmospheric and Ocean Sciences |   |

#### 4) Please specify your department where relevant (eg Chemistry, Microbiology, History)

5) Do you belong to a research centre or institute?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6) Role

(please tick one only, indicating your primary role)

- ☐ Staff: research-only
- ☐ Staff: research and teaching
- ☐ Student: PhD
- ☐ Student: Research Masters

7) Are you employed as a postdoctoral researcher?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8) How long have you been engaged in research?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-4 years
- ☐ 5-9 years
- ☐ 10 or more years

9) Please list the top 5 journals that you consult for your research (each on a separate line)

[Go to next question](#)

## Section 2 (of 5): IReL resources

If your research is in ARTS/HUMANITIES/SOCIAL SCIENCES only please move to Question 12

10) Do you use any of the following IReL **SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY/MEDICINE** JOURNAL collections (please select all that apply)?

- ☐ Academic Press (via Science Direct)
- ☐ Academic Search Premier
- ☐ ACM Digital Library (Association for Computing Machinery)
- ☐ American Association for Cancer Research
- ☐ American Chemical Society
- ☐ American Institute of Physics
- ☐ American Medical Association
- ☐ American Physical Society Reviews
- ☐ American Society of Mechanical Engineers
- ☐ American Society for Microbiology
- ☐ Annual Reviews
- ☐ Blackwell Synergy
- ☐ British Medical Journal Online Journals Collection
- ☐ Cambridge Journals Online
- ☐ Cell Press
- ☐ GeoScience World
- ☐ IEEE/IEE
- ☐ Institute of Physics
- ☐ JSTOR
- ☐ Nature Publishing Group
- ☐ Optical Society of America
- ☐ Oxford University Press
- ☐ Royal Society of Chemistry
- ☐ SIAM (Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics)
- ☐ Springer
- ☐ Wiley Interscience
- ☐ Wilson OmniFile

**11) Do you use any of these other IReL SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY/MEDICINE information sources (please select all that apply)?**

- ☐ Beilstein
- ☐ Biosis Previews (Biological Abstracts)
- ☐ CAB Direct (Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau)
- ☐ Compendex (Engineering Index)
- ☐ Current Protocols
- ☐ Embase (Excerpta Medica)
- ☐ Engineering Sciences Data Unit (ESDU)
- ☐ Essential Science Indicators
- ☐ Faculty of 1000: Biology (Biomed Central)
- ☐ Faculty of 1000: Medicine (Biomed Central)
- ☐ Index to Scientific and Technical Proceedings
- ☐ Inspec (physics, electronics, computing)
- ☐ Journal Citation Reports
- ☐ MathSciNet
- ☐ Science Citation Index
- ☐ SciFinder Scholar (Chemical Abstracts etc)
- ☐ SourceOECD
- ☐ Web of Knowledge
- ☐ Web of Science
- ☐ Wiley Reference Works
- ☐ Zentralblatt Math

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If your research is in SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY/MEDICINE only please move to Question 14

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**12) Do you use any of the following IReL ARTS/HUMANITIES/SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL collections (please select all that apply)?**

- ☐ Academic Search Premier
- ☐ Blackwell Synergy
- ☐ Business Source Premier
- ☐ Cambridge Journals Online
- ☐ Emerald FullText
- ☐ Hein Online
- ☐ JSTOR
- ☐ Oxford University Press
- ☐ Project MUSE
- ☐ PsycArticles
- ☐ Sage
- ☐ Springer
- ☐ Taylor and Francis
- ☐ Wiley InterScience Journals
- ☐ Wilson OmniFile

**13) Do you use any of these other IReL ARTS/HUMANITIES/SOCIAL SCIENCES information sources (please select all that apply)?**

- ☐ Arts and Humanities Citation Index
- ☐ EconLit
- ☐ FactFinder Business/Social Sciences
- ☐ Film Index International
- ☐ GeoRef
- ☐ Global Market Information Database
- ☐ Historical Abstracts
- ☐ International Medieval Bibliography
- ☐ Journal Citation Reports
- ☐ JUSTIS (legal information)
- ☐ Literature Online
- ☐ Making of Modern Law
- ☐ MLA Bibliography (Modern Languages Association)

