RESEARCH REPORTS AND NOTES

RESEARCHING LATIN AMERICA
A Survey of How the New Generation Is Doing its Research[1]

Orchid Mazurkiewicz
Hispanic American Periodicals Index
University of California, Los Angeles

Claude H. Potts
Arizona State University

Abstract: This article reports the results of a pioneering and in-depth survey of the research and information-seeking behavior of the student members of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) living in the United States and Puerto Rico. The results suggest that the new generation of Latin Americanists in the universities surveyed are confident in their abilities to carry out research on the region within their respective disciplines. However, most of these students have not received formal instruction by course instructors or librarians on how to carry out their research on Latin America. Use of the Internet as a research resource is popular but has not replaced the use of the library and long-standing research strategies such as footnote-chasing. While the reported use of library electronic resources is very high, awareness of Latin America-specific and electronically-available research tools such as HLAS, HAPI, and LAPTOC is low. The survey is the first step in reassessing the ever-changing needs and research patterns of this cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary group of academic library users and future leaders in Latin American studies.

INTRODUCTION

A recent exchange of e-mails on the Latin Americanist Librarians' listserv (LALA-L) provides an example of a growing concern among many information professionals. A doctoral student was in need of biographical information on a little-known eighteenth-century Mexican writer and priest. The student reported having tried to "google" him and was stymied by finding nothing. The list members quickly supplied the required information, drawing from a variety of print reference tools such as the *Diccionario Porrúa de Historia, Biografía y Geografía de México*. This anecdote illustrates the challenges that faculty and librarians face as academia migrates rapidly to an electronic landscape with its attendant expectations that all the research resources one needs are just a few clicks away.

The investigators on this study, both Latin Americanist librarians, have worked with students (undergraduate and graduate) from many disciplines, with a wide variety of Latin American information needs. Unfortunately, these students' lack of awareness of some of the key resources in the field is often noted. This is a frustration experienced by many academic librarians who work across disciplines. While there is an abundance of information resources available, much of it is unknown or underutilized by students and researchers. This frustration has been amplified by the growth of the Internet. While the Internet has increased the availability of resources and communication, there is concern that the easy availability of information (authoritative or not) by "googling" a topic or browsing Wikipedia[2] might incline students and scholars to ignore the vast wealth of information available only in print or in less obvious electronic resources available through a library's subscriptions. From a Latin Americanist perspective, this is especially a concern. Despite impressive initiatives to get Latin American information online, the availability of full-text scholarly materials remains limited.[3]

2. See *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, http://www.wikipedia.org. See also Bates (2006); Berinstein (2006); Eiffert (2006).

3. Some of the most popular scholarly publishing sites from Latin America include: CLASE, http://ahau.cichcu.unam.mx:8000/ALEPH; CLACSO's Biblioteca Virtual, http://www.clacso.org/; latindex, http://www.latindex.unam.mx/; RedALyC, http://www.redalyc.com/; and SciELO, http://www.scielo.org/. Holdom (2005) provides a good overview and explores sustainability of the new open-access trend in Latin American scholarly publishing.

This survey is a first step in assessing the research, or information-seeking, behavior of Latin Americanist graduate students, with a particular emphasis on the impact of the Internet. Since Latin American studies draws students from a broad range of disciplines, it can be difficult to get a sense of their research behaviors based on previous studies of students of literature, history, sociology, etc. Graduate students were chosen for study as they are likely to be heavily engaged in research and are the next generation of instructors. The goal of this project is to better understand how this diverse group of students does research, their comfort level with different kinds of research strategies, and their awareness of Latin America-specific research tools. The hope is that the results of this survey will be used by faculty, librarians, and the new generation of Latin Americanist researchers as a starting point in assessing the ever-changing needs and research patterns of this sophisticated group of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary scholars.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While a national survey of this depth and nature has never been administered to graduate students specifically working in Latin American studies, a wealth of related literature informs the complex needs and research patterns of scholars working in interdisciplinary and cross-cultural fields. Numerous studies conducted in the past fifteen years have explored the distinctive research needs and usage-patterns of graduate students.[4] Smith's (2003, 354) study was among the first to use citation analyses to demonstrate the impact that the Web and other electronic resources have had on graduate research. Marcum and George (2003, 2) found that 94.8 percent of the graduate students surveyed agreed with the statement, "I am comfortable retrieving and using information electronically." Furthermore, they determined that while more and more research is being conducted online, more than 96 percent of those faculty and graduate students surveyed continue to use printed books and journals (2003, 4). In an exploratory research study on the information-seeking habits of graduate students in the humanities, Barrett (2005) cautioned that it is "potentially misleading to consider graduate students to be a single user group" and that it would be more accurate to describe them as a "group constituting a unique series of stages" who become more and more reliant on their "invisible colleges," or informal scholarly networks for research guidance, and less so on librarians. While such studies are helpful in uncovering some general characteristics of graduate students as a library user-group, they shed

4. The following list is far from comprehensive. See Washington-Hoagland et al. (2002); Parrish (ED 309 771); Simon (1995); Stoan (1991); Smith (2003); Barry (1997); Marcum and George (2003); Laribee and Lorber (1994).

little light on the specific needs and habits of those conducting highly specialized research on Latin America-related topics.

