

Journal of the Medical Library Association 2003 Readership Survey Results

The 2003 *JMLA* readership survey was conducted online via MLANET between March 7 and April 7, 2003. Answers to this survey are completely confidential and are only reported in aggregate; we cannot identify members personally from the information collected on this survey. We received 454 nonduplicate usable responses to the survey. In the tables below, "n" equals "number of responses" for each question (not for the total survey). For each answer to a question, we report the number of responses followed by the percentage, calculated as number of responses for that answer divided by the total number of responses to that question. Percentages have been rounded to equal 100%.

For more information or answers to technical questions about the survey results, or for further crosstab data results, please contact Kate Corcoran, 312.419.9094 x12 or corcoran@mlahq.org.

1. Which of the following best describes how often you use <i>JMLA</i> features?	Always n / %	Frequently n / %	Rarely n / %	Never n / %	Don't know / no opinion n / %	Did not answer question
a) browse the entire issue (n=443)	205 / 46.3	166 / 37.5	66 / 14.9	6 / 1.3	0	11
b) browse the table of contents (n=441)	347 / 78.7	78 / 17.7	14 / 3.2	1 / .2	1 / .2	13
c) read columns and depts. (n=427)	43 / 10.1	257 / 60.2	122 / 28.6	4 / .9	1 / .2	27
d) read papers (n=431)	35 / 8.1	241 / 55.9	150 / 34.8	2 / .5	3 / .7	23
e) read the entire issue (n=430)	15 / 3.5	60 / 13.9	214 / 49.8	140 / 32.6	1 / .2	24
f) read specific content pertinent to my job or interest (n=440)	213 / 48.4	199 / 45.2	28 / 6.4	0	0	14

2. Approximately how much of each issue do you read? (n=451)

All or almost all = 36 / 7.9	About 50% = 155 / 34.4
About 75% = 72 / 16	Less than 50% = 188 / 42.7

3. In general, how would you characterize the content of the articles published in the *JMLA*? (Please check ONE answer in each column):

Interest (n=440)	Usefulness (n=433)
Very interesting = 118 / 26.8	Very useful for my job or the profession = 105 / 24.2
Somewhat interesting = 300 / 68.2	Somewhat useful for my job or the profession = 309 / 71.4
Not interesting at all = 22 / 5	Not useful at all for my job or the profession = 19 / 4.4
Did not answer = 14	Did not answer = 21

4. About how many times per year do you read the following <i>JMLA</i> columns or departments?	Read in 3 or 4 issues n / %	Read in 1 or 2 issues n / %	Never read n / %	Did not answer question n / %
a) books and journals received (n=445)	126 / 28.3	188 / 42.3	131 / 29.4	9
b) book reviews (n=446)	170 / 38.1	213 / 47.8	63 / 14.1	8
c) brief communications (n=443)	233 / 52.6	190 / 42.9	20 / 4.5	11
d) comment and opinion (n=443)	182 / 41.1	212 / 47.9	49 / 11	11
e) editor's opinion (n=445)	185 / 41.6	193 / 43.4	67 / 15	9
f) guest editorials (n=439)	147 / 33.5	230 / 52.4	62 / 14.1	15
g) historical notes (n=445)	111 / 24.9	218 / 49	116 / 26.1	9
h) letters to the editor (n=440)	137 / 31.2	214 / 48.6	89 / 20.2	14
i) obituaries (n=443)	157 / 35.4	171 / 38.6	115 / 26	11
j) president's page (n=440)	139 / 31.6	210 / 47.7	91 / 20.7	14
k) software reviews (n=440)	124 / 28.2	218 / 49.5	98 / 22.3	14
l) special reports (n=443)	160 / 36.1	262 / 59.1	21 / 4.8	11
m) symposia (n=436)	96 / 22	286 / 65.6	54 / 12.4	18

