



# ITHAKA S+R LOCAL SURVEY



## THE ITHAKA S+R LOCAL FACULTY SURVEY AT SWARTHMORE UNDERSTANDING THE LIBRARY'S CHANGING ROLE

In 2003, as part of a collaborative collection development planning initiative, the TriCollege libraries of Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore developed their own survey to determine the collection needs of their faculty, and in particular, their tolerance for delayed access to materials for teaching and research. While the results were instructive, crafting a new survey that would provide valuable data and most importantly, finding a time to repeat the survey across the three colleges proved difficult. Despite initial plans to collect longitudinal data, the TriColleges were not able to follow up with additional surveys in subsequent years.

Given this, Swarthmore College Librarian Peggy Seiden jumped at the opportunity to offer the [Ithaka S+R Local Faculty Survey](#) and believed it would help her see how faculty attitudes had changed since 2003. “I appreciate that the survey allows us to assess how well we are meeting faculty needs based on their described research behavior as opposed to asking faculty how good they think we are.”

Seiden was pleasantly surprised to see that her faculty are willing to relinquish print in favor of electronic journal access, and found this result even more surprising considering that more humanists than scientists or social scientists responded to the survey. “If we had heard mainly from our engineering faculty, I would have expected this, but I didn’t realize our humanities professors had come so far.” Based on this result, Seiden has been able to speed up the process of planning for moving print materials out of the library, knowing that her faculty members are broadly comfortable with this change.

While Swarthmore’s faculty clearly sees the library’s main responsibility to be acquiring the resources they need, Seiden did not anticipate that they also viewed the library’s role in educating students to be so important. This result confirmed that new subject librarian hires have made significant inroads in their outreach to departments and through their instruction.

Finally, Seiden allows that as she reviewed the [Ithaka S+R US Faculty Survey](#) over the years, she was “skeptical if the data applied to us.” But the local survey results show that her faculty’s attitudes are well aligned with national patterns. In many ways, that makes it easier for Swarthmore to draw on the work that other libraries have undertaken, in areas such as scholarly communications, knowing that the lessons learned elsewhere will be applicable on campus.