Many information-seeking studies examine research behaviors by discipline or field. However, as noted by Delgadillo and Lynch (1999), there is very little literature about the information-seeking habits of humanities scholars published after the explosion of the Internet in the 1990s. With some noteworthy exceptions, the same holds true for the social sciences and the sciences (See Brown 1999; Folster 1995). In one recent study, Dalton and Charnigo (2004) found, like Delgadillo and Lynch, that even in the electronic age many characteristics of historians' information needs and uses have not changed much, and that browsing and other informal means of discovery like reading book reviews remain important.[5] Their survey of 278 history professors at American universities and citation analyses revealed that print remains the principal format of information used although electronic databases are used extensively in the discovery of the information (Dalton and Charnigo 2004, 414). Similarly, "history graduate students are guided by their faculty advisors and their professors, not only within the content of the courses they take but also within the context of how they do their work" (Delgadillo and Lynch 1999, 257). In Folster's (1995) review of research behavior studies of social scientists, she concluded that social scientists as a group tend to 1) place high importance on journals; 2) identify most citations through "citation-tracking" or "footnote-chasing"; 3) use informal channels as an important source of information; and 4) not heavily use library resources such as catalogs, indexes, and librarians.

Several articles published in the fall 1996 issue of *Library Trends* provide a survey of the unique needs of interdisciplinary researchers (See Bates 1996a; Searing 1996; Klein 1996). Spanner (2001) expands upon the earlier studies, and concludes that interdisciplinary scholars face distinct difficulties with disciplinary acculturation, and inadequate library collections and that more research must be done to better address the needs of this user-group. Whitmire (2002) measured the information seeking behavior of more than 5,000 undergraduates conducting research in different academic disciplines, and concluded that certain types of academic library services may favor one group to the detriment of others. Another obstacle that Latin Americanists encounter, as identified by Westbrook (2003) in the context of women's studies, is that they work in a high-scatter field as opposed to traditional low-scatter disciplines where resources are consolidated, controlled, and standardized. The Internet, with its promises of greater connectivity and access to resources, has dramatically increased resource scatter.

5. Their study also provides one of the most thorough literature reviews of information-seeking behavior studies of historians to date.

A subset of the information-seeking behavior literature that informs this study is a review of awareness, usage, and self-efficacy studies for the current generation of emerging scholars. Often called "Generation Y," the "Net Generation," or the "Millenials," these students were all born in or after 1982 and make up the largest generation in American history (currently 34 percent of the country's population) (Gardner and Eng 2005, 405; see also Merritt 2002). They are more technologically savvy than previous generations, and studies have suggested that they are capitalizing on technology's mobility to use the library (and the Internet) in novel ways (Howe, Neil, and Strauss 2000). For those that do regularly visit the library, Gardner and Eng discovered that "only a small number of students come to the library with the intention of asking for any kind of reference (12.6 percent) or computer assistance (2.1 percent)" (Gardner and Eng 2005, 413). One of the hallmarks of this new generation is its self-confidence. "Bolstered by an inflated sense of competence with technology, they are convinced of their excellent skills in quickly locating information online" (Knowlton 2004; see also Online Computer Library Center [OCLC], Inc 2002). A large survey commissioned by OCLC in December 2001 found that college students consistently rate their own searching skills as either good, above average, or excellent (OCLC 2002).

While not all survey respondents are likely to be Millenials, they probably share some of the same characteristics and fit into what Bell (2003, 45) calls, adding yet another moniker, the "full-text-fixated generation"—a group that uses full-text databases to the exclusion of all other information sources. Though the current debate over whether students need to be more "information-literate" or whether libraries need to become more "information-literate-friendly" remains unresolved, the common belief is that library instruction does enhance students' self-efficacy in electronic information searching.[6] Barnhart-Park (2002) and Simpson (1998), among others, have proposed team-teaching or student-librarian-professor models of information-finding, as opposed to bibliographic instruction in isolated classes.

