How Do College Freshmen Conduct Research?

For their class reports, Project Information Literacy (P.I.L.) seeks to help them determine the struggles the students face when transitioning to higher education.

High School vs. Academic Libraries

- The average college library has... 19X as many online library databases & 9X as many books and journals than the average high school library.

Exposure to New Tools

- 51% of freshmen said they had a hard time learning to navigate new tools...
- 43% had trouble making sense of the information.

Sometimes You Just Need Help Getting Started

- The most helpful individuals on campus guiding freshmen through college-level research are:
  - Campus Librarians: 29%
  - English Comp. Instructors: 29%
  - Other Professors: 20%

17% of students said they had trouble asking for help.

Top Resources That Freshmen Use

- Google: 88%
- Library Databases: 82%
- Course Readings: 80%
- Government Sites: 77%
- Instructors: 72%
- Encyclopedias: 63%
- Classmates: 63%
- Google Scholar: 61%

What are the Most Difficult Steps?

- Coming up with keywords: 75%
- Coming up with research worth results: 67%
- Identifying and analyzing sources: 51%
- Identifying writing styles from different sources: 49%
- Applying a thesis: 37%

Source:

* Additional data was provided by 35 U.S. high school, college, and university libraries and 95 first-year college freshmen from 8 U.S. colleges and universities.

* Feb. 2014.