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- ☐ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
  - ☐ Oxford English Dictionary
  - ☐ Oxford Reference Online
  - ☐ Philosopher's Index
  - ☐ PsycInfo
  - ☐ Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy
  - ☐ Social Sciences Citation Index
  - ☐ SourceOECD
  - ☐ Web of Knowledge
  - ☐ Women Writers Online
  - ☐ World Development Indicators (World Bank)

14) What other information sources not currently provided by IReL (this may include backfiles) do you need on a regular basis?

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### Section 3 (of 5): Using IReL

15) How do you access IReL resources (please select all that apply)?

- ☐ Library catalogue
- ☐ Library website/portal
- ☐ University portal
- ☐ Search engines, eg Google
- ☐ Publisher websites
- ☐ Databases, eg PubMed
- ☐ Other (please specify)

If you selected other please specify:

16) How could access to IReL resources be improved?

17) I no longer need to consult the printed copy of journal issues supplied online by IReL

- ☐ Disagree Strongly   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Agree Strongly   ☐ Don't Know

Additional comments:

18) Please indicate *whether* you use IReL for any of the following activities (please select all that apply):

- ☐ Publishing
- ☐ Selecting a publication, eg journal, in which to publish
- ☐ Measuring impact of own publications, eg number of times cited
- ☐ Current awareness
- ☐ Literature searching
- ☐ Writing thesis
- ☐ Supervising research
- ☐ Postgraduate teaching
- ☐ Undergraduate teaching
- ☐ Identifying a funding source
- ☐ Preparing research proposals
- ☐ Inter-institutional collaboration
- ☐ CV preparation
- ☐ Other (please specify)

If you selected other please specify:

19) Please comment on *how* IReL has impacted on your research

20) Please comment on *how* IReL has impacted on your teaching

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Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

**21) IReL has delivered enhanced multidisciplinary coverage for my research**

☐ Disagree Strongly ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Agree Strongly ☐ Don't Know

Additional comments:

**22) IReL has facilitated collaboration between institutions**

☐ Disagree Strongly ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Agree Strongly ☐ Don't Know

Additional comments:

**23) IReL has increased the competitiveness of Irish research internationally**

☐ Disagree Strongly ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Agree Strongly ☐ Don't Know

Additional comments:

**24) IReL is a luxury, not a necessity**

☐ Disagree Strongly ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Agree Strongly ☐ Don't Know

Additional comments:

**25) Please comment on how a discontinuation of IReL would affect your work**

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## Section 4 (of 5): Awareness of IReL

**26) Had you received information about IReL prior to participating in this survey?**

☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Not Sure

Additional comments:

**27) If you had received information, was this through any of the following channels (please select all that apply)?**

- ☐ Press release
- ☐ IReL brochure
- ☐ Library newsletter
- ☐ Journal article
- ☐ Newspaper article
- ☐ Training session
- ☐ Librarian
- ☐ Library website
- ☐ Colleague
- ☐ Other (please specify)

If you selected other please specify:

**28) What would be the best ways of keeping up to date with IReL developments? (please select all that apply)?**

- ☐ Librarian
- ☐ Library website
- ☐ Email updates
- ☐ Departmental/research centre website
- ☐ An IReL website
- ☐ Library newsletter
- ☐ University newsletter
- ☐ An IReL RSS feed
- ☐ An IReL blog
- ☐ Focused presentations to your team/department
- ☐ Conference presentations
- ☐ Other (please specify)

If you selected other please specify:

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### Section 5 (of 5): Other Comments

29) Are there any other comments you wish to make regarding IReL, eg current service, future development?

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Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire. You will be entered into the prize draw when you enter your **individual email address** and click the **Submit Survey** button below. Your address will be separated from other survey data and will only be used for the prize draw.

Please enter your email address:

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[Submit Survey](#)