

Assessing E-book and Print Book User Behavior in Academic Libraries

UCSC Focus Groups Interview Questions & Script

Updated on October 19, 2015

Size: aim for 8 people per group (4 focus groups in total)

Seating arrangement: circle (each participant will have their name tag on a chair (with a clipboard, paper and pen)

Ask participants to arrive 10 minutes before the start of the focus group (for administrative purposes, to get coffee, etc.).

Materials required:

White board (optional)

Large flip charts and stands (2 if possible)

8-10 clipboards with paper and pen

Name tags

Sharpies

Welcome (3-5 minutes)

- Thank you for agreeing to take part in our focus group; we really appreciate your willingness to participate in a discussion about your use of print and electronic books.
- My name is {moderator's name}; I'll be leading our discussion today. My colleague(s), {assistant 1 and 2}, are here to assist.
- Today we want to learn how you as graduate students use print and electronic books in your research and academic work. This discussion will greatly help UC Santa Cruz, and the UC libraries, to better manage our existing and future book collections - thank you for participating!
- Ground rules/guidelines:
 - Only one person talks at a time
 - Confidentiality is assured. What is shared in the room stays in the room. With your permission, I would like to tape this interview so that I can make an accurate transcript. Once I have made the transcript, I will erase the recordings. Your name will not be in the transcript or my notes.

- It is important for us to hear everyone's ideas and opinions. There are no right or wrong answers to questions- just ideas, experiences and opinions, which are all valuable
 - It is important for us to hear all sides of an issue, both the positive and negative. Keep in mind that we are just as interested in negative comments as positive comments, and at times the negative comments are the most helpful.
 - Are there any other ground rules you want you to add to the list?
- We've placed name cards on the table in front of you to help us remember each other's names. Let's find out some more about each other by going around the table. Could everyone introduce yourselves, state your department and area of study? [State Name], could you please start?

Focus Group Introductory/Transition Questions (12-15 minutes)

[On the whiteboard: definition for "scholarly work" and "scholarly book."]

Narrative: We'd like our discussion today to be grounded in your experiences and not in your preferences. We'd also like to note that we are only talking about your use of books today, and not journals. But by books, this might mean an entire book, or just a portion of a book or chapter. Alright - let's begin!

And we will also like to focus on scholarly books. We have some examples of scholarly books on the table.

- **A scholarly book** is typically a single volume book that gives an in-depth analysis of a specialized topic, often presenting original research/content. It's written by an academic (or a group of academics), and written mainly for an academic audience. So today, we won't be talking about textbooks, reference books, dictionaries, encyclopedias or journals. We do have definitions for textbooks, reference books, dictionaries, encyclopedias, journals, just in case you feel confused about the different kinds of the books.

Please think back over this quarter,

1. How often do you use scholar books for your academic work? Every day, every week, every few weeks, or a few times each quarter?

Let's focus on **ONE** scholarly book you've used most recently for your academic work.

2. What did you use the book for? And why did you use book instead of journal, website or other resources?
 - a. Purpose: class reading, research for an article, project, thesis, preparing a presentation or lesson?
 - b. For the people who haven't used a scholarly book, what kind of book did you use? For what purpose and why not journal, website and other resources?
3. What was its format? Was it an eBook, a print book or did you use both formats? Where did you get the book of your chosen format?

- a. Print book user:
 - i. Pick up from the library or store? Or delivered to you?
 - ii. If delivered to you, how soon was the book delivered to you?
 - b. If purchased the book (either format)
 - i. Why did you buy it, as opposed to borrowing it?
4. Was it easy getting hold of your chosen format? Please describe your experience, whether positive or the obstacles you faced, with getting ahold of the book.
- a. Ebook user: downloadable (chapter or whole book),
 - b. Print book user: availability, delivery time
5. **(For ebook users only)** How did you read your ebook? Did you read on screen? On an eReader? Or Print it out? And how did you like that experience?
6. Please describe the type of reading you did with this book, using the following spectrum:
- You...
- a. Read the whole book
 - b. Read most of the book (i.e. most of the chapters)
 - c. Read a few chapters
 - d. Read one chapter or less
 - e. Scanned/searched the book for particular pieces of information
 - f. Other (and if so – how would you describe the type of reading you did?)
7. Have you used this book before?
- If yes,
- a. Why? For what activities do you need to use a book more than once?
 - b. Do you select the same or different format for the repetitive use?

Key Questions (35 minutes):

The next set of questions is focused on your book format choice, again focusing on the **ONE** scholarly book you used most recently (eBook, print book, or both).

8. Was the chosen format, your preferred format? What influenced your format choice?
 - a. Availability, usability, delivery time, urgency, reading purpose, type of reading
9. If both formats were available, what would be your preferred format? And why?
10. Using the pen and paper provided, please list up to three features/characteristics of each format that are important to you.

Do your best – if you can only think of one or two, that is fine.
Did anyone list anything different?

- a. Why is that important to you

11. Using the pen and paper provided, please list up to three features/characteristics of each format that you dislike.

- a. Why do you dislike that?

Ending Questions (5 minutes):

11. (We have been focusing on the ONE scholarly book you used most recently.) Was this last book you used similar to others you've used?

- a. If not, how different? Purpose? Type of reading? Where to get the book?
Format selection?

- b.

12. Of all the things we discussed today, what to you is the primary factor that affects your book format choice in general (not just the most recent book use, but in general)?

13. (Optional) Suppose you were in charge of the library, and could make one change that would make the library better for book users. What would you do?

Conclusion (1 minute)

Thank you so much for your time and participation. The information you have shared is very valuable for our research.

We'll be distributing your \$40 amazon gift cards to you electronically; it will be sent to the email address you used to join our focus group within next 4 to 6 weeks, maybe shorter than that. Feel free to contact me anytime if you have any questions or you haven't received the gift card, say, by the end of November. I have left my business cards on the table, and you should already have my contact information from our earlier communication. Please help yourself to more coffee and snacks on your way out.

Probing/Follow-up Questions

Please tell me more.

Would you explain further?

Would you give an example?

What could have made your experience better?

What else can you say about that?

Can someone build on that?

On a scale of 1-5, how important is that (5 being most important)?

Can you tell me more about how you felt about X?

Why do you think you feel this way?

Name:

Features you like/are important to you

Print Books	Electronic Books
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Features you dislike

Print Books	Electronic Books
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.