METHODOLOGY

Based on the literature review and personal experience, the initial assumptions concerning the research and information-seeking behaviors of Latin Americanist graduate students were: 1) students would not have a high level of awareness of the core tools in the field, 2) students who had received bibliographic instruction would be more likely to be familiar

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6. Ren (2000, 323). See also Wilder (2005): Simpson 1998); Stamatoplos and Mackoy (1998); Jacobson and Williams (2000); Barry (1997).

with the field's core tools, 3) medium or format would be an important determinant in the choice of research tools, and 4) the Internet would be a prominent tool for research. A three-part survey was designed to test these assumptions, as well as to gather some additional data on information-seeking behavior, and on students' perceptions of their ability to successfully carry out Latin America-related research.[7] The first section ("How you do your research") included general questions related to the use of print versus electronic and library versus Internet resources when conducting Latin America-related research. A combination of Likert (1932) scale[8] and multiple-choice questions allowed us to approximate and compare students' comfort levels locating and using different kinds of research materials and different research strategies.

The second section ("The tools you use for Latin America-related research") included questions on preferred tools for research and questions related to awareness and use of four Latin America-specific research tools. The tools were chosen based on the investigators' professional experiences and training as librarians, and on a review of a variety of librarians' Internet-based research guides.

The *Handbook of Latin American Studies* (HLAS) is a selective, annotated bibliography produced by the Hispanic Section of the Library of Congress.[9] Published since 1935, it covers both the social sciences and humanities and is available in both a print volume and in a free online searchable database. It is the "principal ongoing bibliography of publications on Latin America" (Covington 1992, 3,72; see also McNeil 1990).

The *Hispanic American Periodicals Index* (HAPI), available both in print and online, includes citations to more than five hundred periodicals in the field of Latin American studies dating back to 1970.[10] It is the only one of the four tools that requires a paid subscription, but it is widely subscribed to by university libraries throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. It is the "principal index to journals on Latin American themes" (Covington 1993, 53, 71; see also McNeil 1990, 216).

The *Latin American Periodicals Table of Contents* (LAPTOC) is a product of the Latin Americanist Research Resources Project (LARRP). Latin American Periodicals Tables of Contents (LAPTOC) is a searchable database of the tables of contents of more than eight hundred scholarly periodicals published in Latin America. Started in 1997, it is a relatively

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7. The study described in Marcum and George was especially helpful in the survey design. The survey used is available online at http://hapi.ucla.edu/las_survey.pdf. The survey can only reflect what the respondents report to be their attitudes and behavior. Reliable measures of, for example, *actual* use of particular research tools or research strategies are not available from the survey results.

8. Likert scales can result in central tendency bias and acquiescence response bias.

9. Handbook of Latin American Studies Online, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/hlas/.

10. Hispanic American Periodicals Index, http://www.hapi.ucla.edu.

new project and was created to fill in the gaps in access to the region's vast periodical literature left by HLAS and HAPI.

The Latin American Network Information Center (LANIC) is one of the largest gateways to Latin American content on the Internet. It is affiliated with the University of Texas at Austin and includes editorially reviewed directories to relevant Internet resources.[11] It is generally recognized among Latin Americanist librarians as an important starting place for organized access to Latin America-related Web sites.

The final section of the survey ("Information about you") asked respondents about the degree they were currently working on, year of study, majors, languages used in research, and whether they have received bibliographic instruction sessions from librarians and / or class instructors.

The instrument was tested in a pilot survey carried out on the Arizona State University and University of California, Los Angeles, campuses in the spring of 2004. In September 2004, after minor adjustments, this survey was mailed to the 723 Latin American Studies Association (LASA) student members with postal codes in the United States and Puerto Rico.[12] Two hundred-eleven completed surveys were returned, and fifty-six of the survey packages were returned as undeliverable. This made the return rate for the surveys just under 32 percent.

The LASA student members were seen as an ideal target population as they identify themselves, at least to the extent of becoming LASA members, as Latin Americanists. As well, they are unlikely to have "built up the same information reserves as more established academics: rich personal collections of publications and a network of personal contact with expert colleagues, which can short cut the need for extensive information-seeking" (Barry 1997, 229). These students are also likely to be the next generation of instructors in the field of Latin American studies, passing on their own knowledge of research tools and strategies to the following generation of students.

SURVEY RESULTS

The Respondents

Of the 211 respondents, 3 were postdoctorates, 189 were enrolled in doctoral programs, 16 in master's programs, and 2 in bachelor's programs. It was concluded that the survey had reached the desired population. A characteristic of this dataset is the vast range of disciplines among the

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11. LANIC web page http://lanic.utexas.edu/info/about/ (accessed December 2005).

12. Mailing costs limited this stage of our project to U.S. and Puerto Rican student members. LASA does not sell lists of the e-mail addresses of its members, making an e-mailed survey for this population impossible.

respondents. While most of the respondents fell into categories such as anthropology, history, political science, literature, and languages/linguistics, 57 of the 211 (22.2 percent) respondents wrote in other disciplines (see Appendix A). This suggests a number of tendencies within Latin American studies: 1) the emergence of new disciplines and sub-disciplines, 2) the inability of traditional or core disciplines to encapsulate the specificity of new research, and 3) the natural growth of inter-disciplinary specializations within a growing field.

