

# Reading for Research: Scholarly Publications in the Worklife of Researchers

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# A bit about me...



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# Overarching Research Question

How do researchers access, read, use, and value scholarly publications in their work?



# In the information context economist Machlup described 2 types of value:

1. **purchase or exchange value:** what one is willing to pay for information in money and/or time, and
2. **use value:** the favorable consequences derived from reading and using the information.

# 4 types of questions

1. Demographic

2. Recollection

3. Critical Incident

4. Comments

Therefore, insights  
into

both READERS and  
READINGS

# Critical incident of last reading

“The following questions in this section refer to the **SCHOLARLY ARTICLE** YOU READ MOST RECENTLY, even if you had read the **article** previously. Note that this last reading may not be typical, but will help us establish the range of patterns in reading.”

# Finland Reading Study

- Online survey sent to Finnish scholars
- 527 total respondents (although the number for any one question may vary)
- Follow-up interviews
- Replicates and expands on a 2007 survey in Finland

*Carol Tenopir, Concepción S. Wilson, Pertti Vakkari, Sanna Talja, and Donald W. King. "Cross country comparison of scholarly e-reading patterns in Australia, Finland and the United States," Australian Academic & Research Libraries (AARL) 41 (1) March 2010: 26-41.*

*Carol Tenopir, Concepción S. Wilson, Pertti Vakkari, Sanna Talja, and Donald W. King. "Scholarly E-reading Patterns in Australia, Finland, and the United States: A Cross Country Comparison," Proceedings of the 74th IFLA General Conference and Council, 10-14 August 2008.*

# CROSS COUNTRY COMPARISON OF SCHOLARLY E-READING PATTERNS IN AUSTRALIA, FINLAND, AND THE UNITED STATES\*

*Carol Tenopir, Concepción S. Wilson, Pertti Vakkari, Sanna Talja, Donald W. King*

Surveys of academic staff in Australia, Finland, and the United States from 2004-2007 reveal reading patterns of e-articles by academics that can be used to measure the purpose and value of e-reading and to demonstrate the value of library-provided electronic journal collections. Results can also be used to compare differences across subject disciplines, age, and national boundaries, and how the decisions that libraries make influence reading patterns.

The surveys used a variation of the critical incident technique to focus on the last e-article read, whether from the library collection or from elsewhere. Readings from e-journals and articles provided by libraries were more often for the purpose of research than were readings from other sources; were rated as highly valuable to that program; and have many reported values, including stimulating new ideas. Academics who published more also read more. Although there were some minor variations in e-reading patterns among the countries, most differences in reading patterns resulted instead from differences in subject discipline. Personal characteristics of the reader, including age and status, had much less influence on e-reading habits.

*AARL March 2010 vol 41 no1 pp 26-41*

\*A version of this paper was presented at the 74th IFLA Conference, 10-14 August 2008, Quebec, Canada (<http://archiv.ifa.org/TV/ifa74/>).



Date : 14/08/2008

**Scholarly E-reading Patterns in Australia, Finland, and the United States: A Cross Country Comparison\***

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**Meeting:** 160. National Libraries with Statistics and Evaluation

**Simultaneous Interpretation:** Not available

**WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS: 74TH IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE AND COUNCIL**  
10-14 August 2008, Quebec, Canada  
<http://congress.ifla.org/TV/ifa74/index.htm>

\*Theme: "Ensuring quality in national libraries: performance measures and quality evaluation supporting cultural heritage and research."

## ABSTRACT

Surveys of academic staff (faculty members) in the United States, Finland, and Australia from 2004-2007 reveal reading patterns of e-articles by academics and can be used to measure the purpose and value of e-reading and to demonstrate the value of library-provided electronic journal collections. Results can also be used to compare differences across subject discipline, age, national boundaries, and how the decisions that libraries make influence reading patterns.

# A few preliminary findings...

1. Scholarly articles are still important for academic work
2. Many, but not all, readings come from the library
3. Not every reader is the same
4. What has changed?
5. What should change in the future?

