Research Preferences of Law Students: Print vs. e-Book

By Mandy Lee and Stacia Stein

Mandy Lee is Assistant Professor of Law Library and Reference Librarian at University of Nebraska College of Law in Lincoln, Neb., and Stacia Stein is Instructional Services Librarian at Yale Law School in New Haven, Conn.

Law students are the largest user group of the University of Illinois College of Law’s Albert E. Jenner, Jr. Library. In order to better service the student population, it is important not just to be cognizant of their research needs, but also their research preferences. Therefore, we are surveying UIUC Law students to determine their format preferences when conducting legal research. The survey attempts to discern under what circumstances students prefer print legal resources and under what circumstances they prefer electronic legal sources. We used 14 survey questions, ranging from demographics to considerations when selecting a format in which to conduct legal research. We hope the results of this study will serve as a guide for the law library’s allocation of resources and collection development. In a broader sense, the results could contribute to the body of scholarship regarding U.S. law students’ research habits in order to improve law libraries’ services and facilities.