

SURVEY RESULTS

Best face forward

Poll results examining attitudes to online reputations.

Nature sent e-mail invitations to 30,000 researchers and publicized this online poll via Facebook, Twitter and in print. Respondents were offered a chance to win a \$150 Amazon.com gift certificate. Some 840 active researchers responded and took part in the poll, non-researchers were stopped after the first question. The results are examined in the News Feature 'Keeping up appearances' ([Nature 473, 138–139; 2011](#)).

Respondents were recruited to the poll through:

E-mail	641	60.7%
Print	7	0.7%
Facebook/Twitter	406	38.4%
Unknown	2	0.2%

POLL QUESTIONS

1. Is there a website maintained within your institution or organization that aims to update visitors on your research or the research work of your group?

Yes	625	59.2%
No	220	20.8%
I am not a researcher	211	20.0%

2. Do you have a personal website that is dedicated to your research or the work of your group?

Yes	344	40.7%
No	501	59.3%

3. How useful do you find the sites that reference your work (personal or institutional) for the following?

	Increasing the visibility of your research		Attracting additional funding		Sharing data or other resources (e.g. software)	
Very useful	261	39.0%	72	10.7%	142	21.2%
Quite useful	289	43.1%	134	20.0%	221	33.0%
Not very useful	88	13.1%	234	34.9%	169	25.2%
Not at all useful	8	1.2%	115	17.2%	78	11.6%
I don't know	24	3.6%	115	17.2%	60	9.0%

4. Thinking about the personal, group and institutional websites of others, do you regularly use these for any of the following?

Searching for jobs	321	38.0%
Identifying new career prospects	338	40.0%
Networking with colleagues	583	69.1%

5. Do you write or have you ever written a regular blog or blogs?

Yes, I write/have written one blog	170	20.1%
Yes, I write/have written several blogs	77	9.1%
No	598	70.8%

6. Is your blog anonymous?

Yes	61	35.9%
No	109	64.1%

7. Are any of your blogs anonymous?

Yes, all of them	8	10.4%
Yes, but not all of them	33	42.9%
No	36	46.8%

8. Did you discuss science or scientific matters within your blog?

Yes, often	91	36.8%
Yes, occasionally	112	45.3%
No, never	44	17.8%

9. How frequently do you use the following?

	Wikipedia		Facebook		LinkedIn		MySpace		Twitter		News website (e.g. nytimes.com)	
At least once per day	218	25.9%	310	36.8%	32	3.8%	7	0.8%	229	27.2%	426	50.5%
At least once per week	385	45.7%	148	17.6%	106	12.6%	6	0.7%	74	8.8%	178	21.1%
At least once per month	136	16.1%	70	8.3%	150	17.8%	28	3.3%	31	3.7%	58	6.9%
Less than once per month	69	8.2%	65	7.7%	144	17.1%	81	9.6%	60	7.1%	49	5.8%
Never	35	4.2%	250	29.7%	411	48.8%	721	85.5%	449	53.3%	132	15.7%

	Journal website (e.g. nature.com/nature)		Aggregator website (e.g. Huffington Post)		Blogs		Professional gossip website (e.g. job rumour mills)	
At least once per day	358	42.5%	79	9.4%	140	16.6%	16	1.9%
At least once per week	378	44.8%	108	12.8%	157	18.6%	57	6.8%
At least once per month	77	9.1%	114	13.5%	126	15.0%	70	8.3%
Less than once per month	22	2.6%	134	15.9%	190	22.6%	146	17.3%
Never	8	0.9%	408	48.4%	229	27.2%	554	65.7%

10. How frequently do you comment on scientific topics related to your field or mention your group's publications on the following?

	Facebook		LinkedIn		MySpace		Twitter		News website (e.g. nytimes.com)	
At least once per day	36	6.1%	6	1.4%	2	1.6%	57	14.5%	25	3.5%
At least once per week	105	17.7%	28	6.5%	5	4.1%	100	25.4%	29	4.1%
At least once per month	97	16.4%	47	10.9%	8	6.6%	74	18.8%	51	7.2%
Less than once per month	120	20.2%	113	26.2%	18	14.8%	59	15.0%	123	17.3%
Never	235	39.6%	238	55.1%	89	73.0%	104	26.4%	483	67.9%

	Journal website (e.g. nature.com/nature)		Aggregator website (e.g. Huffington Post)		Blogs		Professional gossip website (e.g. job rumour mills)	
At least once per day	39	4.7%	7	1.6%	13	1.6%	6	2.1%
At least once per week	54	6.5%	14	3.2%	55	6.8%	14	4.8%
At least once per month	52	6.2%	34	7.8%	81	10.0%	19	6.6%
Less than once per month	165	19.8%	63	14.5%	127	15.7%	53	18.3%
Never	525	62.9%	317	72.9%	531	65.8%	197	68.2%