5. Please indicate your level of interest in the following types of articles that might appear in the JMLA:

Article type	High interest n / %	Medium interest n / %	Low or no interest n / %	Did not answer	Calculated rank order
a) Annual meeting proceedings (n=448)	120 / 26.8	224 / 50	104 / 23.2	6	912 (8)
b) historical articles (n=449)	90 / 20	216 / 48.1	143 / 31.9	5	845 (9)
c) hot topics (n=451)	380 / 84.3	69 / 15.3	2 / .4	3	1280 (1)
d) international studies (n=447)	48 / 10.7	180 / 40.3	219 / 49	7	723 (11)
e) management trends (n=450)	242 / 53.8	162 / 36	46 / 10.2	4	1096 (6)
f) medical issues or relations with medical professionals (n=450)	307 / 68.2	125 / 27.8	18 / 4	4	1189 (2)
g) non-peer-reviewed papers (n=446)	46 / 10.3	269 / 60.3	131 / 29.4	8	807 (10)
h) papers on particular types of health sciences libraries (n=448)	222 / 49.6	175 / 39.1	51 / 11.3	6	1067 (7)
i) peer-reviewed papers (n=446)	252 / 56.5	181 / 40.6	13 / 2.9	8	1131 (4)
j) research on health information practices (n=449)	250 / 55.7	164 / 36.5	35 / 7.8	5	1113 (5)
k) Web or technology information (n=451)	279 / 61.9	156 / 34.6	16 / 3.5	3	1165 (3)
l) Other: (n=50; see appendix for topics)	46 / 92	2 / 4	2 / 4	404	
m) Other (n=22; see appendix for topics)	22 / 100			432	
n) Other (n=4; see appendix for topics)	4 / 100			450	

6. In the last 12 months, have you used the information contained in the JMLA for any of the following? (Please check all that apply):

collection development (n=186) current topics / trends in medical librarianship (n=310) managing your library (n=176) reference (n=179) research (n=134)	technological applications (n=132) other: (n=30; see appendix for details) other (n=1; see appendix for details) none of the above (n=37)
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7. Have you ever contacted an advertiser after seeing an ad in the JMLA? (n=413)

Yes (n=91 / 22%) No (n=322 / 78%) Did not answer (n=41)

8. Please rate the following aspects of the format or physical appearance of the JMLA:

Aspect	Excellent n / %	Good n / %	Fair n / %	Poor n / %	Don't know / no opinion n / %	Did not answer
a) body text style (n=444)	151 / 34	234 / 52.7	36 / 8.1	4 / .9	19 / 4.3	10
b) chart and graph design (n=444)	145 / 32.7	238 / 53.6	36 / 8.1	6 / 1.3	19 / 4.3	10
c) front cover design (n=442)	143 / 32.4	203 / 45.9	61 / 13.8	12 / 2.7	23 / 5.2	12
d) size and legibility of type (n=443)	169 / 38.2	222 / 50.1	33 / 7.4	6 / 1.4	13 / 2.9	11
e) headline text style (n=442)	165 / 37.3	220 / 49.8	34 / 7.7	5 / 1.1	18 / 4.1	12
f) layout (n=444)	138 / 31.1	219 / 49.3	57 / 12.8	16 / 3.6	14 / 3.2	10
g) organization of material in each issue (n=439)	132 / 30.1	239 / 54.4	49 / 11.2	2 / .5	17 / 3.8	15
h) printing quality (n=444)	185 / 41.7	223 / 50.2	15 / 3.4	1 / .2	20 / 4.5	10
i) table of contents design (n=441)	150 / 34	236 / 53.5	29 / 6.6	6 / 1.4	20 / 4.5	13

9. How would you characterize the quality of the writing that appears in the JMLA? (n=443)

Very readable (222 / 50.1) Somewhat readable (207 / 46.7) Not very readable at all (14 / 3.2)

10. Indicate your preference to maintain or change these aspects of the <i>JMLA</i> :	Increase n / %	Keep as is n / %	Decrease n / %	Don't know / no opinion n / %	Did not answer
Number of issues per year (4) (n=448)	70 / 15.6	342 / 76.3	11 / 2.5	25 / 5.6	6
Number of pages per issue (130) (n=443)	13 / 2.9	338 / 76.3	46 / 10.4	46 / 10.4	11
Average article length (8 pages) (n=444)	4 / .9	289 / 65.1	108 / 24.3	43 / 9.7	10

