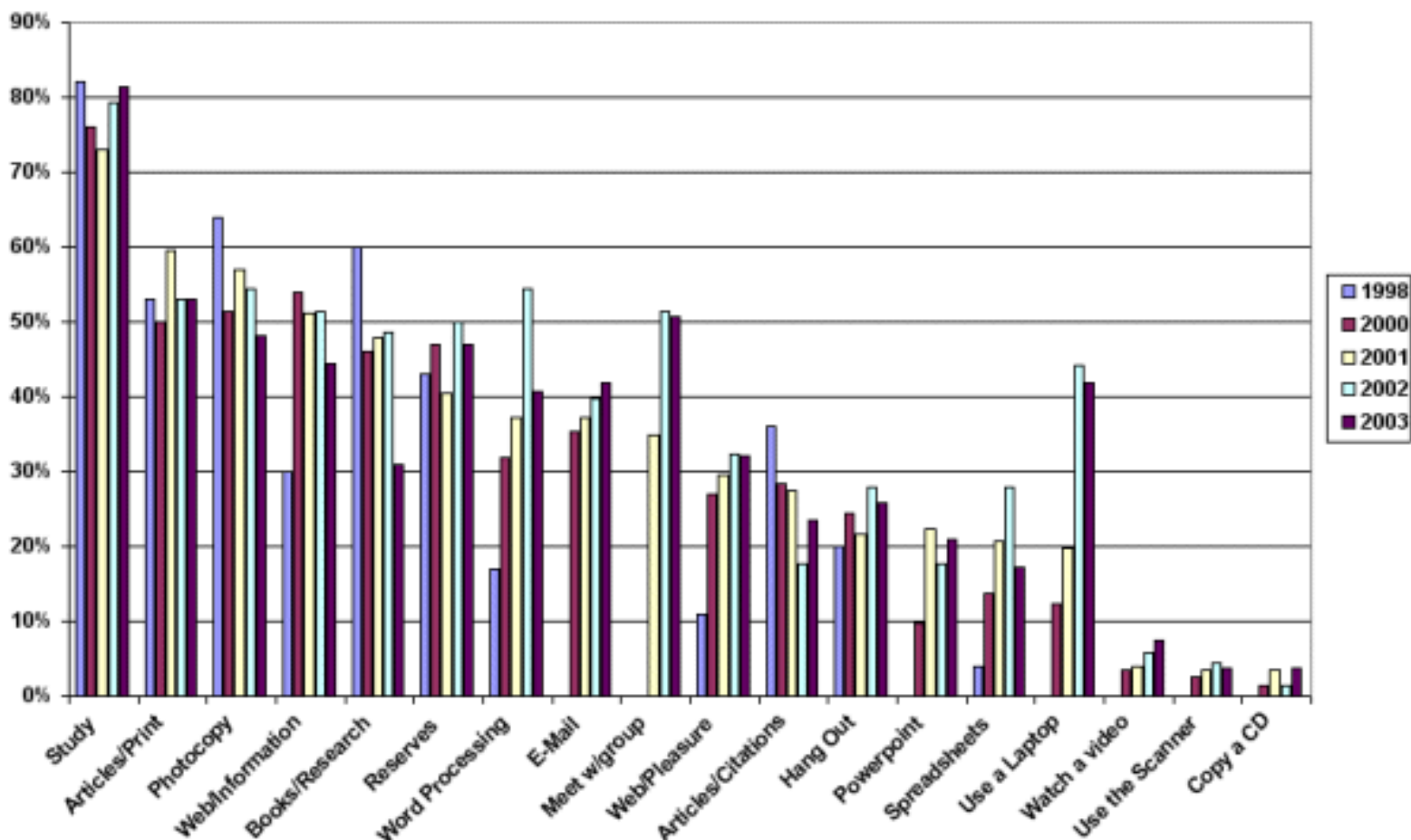


Mildred F. Sawyer Library Selected Charts from Student Library User Surveys Conducted in 1998, and 2000 - 2003

2003 December 1

The staff of the Mildred F. Sawyer Library conducted in-house surveys of student library users during the spring semesters in 1998, 2000, and 2001. In early fall 2001 we placed a survey form on the Web for use any time, and have collected surveys for the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 academic years. The surveys are important sources of information concerning student perceptions of the library and its services. While there are important data compiled from these surveys, we want to share and briefly discuss the responses to four of the questions included on the survey instrument.

Reasons to Come to Library



Reasons Why Students Come to the Library

One question asks students to identify reasons for visiting the Sawyer Library. As displayed by

the chart above, the primary reason students come is to study. Finding and printing articles using library-provided databases was the second most important reason provided in academic year 2002-2003 (53%), while meeting with a group was third (51%).

