

The 2005 Educational Services Survey
SOLINEWS spring 2005

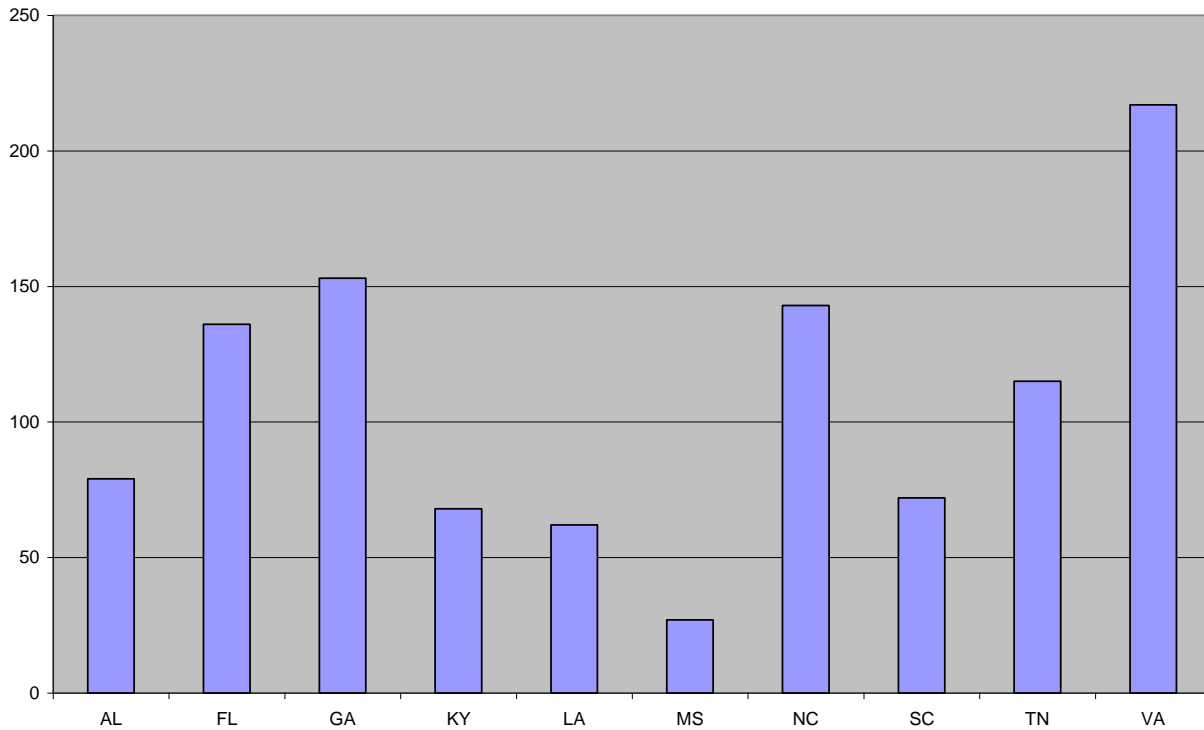
SOLINET recently conducted a survey to collect information from our members about their needs and interests in regard to continuing education and professional development. We asked about preferences for course topics, class delivery methods, and communications. We wanted to know what factors are important to you when making a decision to register (or not) for a course. We asked for your opinions about SOLINET's Educational Services.

And you responded! We received 1,111 completed surveys, an indication of our members' strong interest in continuing education and the high value placed on access to professional development opportunities. The data resulting from the information you've provided will help SOLINET plan for and provide Educational Services that meet your needs and the needs within the library community.

What are the results of the survey?

