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Ensuring Discovery beyond the Catalogue: A Use Case from University of Leeds Libraries

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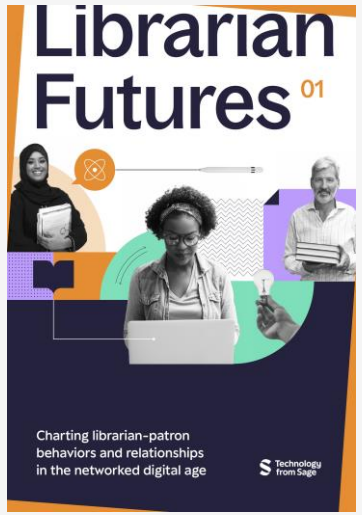
UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

University of Leeds

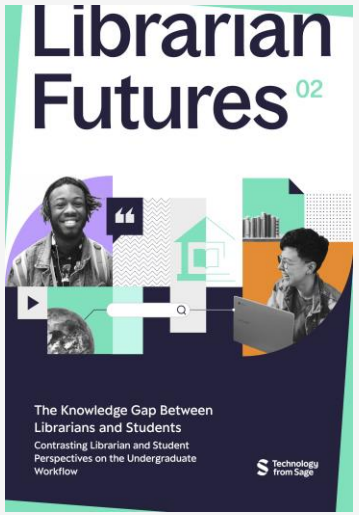
- Eleventh largest university in the UK
- Part of the Russell Group of research-intensive UK universities
- Over 39,000 students from 170 different countries (and over 9,000 staff of 100 different nationalities)
- Five library sites with 2.7 million items across main and Cultural collections; receive 2.5 million visits annually
- Migrated to Alma in 2019; Primo VE and Premium Sandbox

Lean Library findings on how students find resources

Our mission is to help redefine and amplify the power of the academic library to advance teaching, learning and research.
In our Librarian Futures series, we explore modern day librarian-patron relationships. We share this research openly to inform and empower librarians, who are at the heart of every university.



2021



2022

2021

2025

All reports can be downloaded here: www.technologyfromsage.com/whitepapers

Lean Library findings on how students find resources

Librarian Futures Part II:
The Knowledge Gap Between Librarians and Students

- Contrasting librarian and student perspectives on the undergraduate workflow
- Survey of 600 students, seeking to better understand student perspectives on the university experience