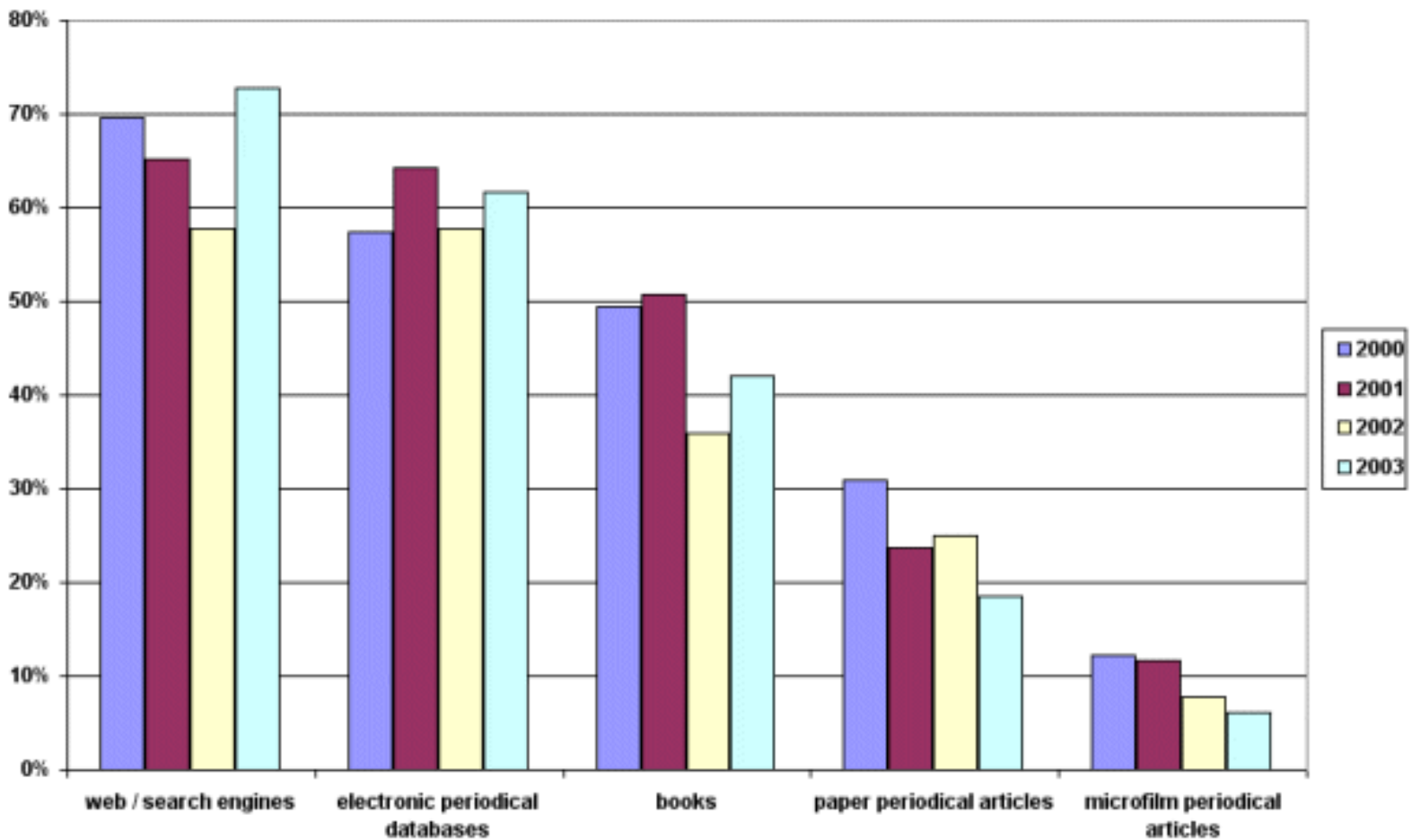
Photocopying (48% in 2002-2003) has declined since the surveys began in 1998 (61%). Using materials on reserve has remained fairly consistent.

The reasons provided by students for using the Sawyer Library are clearly supported by our Mission Statement. The library “contributes to the overall mission of the University by making available, and providing access to, informational resources,” and provides “a place for students and faculty to read and study, to gather and deliberate, and to question, challenge and support one other.”

Where the Information Needed for Research is Found

We began asking students where they found wanted information on the 2000 survey. Unfortunately, students use Internet search engines such as Google more often than the library’s subscription-based databases. Furthermore, after declining for years, search engine use is now increasing. Student use of our subscription electronic periodical databases remains fairly consistent. Overall, since 2000 the use of books, print articles and microforms has declined, likely as a result of the availability of resources found via the World Wide Web.

