

Do Our LibGuides Actually Work?

LibGuides Usability Study



Library
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
SCARBOROUGH

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GOALS

- Conduct research on how students typically use LibGuides
- Determine the effectiveness of LibGuides in helping students complete their assignments and develop research skills

TESTING OVERVIEW



THINK-ALOUD TASKS

COURSE GUIDES

- Management Skills
- Introduction to Sociology



INTERVIEWS



SURVEYS

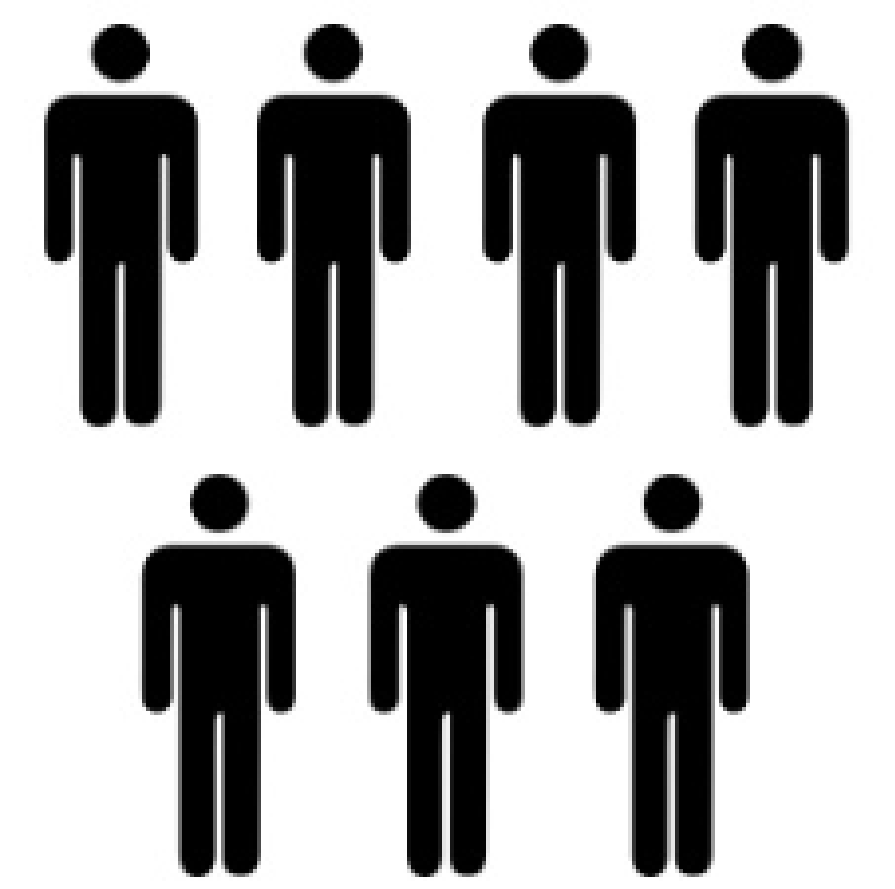
RESEARCH GUIDES

- Academy Integrity
- Understanding Peer Review
- Finding Primary Sources

PARTICIPANTS

User Profiles

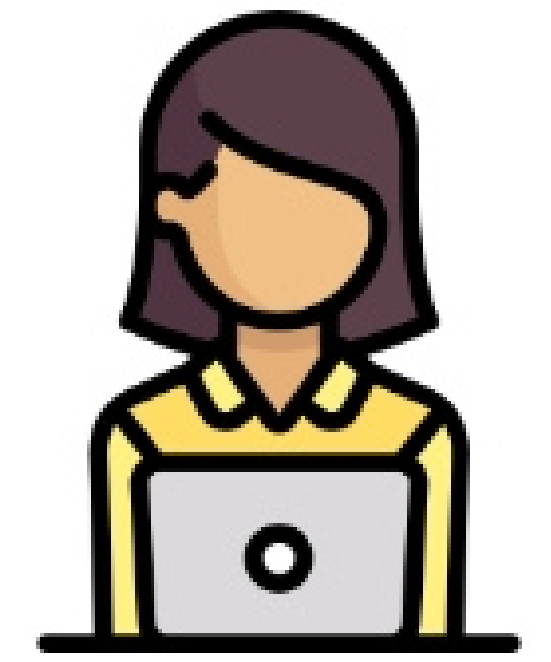
- 7 full-time undergraduate students
- Programs: Management and Accounting, Linguistics, Psychology, Media Studies, Health Science, English
- Third year (3), Fourth year (4)
- Never used LibGuides (1), used 1-3 times (3), used 3+ times (3)



METHODOLOGY

Course Guide Testing

- Develop a search strategy and find an article
- Find information about types of information sources
- Comment on quality and quantity of information and overall experience when using guide

