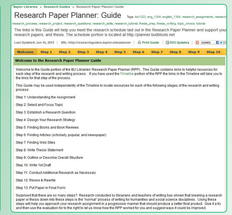
Research Paper Planner: Students Love It, but Do We Know Why?

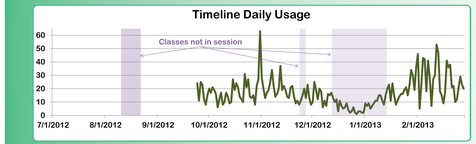
Christina Y. Chan-Park and Eileen M. Bentsen
Baylor University Libraries

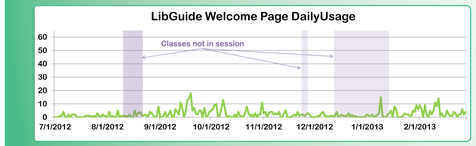
Research Paper Planner Timeline & LibGuide



Modified
University of Minnesota Assignment Calculator
- Added **Step 11 Conduct Additional Research If Necessary**
- Students can print out timeline or sign up for email alerts

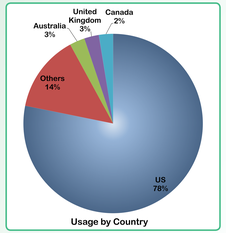
Created an accompanying
Research Paper Planner Research Guide
- Explains and provides additional links for each step
- Students can click on links to the LibGuide from the timeline or email alerts

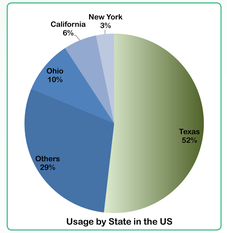


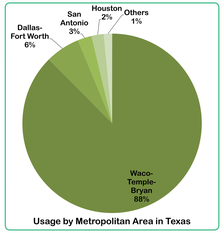


- Extreme daily variation of both the Timeline and LibGuide
- Lower usage when class is not in session
- Average daily usage of the Timeline (17.2) is higher than the usage of the LibGuide (10.5)
- Average daily usage in the LibGuide of the Individual Step pages (8.0) is higher than usage of the Welcome page (2.5)

Timeline Google Analytics





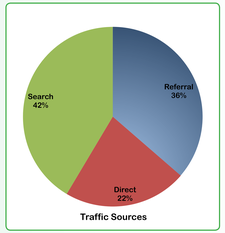


Most usage comes from the US, Texas, and Waco areas where where Baylor University is located

From September 24 to March 1

- 2749 visits
- 2201 unique visitors (80.07%)
- 5623 pageviews

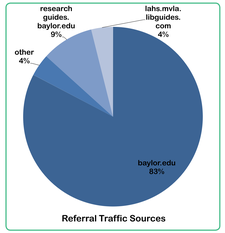
- 2.05 pages/visit
- 1:35 minutes/visit
- 53.77% bounce rate

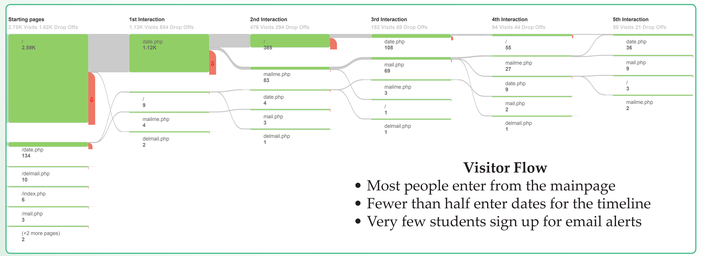


Common search queries include
- research paper timeline
- research project timeline

Direct connections come from
- library pulldown menu
- bookmarks
- email alerts

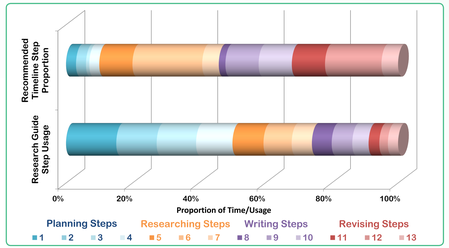
Referal connections come from
- library website
- LibGuides



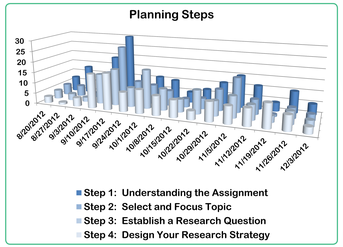


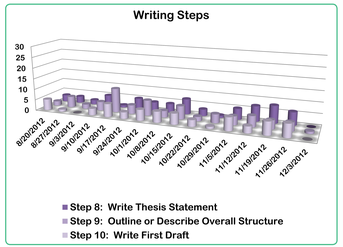
Visitor Flow
- Most people enter from the mainpage
- Fewer than half enter dates for the timeline
- Very few students sign up for email alerts

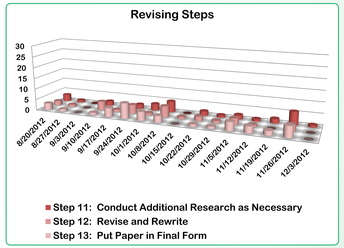
LibGuide Statistics



- The Research Paper Planner is divided into four stages
  - Planning: Steps 1-4
  - Researching: Steps 5-7
  - Writing: Steps 8-10
  - Revising: Steps 11-13
- The Research Paper Planner Timeline recommends spending more than half of the time writing and revising
- The LibGuide statistics indicate that almost half of the usage is spent on getting guidance on planning

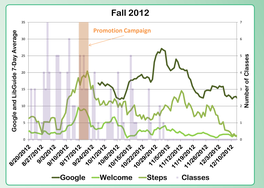






- Steps earlier in the research process seem to have more usage than steps later in the research process
- LibGuide usage appears to happen in two waves during the semsester: Weeks 1-10 and Weeks 8-15
- During each of these waves usage progresses through each stage with peaks for
  - Planning at Weeks 4-5 and Weeks 11-13
  - Research at Weeks 4-6 and Weeks 11-15
  - Writing at Weeks 5-9 and Weeks 12-15
  - Revising at Weeks 6-8 and Weeks 14-15

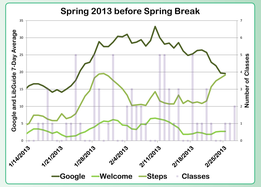
Promotion vs. Usage



During the week of September 17-21, the library embarked on a promotion campaign
- Posters in residence halls
- Bookmark distribution
- Feature on library webpage
- Article in school newspaper

The Research Paper Planner is introduced during instruction
- at all levels
- in multiple disciplines

These promotion campaigns
- seem to increase usage only slightly in the short term
- may increase usage in the long term



We Don't Know Why They Love It

We do know
- overall usage is increasing
- usage mimics weekly and semester rhythms
- traffic comes from some unexpected places
- very few students sign up for email alerts so the emailed survey for feedback is ineffective
- the LibGuide is used mostly for planning and research stages and not for writing and revising stages

We think we can improve usage by
- adding *metadata* tags to the timeline to increase *discoverability* of the Research Paper Planner
- conducting *focus groups* to find out how and why students use the Research Paper Planner
- continuing to promote the Research Paper Planner during *instruction*
- promoting the Research Paper Planner through both traditional and *social media*

CY_Chan@baylor.edu
Eileen_Bentsen@baylor.edu
http://blogs.baylor.edu/stem-access/2013/04/acrl-2013-poster/