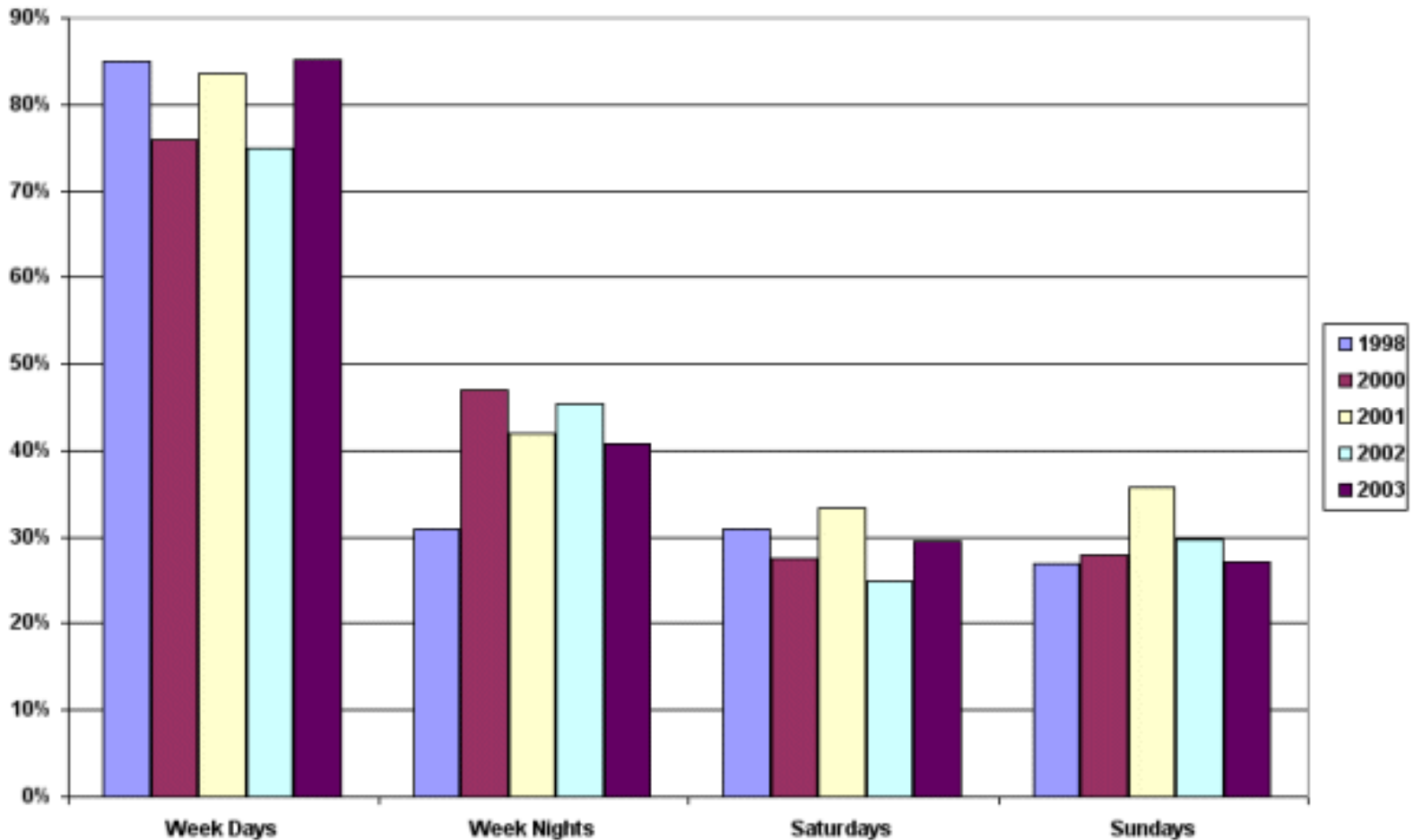
Where Information Needed for Research is Found



Time When Students Use the Library

Eighty-five percent of the students responding to the latest survey reported visiting the library Mondays through Fridays from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm. Evening and Sundays use decreased while Saturday use increased.