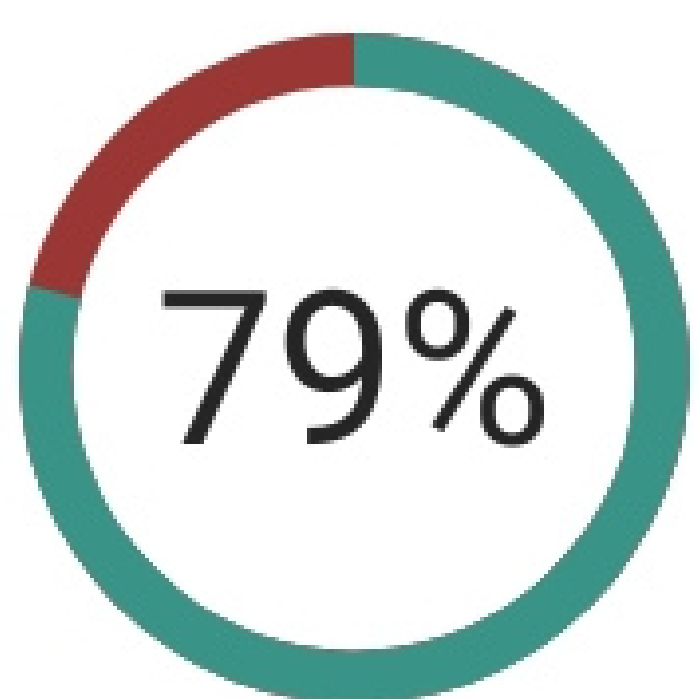


Research Guides

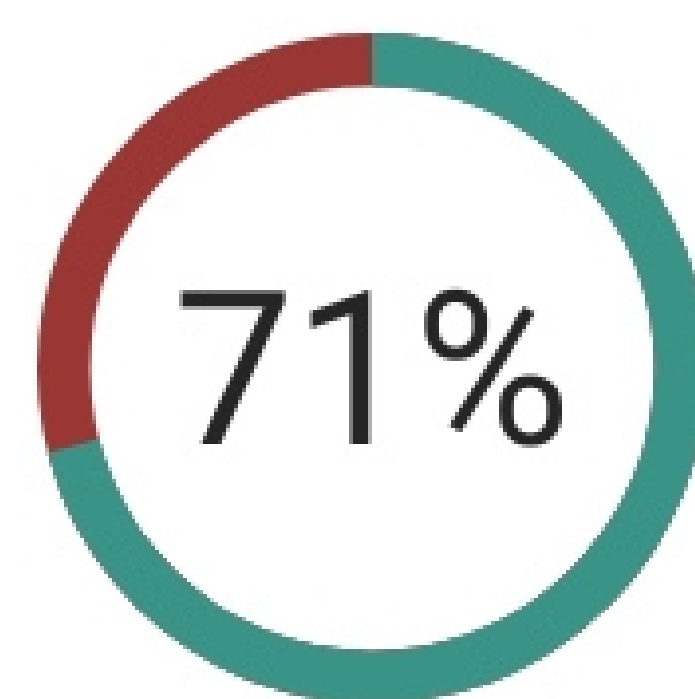
- Find information on proper citation
- Find information on academic misconduct
- Use Ulrich's to determine if articles are peer-reviewed
- Find out what constitutes primary sources and how to find and use them
- Rate the overall experience, clarity, helpfulness and likelihood of using guide