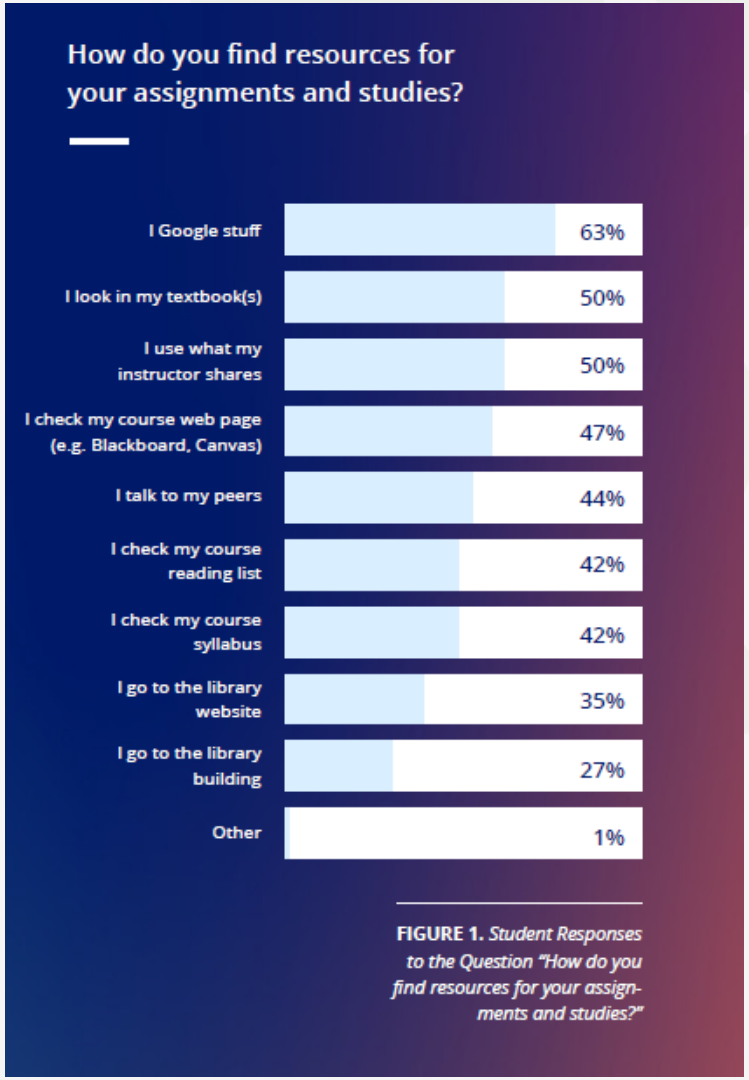
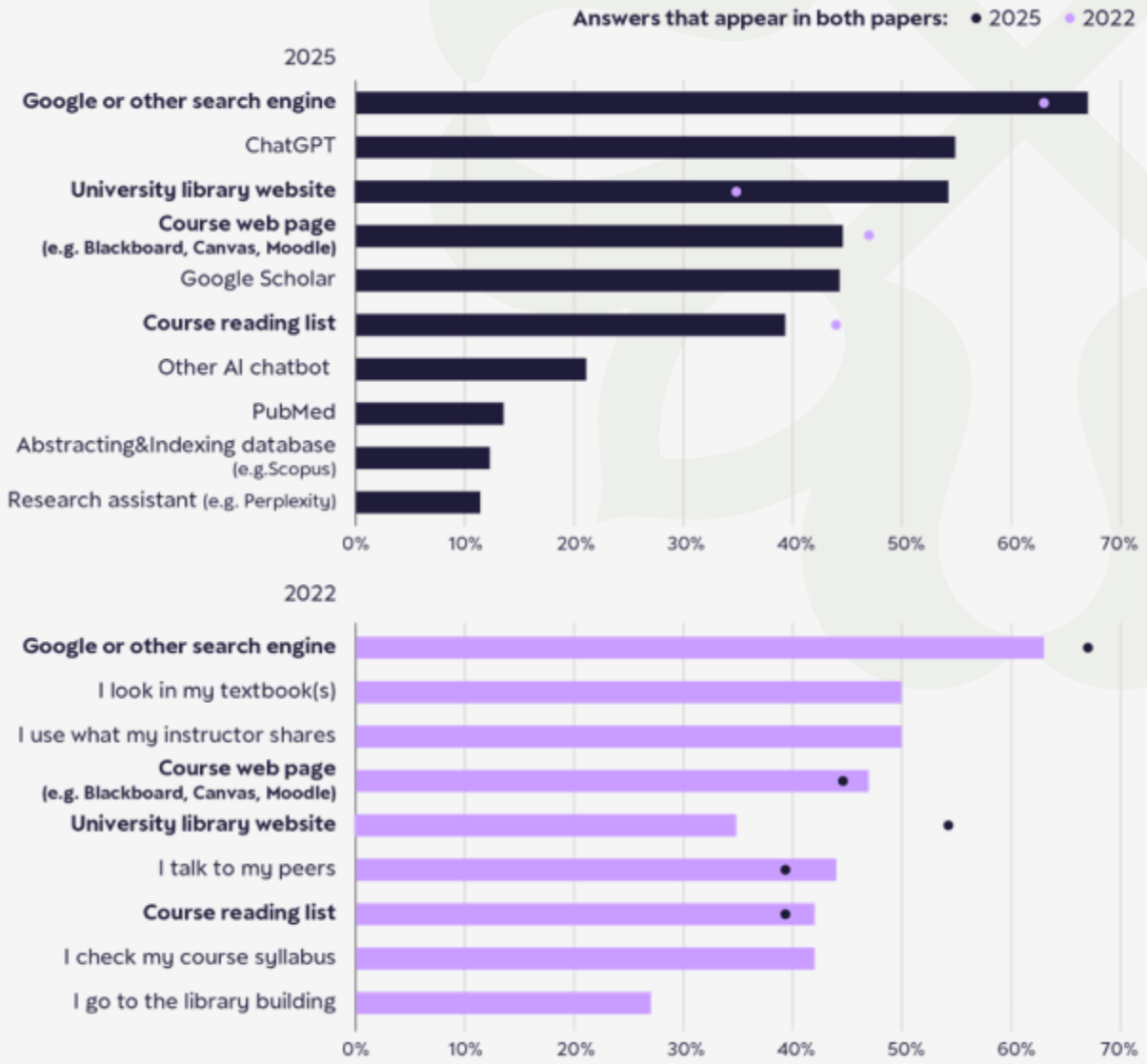


FIGURE 1. *Student Responses to the Question "How do you find resources for your assignments and studies?"*

Lean Library findings on how students find resources

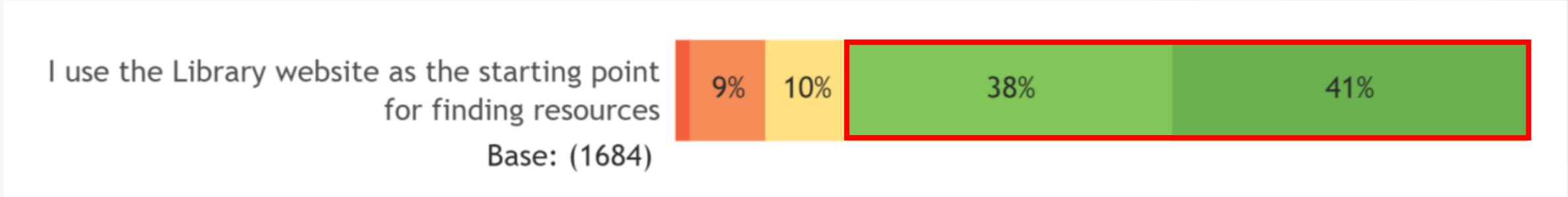
Librarian Futures Part IV:
Librarian Leadership on the AI Frontier