Time to Come to the Library

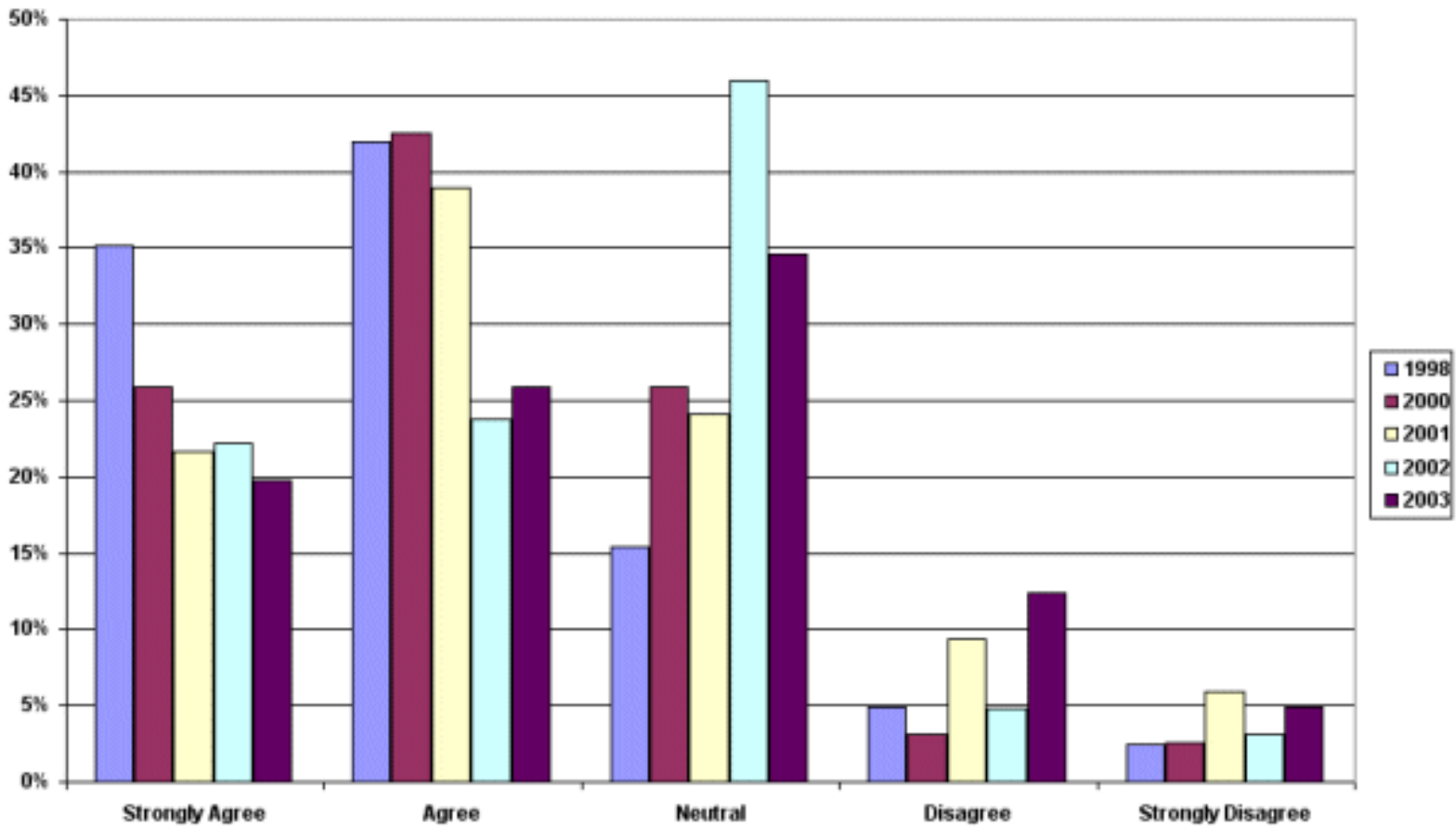


Student's Confidence Using Electronic Resources in the Library

One of the most interesting responses concerns the students' reported confidence in using electronic resources in the library. Those students who "strongly agreed" that they were confident in using electronic resources declined from 35% in 1998 to 20% in 2003. "Agree" has also declined during that time. Those stating a "neutral" position have more than doubled, while those "disagreeing" and "strongly disagreeing" has more than doubled since 1998.

We propose that while students have become more computer literate and Web-savvy over the past five years, they realize that effectively navigating the electronic information landscape for course-related resources has become more difficult. Faculty support for increased librarian-lead instruction in information seeking and evaluation would probably increase the confidence of students as they search for information to prepare course-required projects.

I Feel Confident Using Electronic Resources in the Library



Appendix Mission Statement

The Sawyer Library contributes to the overall mission of the University by making available, and providing access to, informational resources and qualified staff to support the teaching, learning and research needs of CAS and SSOM students, faculty and staff. It participates in the University's effort to teach students the skills they need to find and evaluate information; to learn rather than amass information; and to turn information into knowledge. The Sawyer Library also provides a place for students and faculty to read and study, to gather and deliberate, and to question, challenge and support one other. It is a goal that all members of the University community become independent, self-sufficient, self-directed, life-long information users.