11. About how often do you use the digital archives of the *JMLA* on PubMed Central? (n=452)

Frequently (1 to 2 times a week) [n=14 / 3.1%] Occasionally (1 to 2 times a month) n=109 / 24.1%	Rarely (1 to 4 times a year) [n=189 / 41.8%] Never [n=140 / 31%] Did not answer [n=2]
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12. Do you regularly read full-text, full-featured, electronic journals? (n=448)

Yes (n=274 / 61.2%) No (please skip to Q14) [n=174 / 38.8%]

13. If yes, what do you consider to be an electronic journal's most useful features? (please check all that apply):

Feature	n	Rank order
Ability to print a PDF version	250	1
Access to electronic journal even if I don't have access to the print journal	222	2
Hyperlinks to related information within an article	187	3
Immediate access to current issue or access to content before the print issue is available	186	4
Inclusion of additional content not available in the print version	102	6
Link to quickly email a copy of an article to someone else	157	5
Multimedia content	52	7

14. If MLA were to publish the *JMLA* as a full-featured electronic journal, which TWO of the following features would be MOST important to you? (please select no more than two features):

Feature	n	Rank order
None; the current digital archives are adequate for my needs	31	7
Ability to print a PDF version	302	1
Access to electronic journal even if I don't have access to the print journal	144	3
Hyperlinks to related information within an article	151	2
Immediate access to current issue, or access to content before the print issue is available	83	4
Inclusion of additional content not available in the print version	73	5
Link to quickly email a copy of an article to someone else	58	6
Multimedia content	16	8
Other: 14 respondents; see appendix for topics	14	9

15. Please indicate your preference for receiving MLA's annual meeting proceedings by selecting ONE of the following options: (n=441)

Option	n / %
Annual meeting proceedings should continue as a historical record of the meeting program published in the <i>JMLA</i> (current format).	84 / 19
The annual meeting proceedings should capture as much meeting content as possible, including section programming, and be published in the <i>JMLA</i> .	67 / 15.2
The annual meeting proceedings should continue as the historical record of the meeting program in the <i>JMLA</i> , but there should be additional content on MLANET.	100 / 22.7
MLA should discontinue publishing the annual meeting proceedings in the <i>JMLA</i> and publish full proceedings as a separate electronic or print publication.	179 / 40.6
MLA should discontinue publishing the annual meeting proceedings in any form.	11 / 2.5
Did not answer	13

16. Have you ever considered submitting an article for publication in the *JMLA*? (n=444)

Yes, I have considered it but haven't done it. (n=174 / 39.2%)

Yes, I have previously submitted an article to the *JMLA*. (n=116 / 26.1%)

No, I have neither considered submitting nor submitted an article to the *JMLA* (n=154 / 34.7%)

because...:

Of the 154 respondents answering "no," 55 entered comments, which can be found in the appendix.

17. Have you ever published an article (or other item) in another peer-reviewed journal? (n=443)

No (n=284 / 64.1%)

Yes (n=159 / 35.9%)

Did not answer (n=11)

If yes, which journal?

Of the 159 respondents answering "yes" to this question, 130 provided journal titles. A full list of journal titles provided by respondents are listed in the appendix. Some respondents included multiple journal titles.

18. In what type of library do you work? (=446)

Academic (n=203 / 45.5%)	Student in library school (n=2 / .5%)
Corporate (n=5 / 1.1%)	Retired (n=5 / 1.1%)
Hospital (n=172 / 38.6%)	Not in a library environment (e.g., vendor of library materials) (n=14 / 3.1%)
Specialty or other library type (n=45 / 10.1%)	Did not answer (n=8)

19. Please provide us with any additional comments that would help us make the *JMLA* a better publication for you:

Of a total of 454 respondents to the survey, 103 (22. 7%) provided comments. Comments are listed in the related [appendix](#).