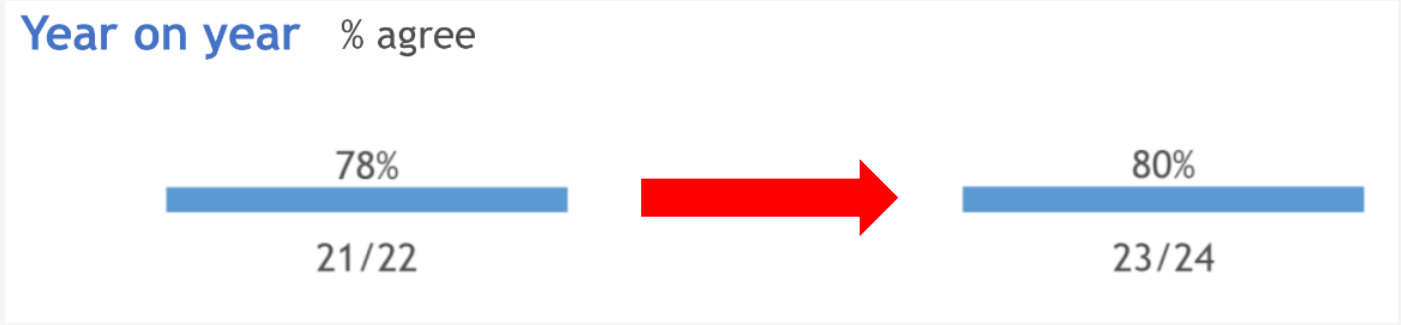
- 1,000 students and 300 librarians surveyed
- In-depth insight into AI use, perceptions of AI in higher education, and the impacts that AI has had on student productivity.