Languages of Research

The survey asked respondents to write in, from most-used to least-used, the top three languages they use to conduct their Latin America-related research. Considering that only graduate students enrolled in North American institutions were surveyed, it was not surprising to discover that English appeared as the most-used language with 130 responses as the primary language compared to 81 for Spanish. The second most-used language reverses these results with 115 respondents selecting Spanish and 69 selecting English. Overall however, nearly all reported using both English and Spanish in their research. The third-most-popular language was Portuguese with 75 respondents indicating that they use it to conduct their research. Other third-ranked languages included, in order of popularity: French, Quechua, Mayan, German, Dutch, Italian, Mixtec, Latin, and Spanglish.

Research and Information-Seeking Behavior

The medium of the information is not perceived to be as important a determinant as we had assumed. Sixty percent reported that the medium of the information was somewhat or not at all important in their decision to use that information. The growing availability of easily accessible electronic resources has not yet eliminated the use of print sources. Of the respondents, 73.9 percent reported that they use print sources when doing their Latin America-related research either all of the time or most of the time, which corroborates earlier findings (Dalton and Charnigo 2004; Delgadillo and Lynch 1999; Folster 1995); 61.7 percent reported that the same was true regarding use of electronic sources.

The vast majority reported using electronic resources in their search for relevant books and articles. Figure 1 shows that approximately 90 percent of the respondents reported going to the library's electronic/on-line sources to identify relevant books and articles, and more than half reported going to other online sources in their searches. More traditional or low-tech strategies also proved to be popular while just a small percentage reported asking a librarian.
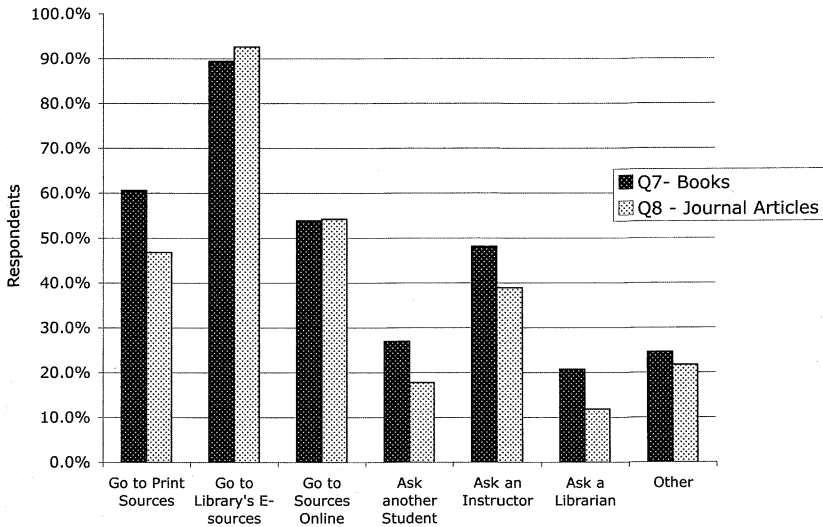
Figure 1 How Students Find Books and Journal Articles (Q7 & Q8)

While librarians might not be a popular resource when conducting research, the library is. Sixty-seven percent either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "my institution's library (physical and/or virtual) is where I conduct most of my research on Latin America-related topics." Almost 66 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that browsing the library stacks or journal shelves is an important strategy for doing Latin America-related research. Ninety-three percent either agreed or strongly agreed that following up on citations was an important strategy for their Latin America-related research. This aligns with previous research suggesting that scholars tend not to carry out carefully thought-out search strategies, but instead rely on looking up references in familiar sources, consulting colleagues, looking through their own private libraries, and browsing the library stacks (See, among others, Simpson 1998, 8).

Awareness of Core Tools/Information Sources

It would seem likely that the survey respondents would be among the heaviest users of the core tools. However, results for use levels were low, as table 1 shows.

While LAPTOC is the youngest of the core tools appearing in the survey and therefore the least likely to be known, the lack of awareness among survey respondents is disappointing. A more surprising result was the relatively high use of the LANIC Web site.

When asked the reason for not using these tools, lack of awareness of the existence of the tools was consistently the most popular response, as

Table 1 Rate of Use for Core Tools

Resource	Ever used?	1–3 x in past 12 mos.	4–10 x in past 12 mos.	10+ x in past 12 mos.	Do not know what this resource cites
HLAS	43.9%	26.6%	6.7%	3.4%	46.9%
HAPI	46.4%	23.7%	6.16%	3.8%	41.7%
LAPTOC	2.8%	2.4%	0.95%	0.0%	77.0%
LANIC	63.3%	30%	12.9%	12.9%	36%

seen in figure 2. Between 69 and 93 percent of those who had not used the four resources in the previous twelve months claimed to be "not aware of the existence of the tool."