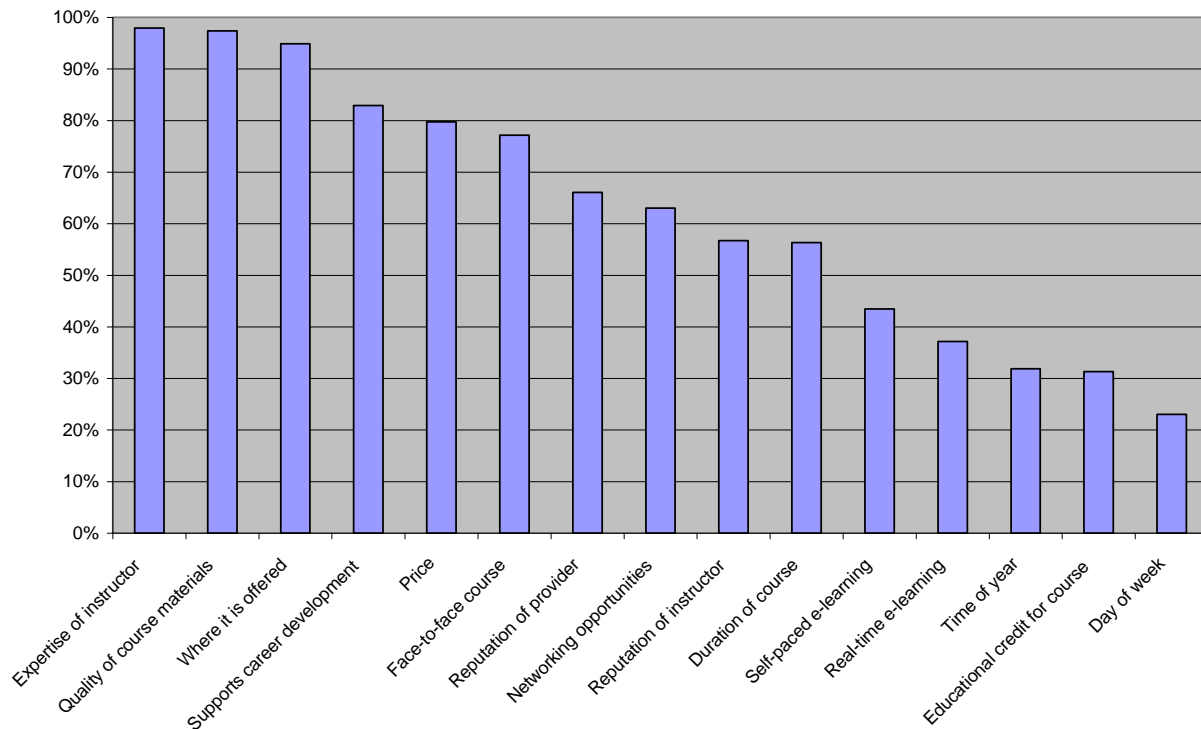
Surveys were completed by people from all parts of the region (see Chart 1) and all types of libraries, with 69% from academic libraries and 20% from public libraries. Likewise, respondents worked in all aspects of library services and operations, with the highest percentages indicating that their work involved reference (37%), cataloging (30%), administration (27%), acquisitions (24%), and instruction (19%). Fifty-one percent of the respondents had attended a SOLINET course in the past two years and 48% had not.

Chart 1: Survey Response by State



The survey asked respondents to indicate what is important to them when selecting an educational course. The factors chosen as very important by the highest number of people are the expertise of the instructor (very important to 87% of the respondents), quality of course materials (very important to 80%), and where the course is offered (very important to 76%). When combined with respondents rating these factors as important, it is clear that these three criteria are almost universally applied in making course selection decisions. Chart 2 shows the percentage of respondents indicating that a particular factor is important or very important to them when selecting an educational course. In addition to the three noted above, support for career development, course price, and delivery through face-to-face training are frequently important selection criteria.

Chart 2: Factors that Are Important or Very Important in Selecting a Course



Topic is, of course, the critical factor when selecting an educational course. The topic chosen most frequently by respondents as one of current interest is emerging technologies. Other topics of current interest to many respondents focus on evaluation and assessment, digital collections and services, and collection development and management. The Topics Table lists the topics most frequently selected as ones of current interest.