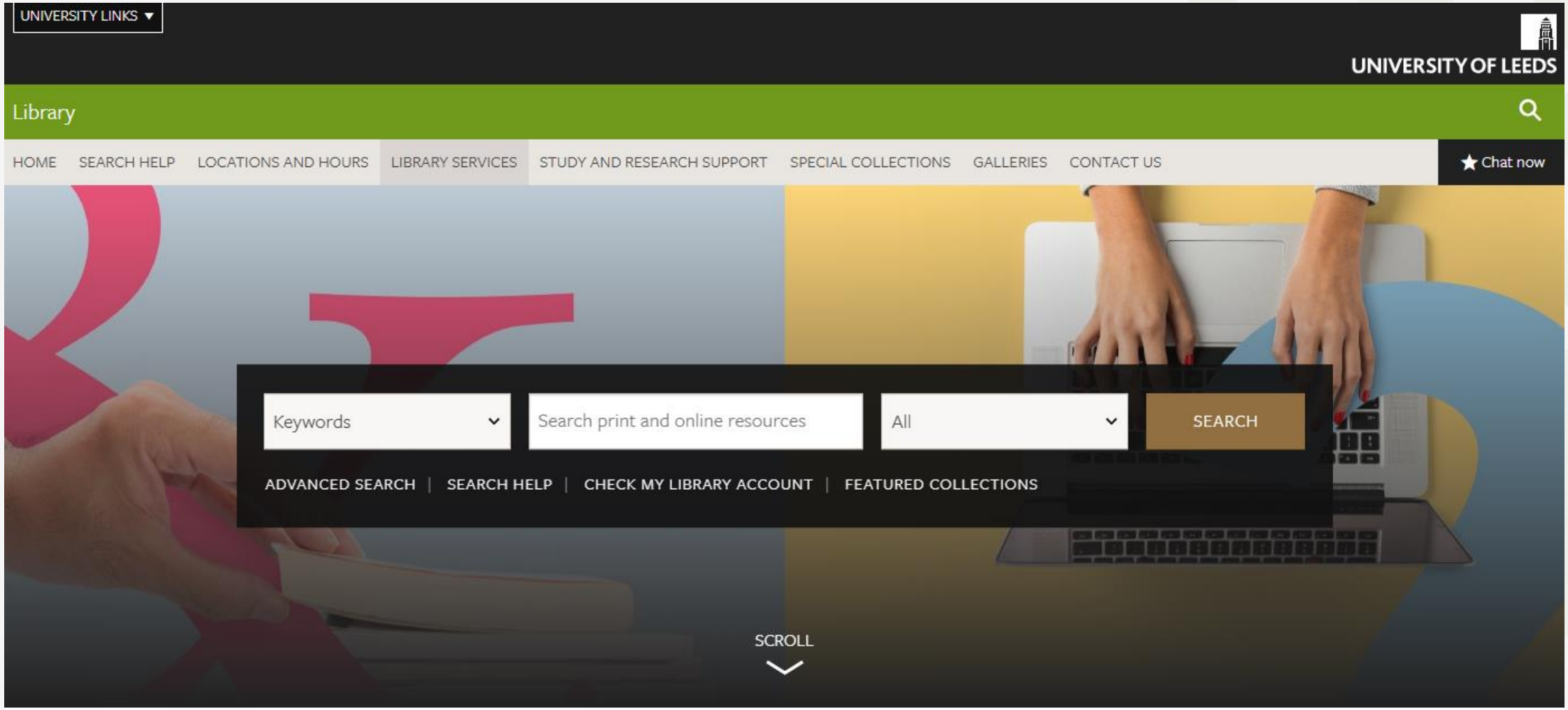
Library Pulse survey 2023-2024

- Large-scale annual quantitative survey
- 52% undergraduates, 39% postgraduates, 9% staff
- 41% under 21; 97% of student respondents are on-campus learners





79% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they use the catalogue as the starting point for finding resources and that number is growing!



Student essentials

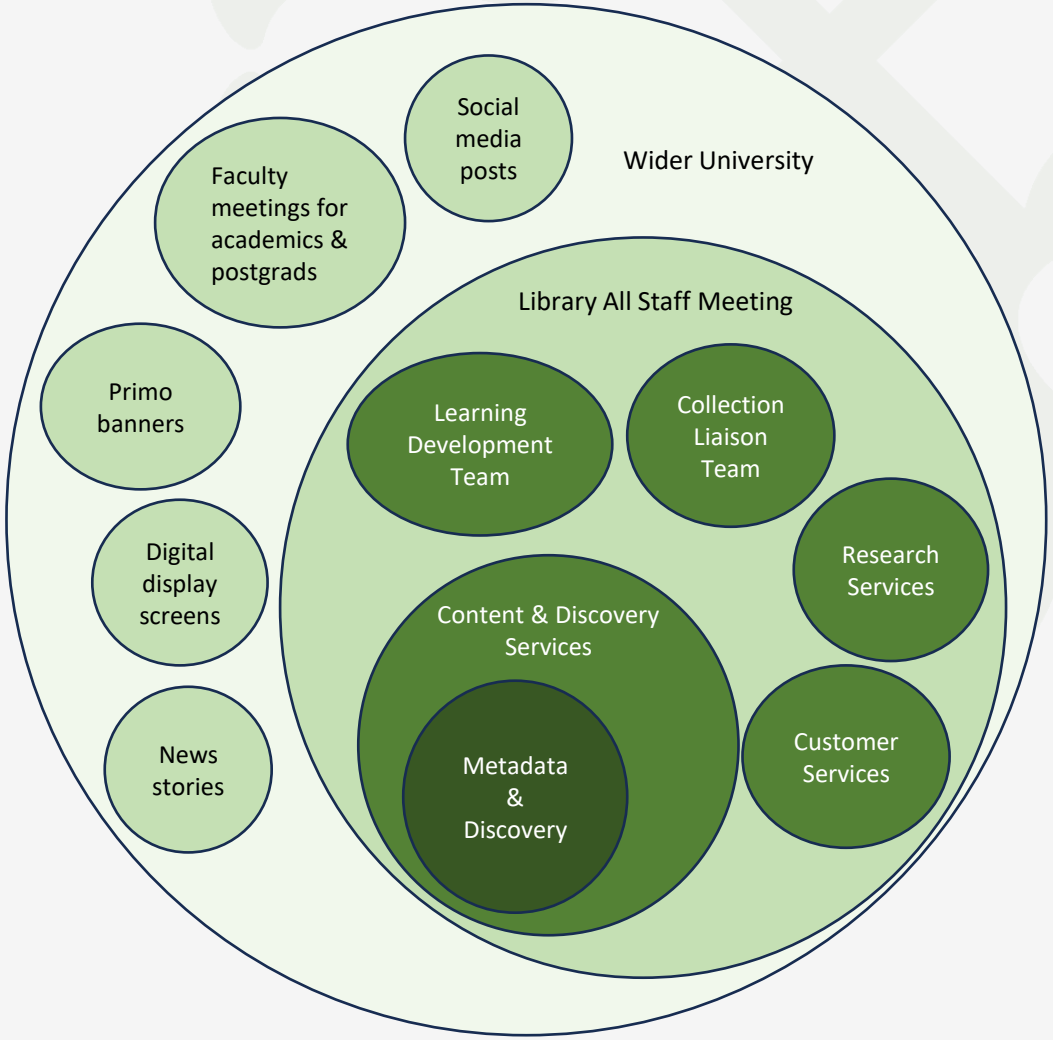
Referencing >
Book a study space >
Subject databases >
Reading lists >
Academic skills >
Dissertation examples >

Lean Library at UoL

- Excellent engagement with the catalogue! But always room for improvement
- Ebook accessibility report in 2022/2023 showed lower engagement with the catalogue so results vary
- Expanding Digital Education Service means increase in distance learners
- Print Alternatives feature imminent
- Implementation began July 2024 with a Metadata & Discovery project group