Respondents were also asked what they considered the three most useful tools when doing Latin America-related research. Since this was an open-ended question, a wide variety of tools were listed. Considering the array of disciplines represented by the respondents it was not surprising that many of these tools were discipline-specific resources (for example, EconLit, ERIC, Sociological Abstracts).[13] Only eight resources received more than ten votes by respondents. Consistent with the results reported above, respondents did value electronic resources, but are still more likely to value tools available through their libraries rather than the Internet in general. Seventeen respondents listed the Internet or Google as one of their top three most useful tools. LANIC, which is itself a gateway to Internet sites, received 28 votes. All the other top resources were library research and reference tools.

By far, the most popular tool was JSTOR with 66 votes, or 31 percent. This is noteworthy and somewhat troubling. JSTOR is an online full-text archive of 582 important scholarly journals, covering both the arts and sciences.[14] Included are a number of core titles in the field of Latin American studies such as *Hispania, Hispanic American Historical Review,* and *Latin American Research Review.*

From our perspective as librarians, we see limitations in JSTOR that raise concerns about its prominence in the top tools list. The Latin America-related titles in JSTOR are primarily titles published in the United States and Western Europe. By design, the most recent available issue for nearly all titles in JSTOR is three to five years old to avoid jeopardizing publishers' subscription income. One of the limitations of JSTOR as a stand-alone research tool is that it is restricted to keyword or phrase searches within certain fields like the author, title, caption, abstract

13. For the complete breakdown of responses to this question, please see *Appendix B.*

14. JSTOR Currently Available Title List, http://www.jstor.org/about/all.list.html, (accessed January 2006).
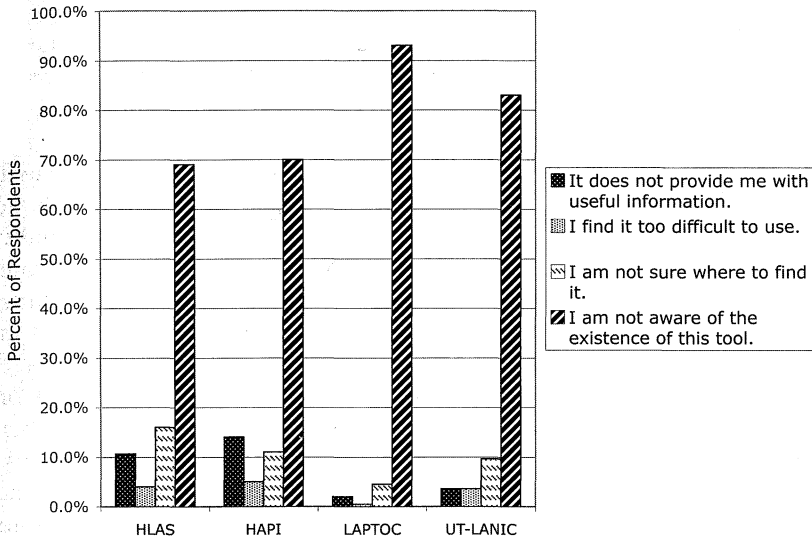
Figure 2 Reasons Core Tools Not Being Used

and entire document.[15] There are no subject terms or descriptors which typically enhance the searching capabilities of scholarly article indexes. JSTOR is not meant to be used as a substitute for databases like EconLit, HAPI, or MLA.

The fact that a limited body of research such as JSTOR is so popular is surprising. While the majority reported that format was either not or only somewhat important as a determinant in choosing whether to use information, perhaps the ease of online full-text access is tempting as a quick source for information, regardless of whether it is the most pertinent or current.

The high awareness and/or preference for resources such as JSTOR, LANIC, and the Internet raises concerns about the quality of the research being carried out by graduate students in our survey. Searches in some Internet resources can lead to a huge number of results. If users are able to identify some useful items from a huge set of search results it is easy to assume they have exhausted available sources (Simpson 1998, 8). As researchers become more accustomed to the availability of full-text online, there is a growing concern that a "full-text-fixated generation of researchers [...] will readily pass up valuable information [...] simply because full-text content *is* not instantaneously available" (Bell 2003, 44; emphasis in original).

15. See JSTOR's Search Tips, http://www.jstor.org/search.html, (accessed January 2006).

The survey respondents were also asked about their experience with bibliographic instruction on how to conduct Latin America-related research: 55 percent responded that they had not had a course or instructor provide direction, 65 percent reported that they had never had an instruction session by a librarian, and 45 percent of the total respondents had received neither of the two kinds of instruction.[16] This is consistent with research suggesting a gap between faculty assumptions about the library skills of graduate students, and what the students actually know (Jacobson and Williams 2000, 147). Faculty assume that graduate students are skilled in using the library and so perhaps do not include bibliographic instruction (provided by themselves or a librarian) in their graduate courses. This survey shows that the respondents have developed strategies for carrying out their research, despite a lack of formal instruction. Nevertheless, the question remains as to whether these are the most efficient or effective strategies. As Reynolds reports, graduate students "who have received some library use training … tend to use more sophisticated finding tools and have developed more scholarly research skills" (Reynolds cited in Jacobson and Williams 2000, 147).