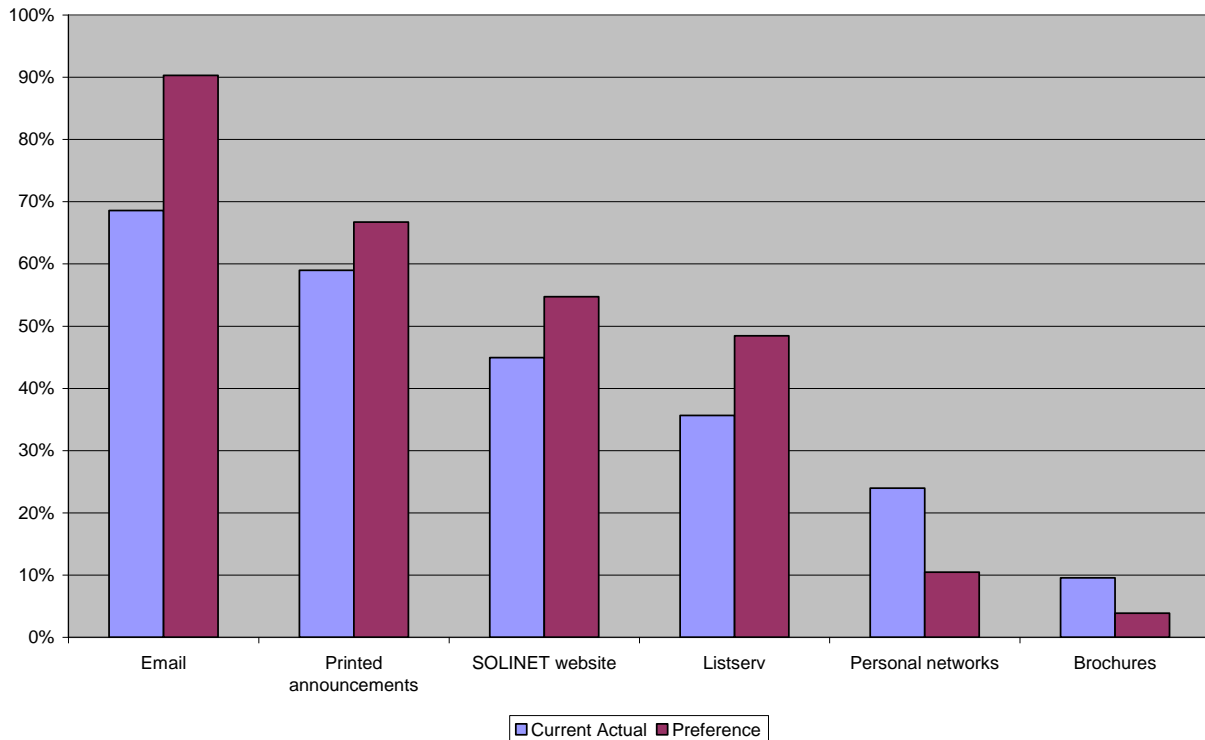
Top 15 Topics of Current Interest to Survey Respondents

<i>Topic</i>	<i>% Selecting</i>
Emerging technologies	40%
Evaluation of library services	35%
Developing & managing digital collections	33%
Copyright	32%
Evaluation of library resources	32%
Marketing library services	30%
Web site development & design	28%
Staff development	28%
Collection development principles & practices	27%
Collection management principles & practices	26%
Database evaluation	26%
OCLC WorldCat Resource Sharing	25%
Information literacy	24%
Conducting a user needs analysis	23%
Evaluating internet resources	23%

The survey also asked for input on questions related to how SOLINET delivers courses, distributes course materials, and communicates about courses. Eighty-three percent of the respondents indicated that they would be willing to take a web-based course. Sixty-four percent indicated that they prefer to receive course materials electronically prior to class, while 35% prefer course materials to be delivered in hard copy format during class.

In regard to communication, 69% of the survey respondents learn about SOLINET courses from email, 59% from printed announcements they receive in the mail, and 45% from the SOLINET website. These three communication methods are also the three most preferred methods, as illustrated in Chart 3. Email communication is the dominant preference.

Chart 3: Current Communication Methods and Preferred Communication Methods



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SOLINET’s Educational Services has already begun to use the information collected through this survey to plan and schedule courses for the immediate future. We’ve also begun to identify strategies to help make Educational Services more relevant, timely, and useful to you. From a broad perspective, such strategies will include strengthening our distance education offerings, improving relationships with host sites for face-to-face classes, increasing opportunities for personal career development and networking with colleagues throughout the region, and enhancing communication about courses.

You've helped increase our understanding of your needs and interests through this survey. Thank you for taking the time to respond. We appreciate your opinions and comments on our educational programs and services and hope that you will continue to share them with us on an ongoing basis.