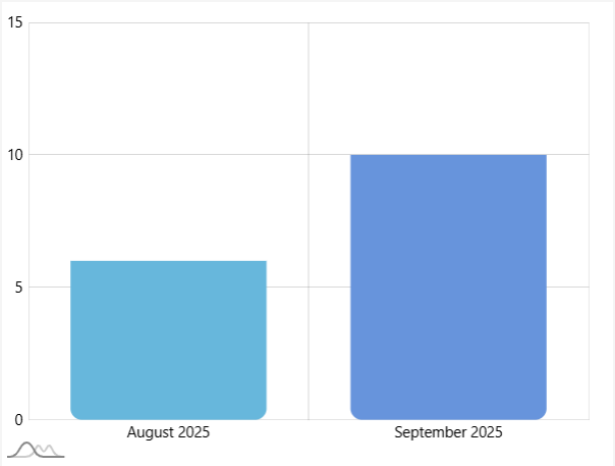
Communications strategy

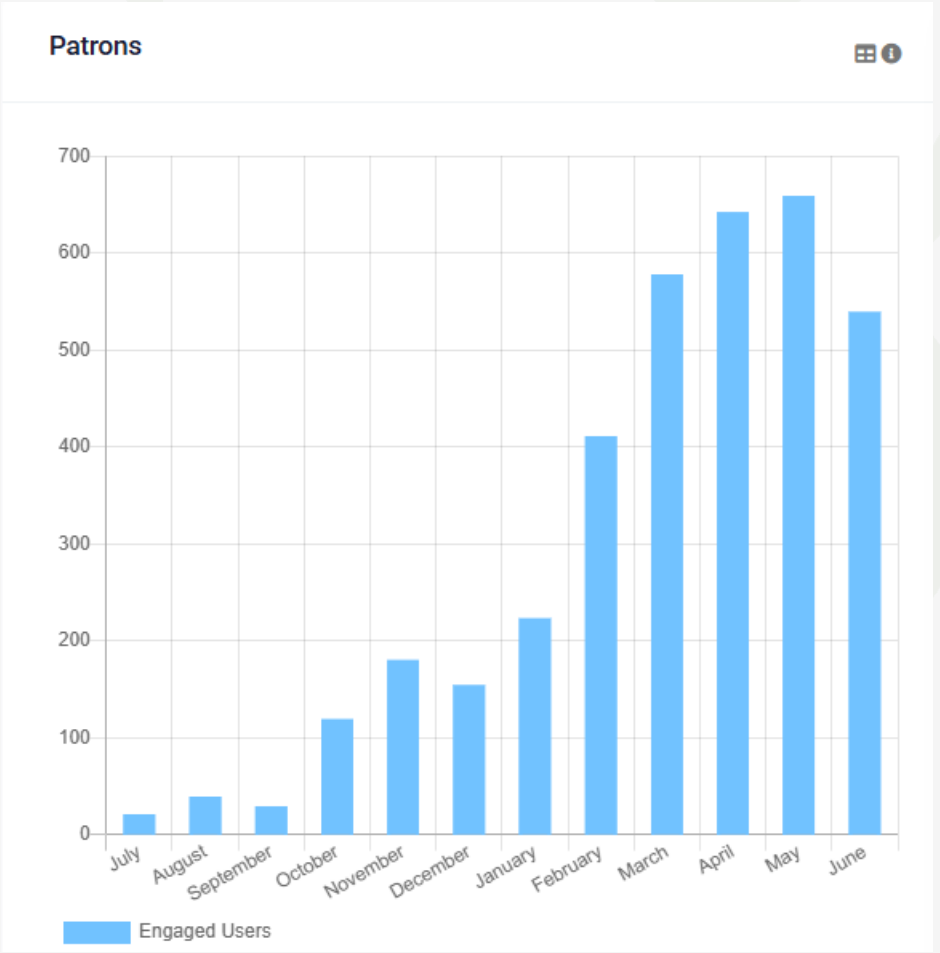
- In-person and online presentations to widening groups of colleagues starting in October 2024
- Dedicated Library webpage January 2025
- Library Communications team incorporated LL into Fresh Start campaign in January 2025 then ran a promotion throughout February 2025
- Big Five and other negotiations ongoing; incorporated LL into faculty outreach meetings in April 2025
- Future planning: Workspace and Print Alternatives outreach—and PC installation…?