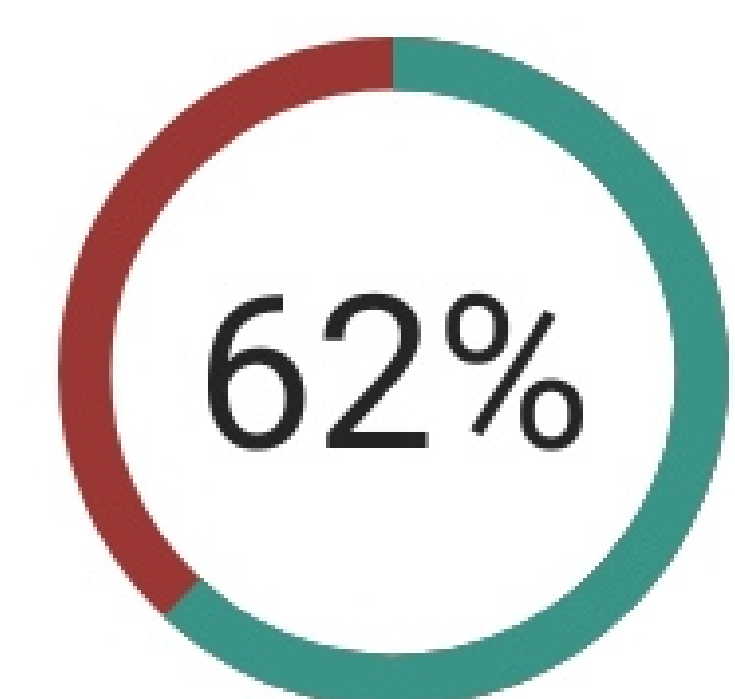
TASK SUCCESS RATES



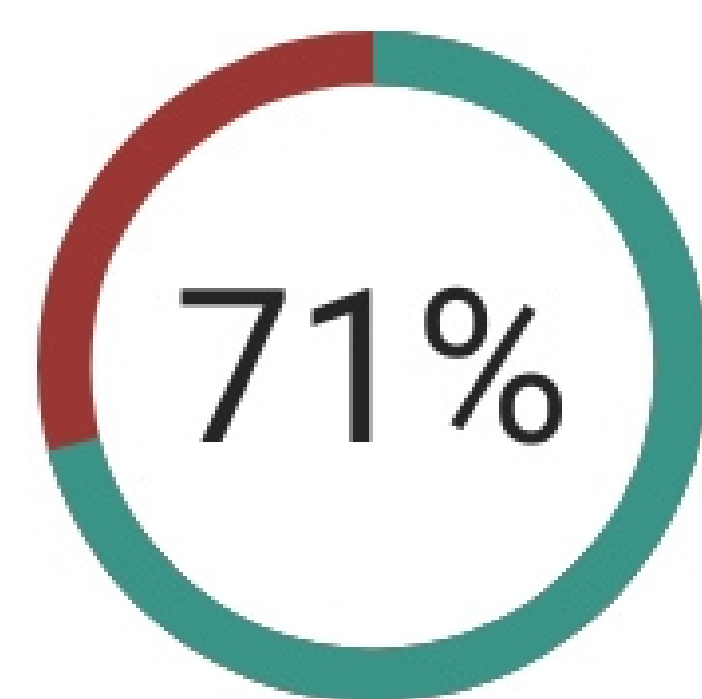
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY GUIDE



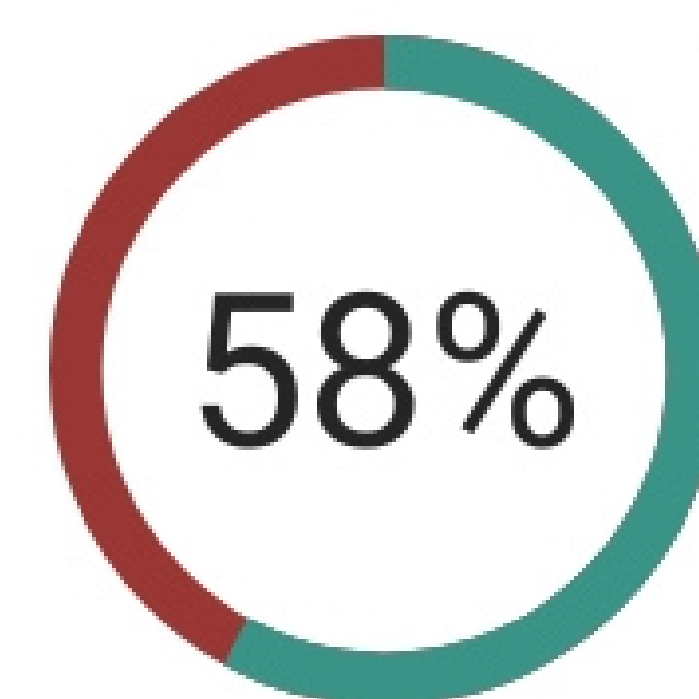
PEER REVIEW GUIDE



PRIMARY SOURCES GUIDE



MANAGEMENT GUIDE



SOCIOLOGY GUIDE

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Participants liked:

- Information presented visually in a variety of formats
- Easy access to resources they are familiar with (i.e. library catalogue, Owl of Purdue)
- Many examples
- Step-by-step instructions

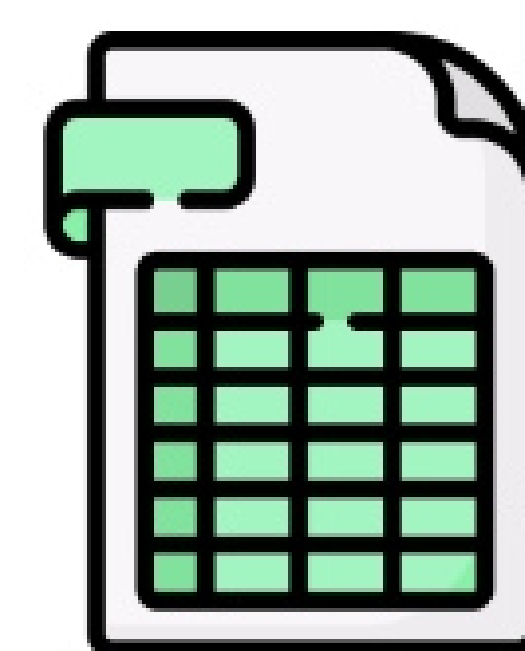
Participants struggled to:

- Closely follow the LibGuide as most already had a pre-established research process
- Navigate to correct pages when tab and content labels were inconsistent or vague
- Identify information hidden lower on the page or within the hierarchy of tabs

RECOMMENDATIONS

Include:

- Tables, videos, screenshots and other graphics
- Closed captioning or transcripts for video content
- Links to helpful resources and top databases
- At least two examples for any new concept



Consider:

- Potential challenges of using any database included in the guide
- Shorter lists of steps to reduce scrolling
- Student workflow when deciding order of content and tabs
- Consistency and specificity of labels