The pre-survey assumption that students who had received bibliographic instruction would be more likely to be familiar with the four core tools gets only moderate support from the survey results (see figure 3). For HLAS and HAPI, there were no statistically significant differences in reported use between those who had no instruction and those who had instruction within a course or by a librarian. A statistically significant increase came when respondents had received both kinds of instruction with use rates increasing to 76 (HLAS) or 86 (HAPI) percent.[17]

The picture presented for use of LANIC is somewhat different. Approximately 60 percent of those who had neither type of instruction or instruction within a course had used LANIC. Surprisingly, that number drops to 45 percent for respondents who had received instruction by a librarian, although this is not a statistically significant difference. Perhaps this is a reflection of the fact that students are becoming more and more adept at locating Internet resources, while still faring better after instruction when identifying more traditionally established tools such as HLAS and HAPI. Nevertheless, 76.9 percent who had received both types of instruction had used LANIC, a statistically significant difference compared to those who had received no instruction or only instruction

16. The concept of bibliographic instruction was used loosely in the survey, and the authors acknowledge that there are different approaches to promoting the use of library resources, ranging from one-shot librarian taught sessions to credit-bearing semester long research methods courses.

17. All tests of statistical significance used Chi Square tests with the null hypothesis that the two variables are independent. All the tests were significant at the level of 0.05.
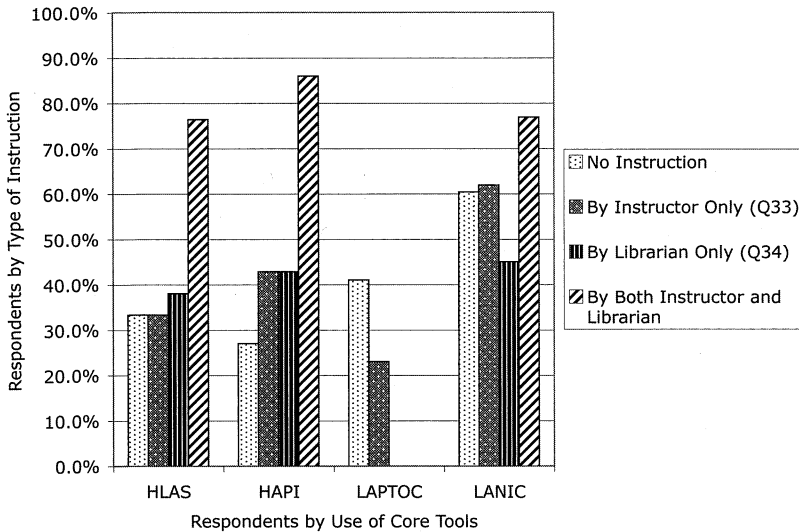
Figure 3 Instruction and Use of Core Tools Compared

by a librarian.[18] Overall, awareness of the core tools increases with more than one type of bibliographic instruction.

Assessing Comfort/Confidence Levels with Library Resources

Several Likert scale questions on the survey prompted students to assess their own comfort levels with identifying and using library resources. Students were asked how much they agreed with the statements "I am comfortable locating and using print resources when doing Latin America-related research," and "I am comfortable locating and using information electronically when doing Latin America-related research." They were also asked to assess their own efficacy by asking how much they agreed with the statement "I can find the information I need on Latin America-related topics." Figure 4 shows that most respondents indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements.

Out of 169 students who had either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement on comfort with print resources, 47.9 percent and 37.3 percent had bibliographic instruction by an instructor or librarian, respectively. Similarly, of the 180 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement on comfort levels with electronic resources, 47.8 and 37.2 percent had bibliographic instruction by an instructor or librarian respectively.