Year 1 statistics

- As of July 2025, **3,200** active users
- **1000 hours** and **£49,000** saved
- Connected users to **1,665 Open Access resources**
- Lean Library popup displayed library branding in our patrons' workflows **64,541 times**





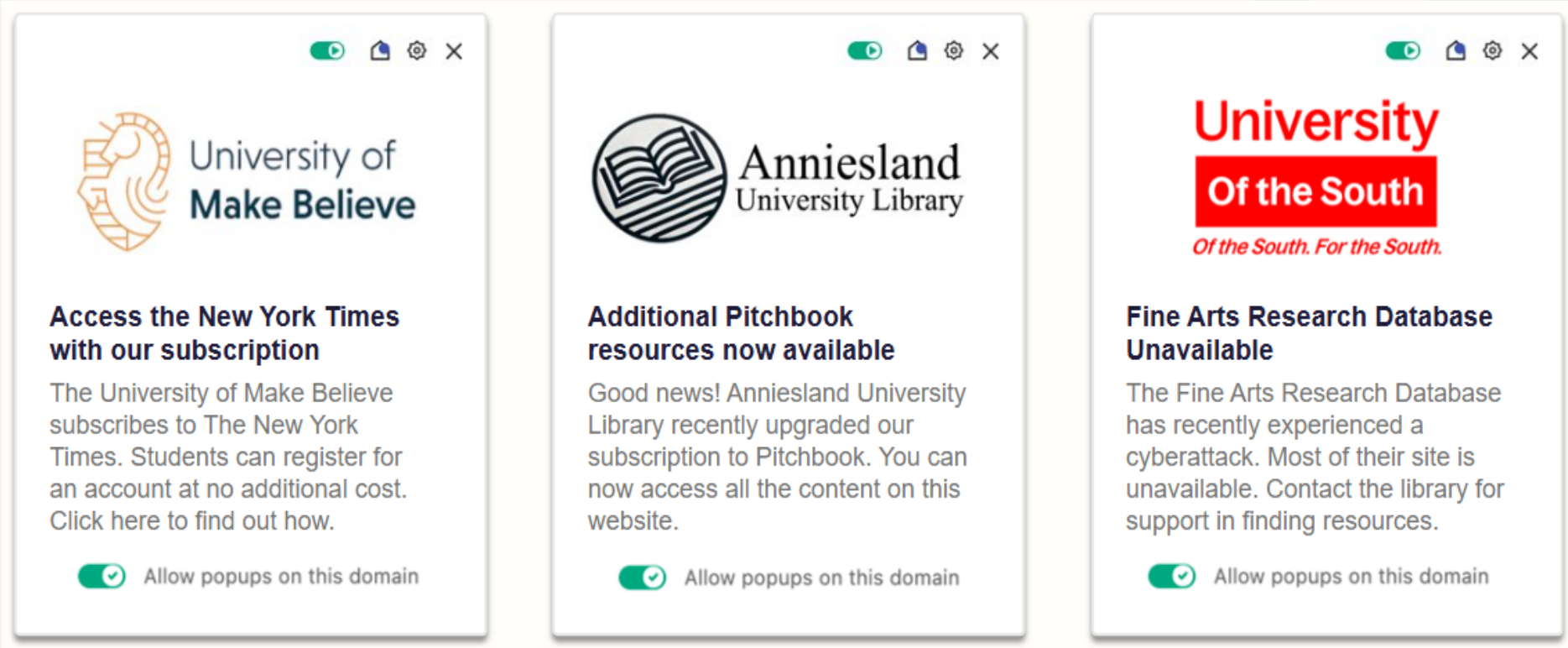
Assist message templates

“By using the assist messages within Lean Library, we are able to inform users of known issues with suppliers or websites, saving the user and library team time in answering questions before they are raised.”

Andrew Cheney, NHS Mersey Care

“It is a great way for us to support our users at point of need by also being able to provide pop-up messages with extra help and training when they are using particular resources or databases.”

Ali Carroll, University of East Anglia



Assist message language (and towels)

You can show your respect for nature and help save the environment by reusing your towels during your stay.

Control group

Almost 75% of guests who are asked to participate in our new resource savings program do help by using their towels more than once. You can join your fellow guests to help save the environment by reusing your towels during your stay.

Social norms – 26% more likely to reuse towels

Almost 75% of guests who have used this room participated in our new resource savings program do help by using their towels more than once. You can join your fellow guests to help save the environment by reusing your towels during your stay.

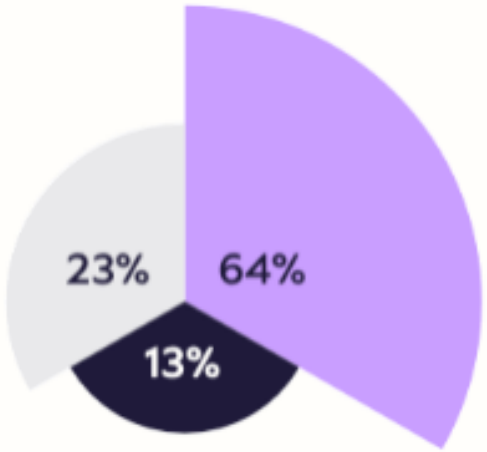
Specific social norms – 33% more likely to reuse towels

Goldstein, N. J., Cialdini, R. B., & Griskevicius, V. (2008). A Room with a Viewpoint: Using Social Norms to Motivate Environmental Conservation in Hotels. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *35*(3), 472-482. https://doi.org/10.1086/586910