11. How frequently do you check the following for references to you personally or your group's work?

	Wikipedia		Search engines		ISI Web of Science or other citation counting engine	
At least once per day	53	6.6%	177	21.0%	95	11.3%
At least once per week	102	12.7%	144	17.1%	157	18.7%
At least once per month	73	9.1%	173	20.6%	198	23.5%
Less than once per month	174	21.6%	249	29.6%	274	32.6%
Never	404	50.1%	98	11.7%	117	13.9%

12. How frequently do you check the following for references to other group's work?

	Wikipedia		Search engines		ISI Web of Science or other citation counting engine	
At least once per day	52	6.2%	169	20.1%	93	11.1%
At least once per week	123	14.6%	254	30.2%	215	25.6%
At least once per month	108	12.8%	185	22.0%	203	24.1%
Less than once per month	206	24.5%	145	17.2%	197	23.4%
Never	352	41.9%	88	10.5%	133	15.8%

13. Have you created, edited or deleted text for a Wikipedia entry on a scientific topic within the past 12 months?

Yes, three times or more	33	3.9%
Yes, once or twice	110	13.1%
No	698	83.0%

14. Have you inserted or edited a reference to your group's work or publications on a relevant Wikipedia entry within the past 12 months?

Yes, three times or more	11	1.3%
Yes, once or twice	64	7.6%
No	766	91.1%

15. Have you asked someone else to write or edit references to yours or your group's work or publications on a relevant Wikipedia entry within the past 12 months?

Yes, three times or more	11	1.3%
Yes, once or twice	39	4.6%
No	791	94.1%

16. Have you created, written or edited text for your own biography on Wikipedia within the past 12 months?

Yes, three times or more	3	0.4%
Yes, once or twice	19	2.3%
No	819	97.4%

17. Have you asked someone else to create, write or edit your biography on Wikipedia within the past 12 months?

Yes, three times or more	4	0.5%
Yes, once or twice	20	2.4%
No	817	97.1%

18. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	My personal online reputation is important to me		The online reputation of my work is important to me	
Strongly agree	298	35.5%	370	44.0%
Agree	350	41.7%	366	43.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	163	19.4%	90	10.7%
Disagree	23	2.7%	12	1.4%
Strongly disagree	6	0.7%	2	0.2%

19. Have you ever used any online-reputation tools or services to improve your profile or the profile of your work online?

Yes	52	6.2%
No	788	93.8%

20. Have you ever considered using online-reputation tools or services to improve your profile or the profile of your work online?

Yes	81	10.3%
No	707	89.7%

21. Have you used search optimization strategies to improve your profile or the profile of your work online?

Yes	107	12.7%
No	733	87.3%

22. Have you ever experienced misrepresentation of your work or the work of your group on the Internet?

Yes	92	11.0%
No	748	89.0%

23. Have you ever disagreed with the representation of another group's work on the Internet?

Yes	189	22.5%
No	651	77.5%

24. Have you ever contacted the authors of content online about the way you were depicted or your work was discussed?

Yes, three times or more	11	1.3%
Yes, once or twice	84	10.0%
No, never	745	88.7%

25. Have you ever contacted the authors of content online about the way other scientists or their work are discussed?

Yes, three times or more	17	2.0%
Yes, once or twice	86	10.2%
No, never	737	87.7%

26. What is your age?

Under 18	1	0.1%
18 to 24	55	6.5%
25 to 34	280	33.3%
35 to 44	190	22.6%
45 to 54	168	20.0%
54 to 65	116	13.8%
Over 65	30	3.6%

27. Where do you live?

United States	273	32.5%
Canada	38	4.5%
Europe	322	38.3%
South America	42	5.0%
Oceania	16	1.9%
Japan	17	2.0%
China	26	3.1%
India	31	3.7%
Other Asia	17	2.0%
Middle East	8	1.0%
Africa	5	0.6%
Other	45	5.4%

28. Which category best describes your organization?

University/college	538	64.0%
Industry/corporation	54	6.4%
Government	35	4.2%
Hospital	40	4.8%
Research institute	152	18.1%
Other	21	2.5%

29. Which job title best applies to you?

Postdoctoral fellow	130	15.5%
Graduate student	172	20.5%
Technician	11	1.3%
Research/staff scientist	147	17.5%
Process engineer	2	0.2%
Professor	159	18.9%
Assistant professor	56	6.7%
Principal investigator	54	6.4%
Department head	15	1.8%
Lab/research director	24	2.9%
Librarian/information specialist	4	0.5%
Medical professional/doctor	20	2.4%
President/chief executive/owner	7	0.8%
Business management	4	0.5%
Other	35	4.2%

30. Which of the following best describes your primary science subject area?

Agriculture and food	24	2.9%
Astronomy and planetary science	7	0.8%
Biology/life sciences/medicine	523	62.3%
Chemistry	59	7.0%
Computer science	18	2.1%
Earth and environmental science	49	5.8%
Geology	7	0.8%
Physics	87	10.4%
Mathematics	5	0.6%
Other	61	7.3%

The raw data from this poll are available on request from b.maher@us.nature.com.