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18. Since only five respondents reported using LAPTOC, it is not discussed in more detail.
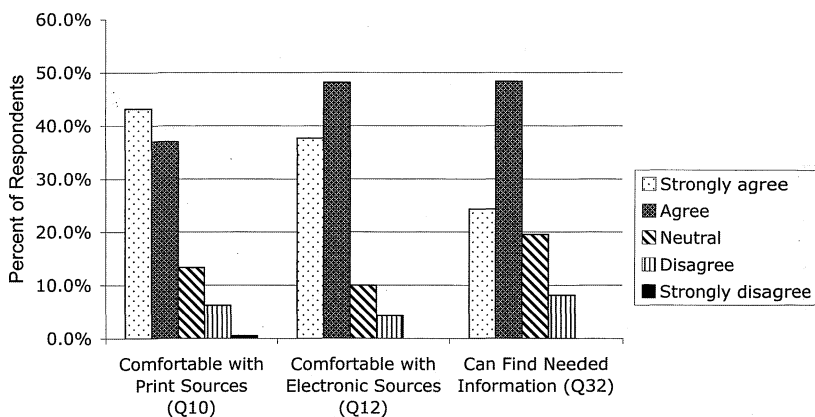
Figure 4 Self-Assessed Comfort Levels with Library Resources

Figure 5 shows the relationship between levels of agreement with the statement "I can find the information I need on Latin America-related topics" and bibliographic instruction. Among those respondents who had received no bibliographic instruction, 13.6 percent disagreed with this statement, higher than those who had received instruction. Nevertheless, 60.9 percent of those who had not received instruction either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, similar to the 56.8 percent who had received instruction from a librarian. 90 percent who had received bibliographic instruction from a course instructor reported either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, followed closely by respondents who had received both kinds of bibliographic instruction (86.5 percent). However, 50 percent of those who had received both kinds of instruction *strongly* agreed with the statement, compared to 9.5 percent for those who had received only instruction by a course instructor. When the multinominal agreement variable is treated as a continuous variable to fit a general linear regression model, those who have received instruction in a course express statistically significant higher levels of agreement with this statement. Those who had received instruction from *both* an instructor and a librarian expressed levels of agreement that were higher than this, which is statistically significant at the level of 0.05.

Looking at respondents and tool use, the highest levels of strong agreement with the statement "I can find the information I need on Latin America-related topics" were found among those who had used HLAS and HAPI (36 percent), or had used HLAS, HAPI, and LANIC (43 percent). Nevertheless, 62.5 percent of those who had not used any of the four core tools still either agreed or strongly agreed. When the multi-nominal agreement variable is treated as a continuous variable to fit a general linear regression model, those who had used HLAS and HAPI had higher levels
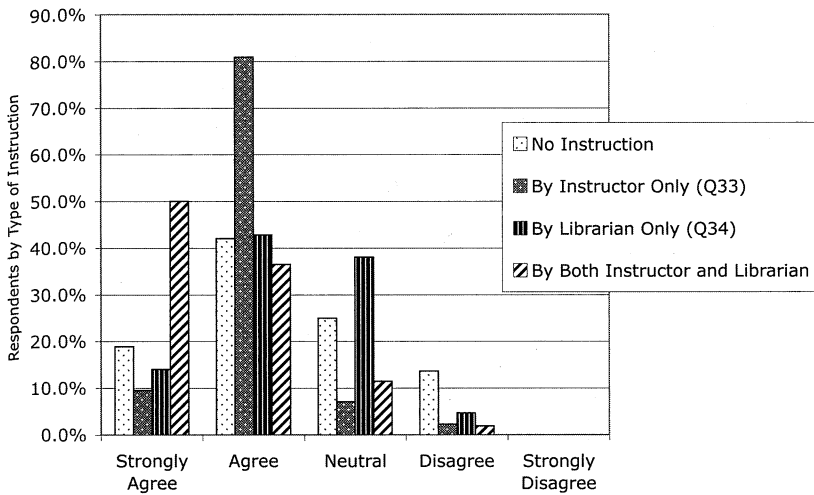
Figure 5 "*I can find the information I need on Latin America-related topics*" (Q32)

of agreement with this statement than those who had used only one of the tools or none of the tools, but only at a marginally significant level. Levels of agreement with the statement were statistically significantly higher only for those who had used HLAS, HAPI, and LANIC.

While it is encouraging that students have a relatively high level of comfort and confidence in their ability to carry out their research, when paired with a lack of awareness of some of the core tools in the field, it suggests that some students might not know what they are missing. Students who *have* used more than one of the core tools experience higher levels of confidence in their ability to carry out their Latin American-related research. Unfortunately, bibliographic instruction from an instructor or librarian does not necessarily result in higher use of the tools by the respondents. The results of these Likert scale questions coupled with the lack of awareness of what are considered core tools in the field may also suggest students have developed their own survival strategies for getting their research done (browsing stacks, footnote chasing, googling, etc.). Whether or not these are the most efficient means for carrying out their research is something still to be explored.

CONCLUSIONS

Technological advances including the Internet have engendered an extraordinary growth in the amount of information accessible to an increasingly wide audience of Latin Americanists. It would be unfortunate if this growth obscures awareness of countless resources not picked up by Google, or not available in electronic format. Interdisciplinary resource

"scatter" persists as Latin America's already complicated bibliographic landscape continues to transform. The new generation of Latin Americanists must develop the skills necessary to navigate the many possible sources of information, and the knowledge to evaluate the potential efficacy of various research strategies in various media and the value of the information found through such strategies.