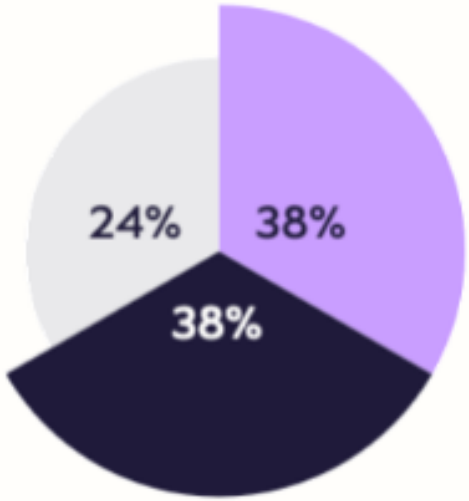
Librarian Futures IV: Further Findings

We asked students...

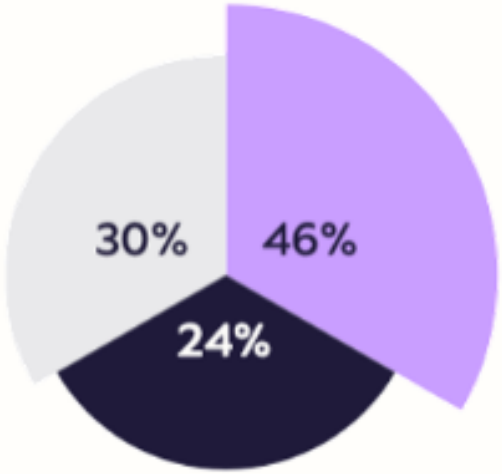
Does your institution have an AI policy?



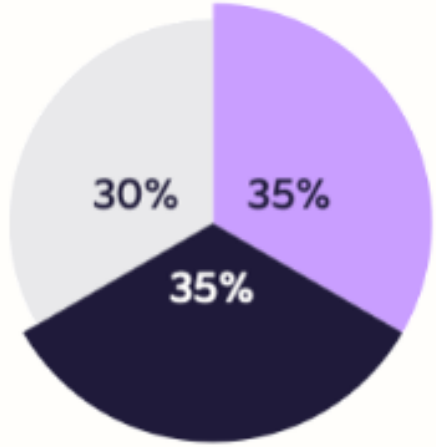
Are students permitted to use AI in academic work?



Are students required to cite AI if they use it in academic work?



Has your institution pre-approved specific AI tools for students to use in their academic work?



Yes
No
Not sure

Librarian Futures IV: Further Findings

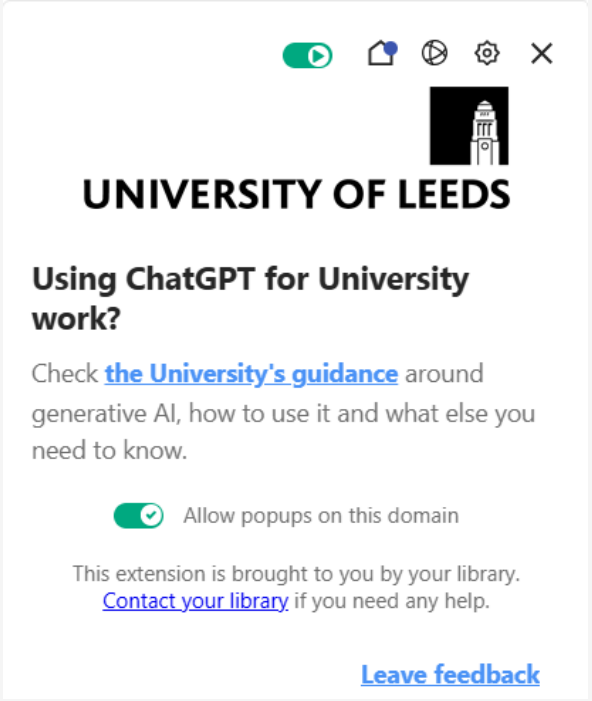
One fifth of students **begin** research with AI

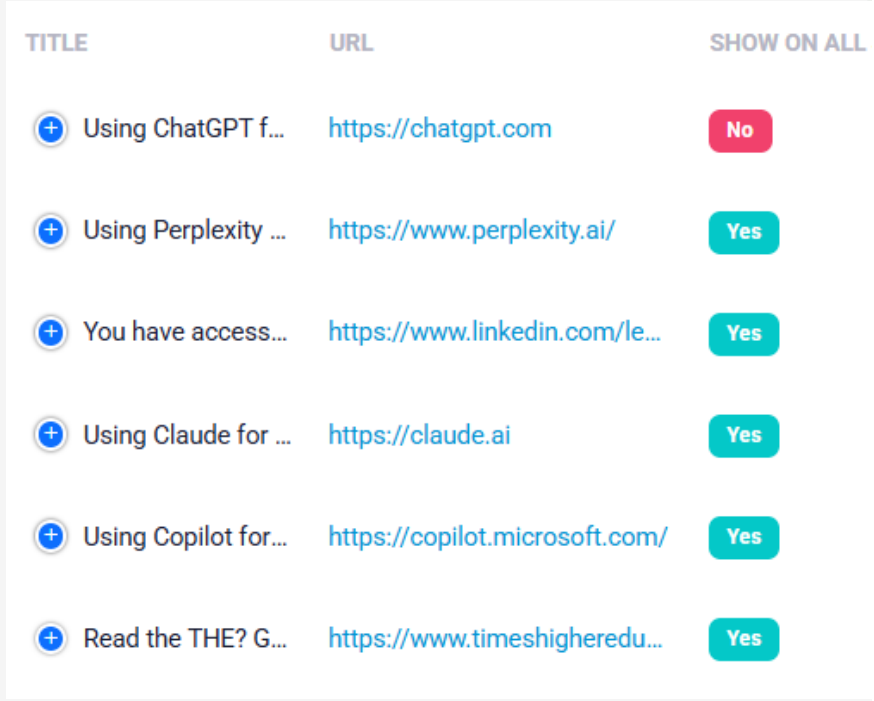
- 18% begin with ChatGPT
- 3% begin with some other AI tool

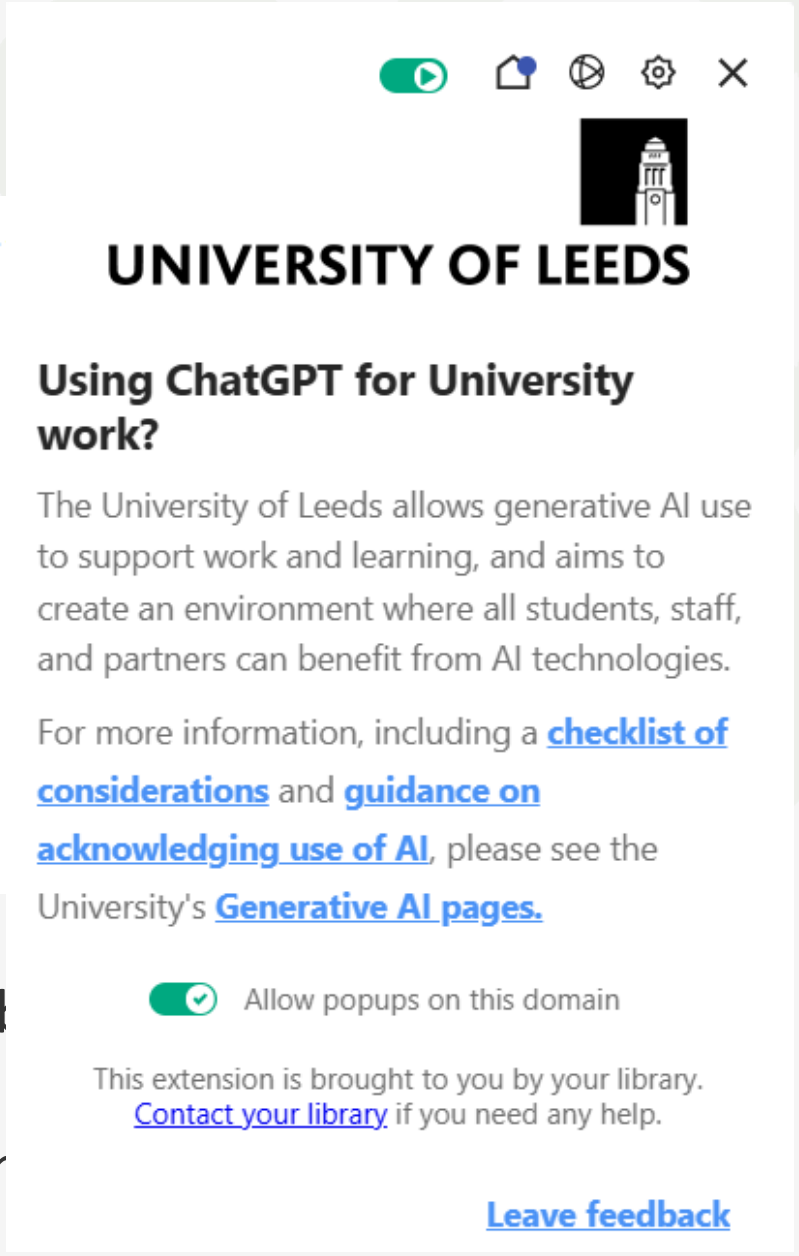
But...the use of Google as a starting point has **not** declined

- Chosen by 38% students in 2022…
- … and 37% of students in 2025

Assist messages and AI







- Started using Assist messaging for Gen AI sites in Novemb had high views
- Experimented with LibGuides integration with input from team but ultimately decided on subtler messaging

Thank you for your time – we welcome any questions...

- **Ceilan Hunter-Green, Metadata & Discovery Manager –** University of Leeds (c.hunter-green@leeds.ac.uk)
- **Rob Moore, Development Manager –** Technology from Sage (rob.moore@technologyfromsage.com)

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