Overall, the results suggest that the Latin Americanist graduate students surveyed are comfortable carrying out their research and have high levels of confidence in their abilities to do this successfully. They report that format (electronic versus print, etc.) is not an overriding concern in the decision to use particular resources, but they do appear to favor the use of online resources. The Internet has not yet replaced more established resources provided through academic libraries. Despite their confidence in their abilities, these students report relatively low levels of awareness of some of the core research tools for doing research in the field of Latin American studies. Considering the wide array of disciplines represented by the survey respondents it may be that many of these students are more familiar with the tools of their base disciplines rather than these specialized, multidisciplinary area studies resources. Instruction on how to do research in the field of Latin American studies does not necessarily lead to increased use of the four core tools.

Some questions to investigate in future studies include whether Latin Americanist graduate students working in specific disciplines are more heavy users of one format or another, or of the core tools; what kind of impact reliance on the Internet and easily-accessible full-text is having on the quality of research; and whether these patterns coincide with those of students in the field outside of the United States. One might question the relevance of the core tools for the new generation of Latin Americanists. One might also explore exactly how these students are using both the Internet and the library's proprietary online resources in their research. Are traditional library methods of instruction achieving the results they set out to accomplish? Are faculty and librarians working together to ensure that graduate students are exposed to effective research methods and core tools early on in their careers?

Finally, we acknowledge the limitations of this study in that it only surveyed those LASA student members in the United States and Puerto Rico. A next step might be to survey their counterparts who study Latin America from beyond the U.S. borders. After all, "Latin American studies is something that North Americans do *with* Latin Americans, not *to* Latin Americans" (Drake and Hilbink 2003, 2). It is our hope that this research will fuel collaborative efforts between librarians, instructors, and students to educate future Latin Americanist scholars who are increasingly knowledgeable about the extraordinary universe of research materials available to them.

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Appendices

Appendix A Disciplines of Respondents in Order by Number of Respondents (Q38)

Other (not represented in boldface)	57	Ethnic Studies	2
Political Science	53	Theatre/Performance	2
History	33	Women's Studies	2
Anthropology	21	Agronomy	1
Literature	20	**Architecture**	1
Sociology	18	Ethnomusicology	1
Education/Higher Ed.	7	Film Studies	1
Geography	7	Gender Studies	1
Area Studies/Latin America	6	Health	1
Economics	5	Human Rights	1
Religious Studies	5	Immigration Studies	1
Languages/Linguistics	4	International Relations	1
Art/Art History	3	Library Science	1
Cultural Studies	3	**Music**	1
Environmental Studies/Ecology	3	National Security	1
International Development	3	Philosophy	1
Business/Management	2	**Sciences**	1
Communication/Media	2	**Music**	1
Community/Regional/Urban Planning	2	No response	1
Demography	2		

Note: Disciplines in boldface reflect those listed on the survey. All others are write-in responses.

Appendix B   Most Useful Tools for Latin America-Related Research in Order of Number of Respondents (Q15)

JSTOR	66	Sociological Abstracts	2
OCLC WorldCat / FirstSearch	42	AA Index	1
LANIC	28	ABI Inform	1
MLA	27	Brasil.gov	1
HAPI	26	Cambridge Abstracts	1
Libraries' Catalog / Web Site	25	CEPAL	1
Bibliographies / Research Guides	23	CIRMA Guatemala	1
Google / Internet	17	Current Contents	1
HLAS	14	Dissertation Abstracts	1
EBSCOhost	12	eHRAF	1
Academic Search Elite / Premier	10	EndNote	1
LexisNexis	10	Ethnic NewsWatch	1
Web of Science / Knowledge (SSCI)	9	Famsi.org	1
Colleagues and Professors	8	Field Contacts	1
Latin American Research Review	8	Gender Watch	1
Project Muse	8	HOBCO	1
ERIC	7	Humanities Abstracts	1
ProQuest	7	Latin American Abstracts	1
Melvyl (University of California)	6	Latin American Studies	1
Anthropological Literature / Index	5	Latindex	1
Electronic Journals	5	Library of Congress Web Site	1
ECO	4	Medline	1
InfoTrac	4	New Left Review	1
Archives in Latin America	3	OVID	1
Online Newspapers	3	Popline	1
Political Database of the Americas	3	PsycINFO	1
ArticleFirst	2	PUC Rio Web Site	1
ATLA	2	RLIN	1
EconLit	2	SciELO	1
Expanded Academic Index	2	U.S. Census	1
Ingenta	2	WilsonWeb	1
PAIS International	2	World Bank Publications	1
Publishers' Web Sites	2	Worldwide Political Science Abstracts	1