1. Scholarly article reading is important for academic work

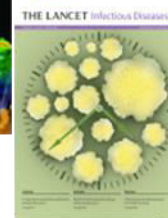
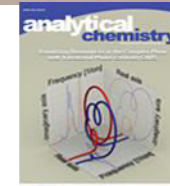
# Researchers read a lot ...article readings per month

20 readings per month  
on average by Finnish  
researchers

X

12 months per year =  
**240 article readings/year**

2016, Finland



# And they spend time reading

42 minutes per article  
reading

x 20 readings per  
month = 14

hours/month

X 12 months/year = 168  
hours/year

OR 21 8-hour work days

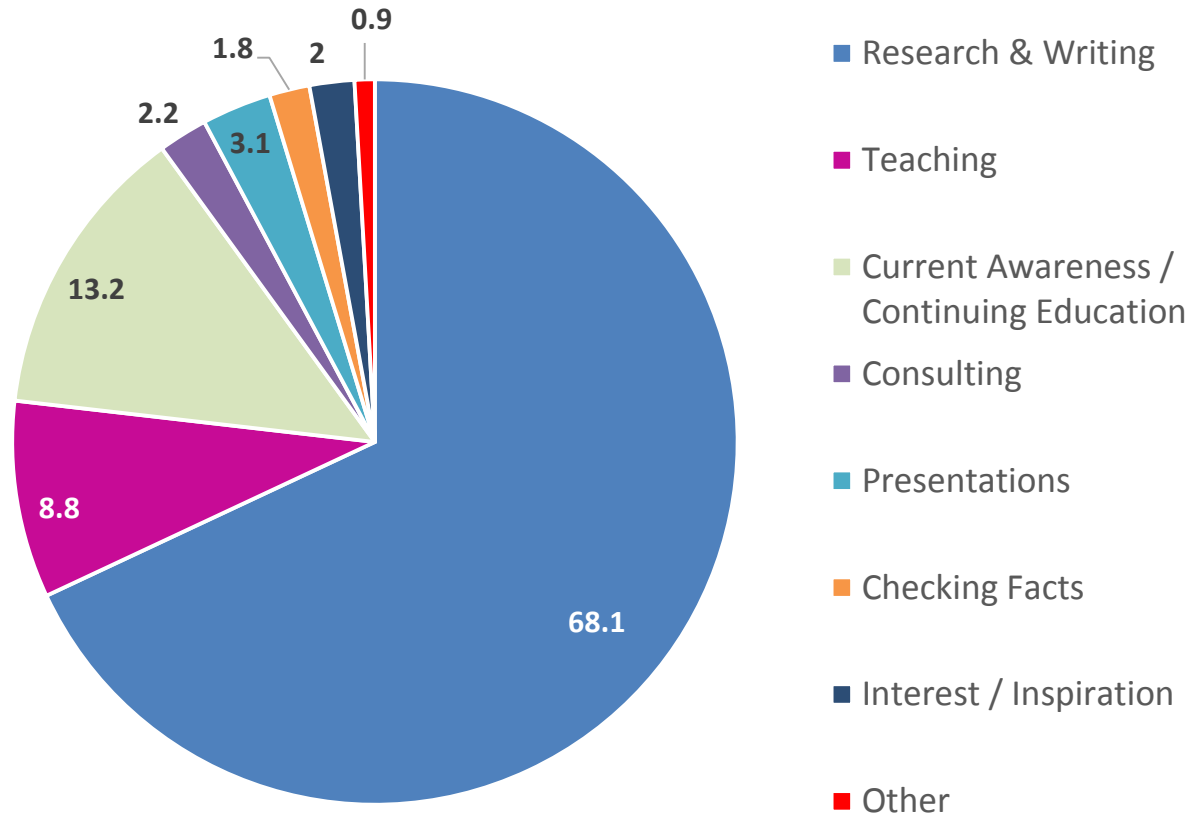


2016, Finland

# Outcomes of article readings

- #1 Inspire new thinking or ideas (54%)
- #2 Helped justify my work (47%)
- #3 Improved the results (21%)
- #4 Narrowed/broadened/changed focus (17%)
- #5 Saved time or other resources (10%)
- ....
- #10 Wasted my time (1%)

# They read articles for many different purposes...



n=454, 2016, Finland

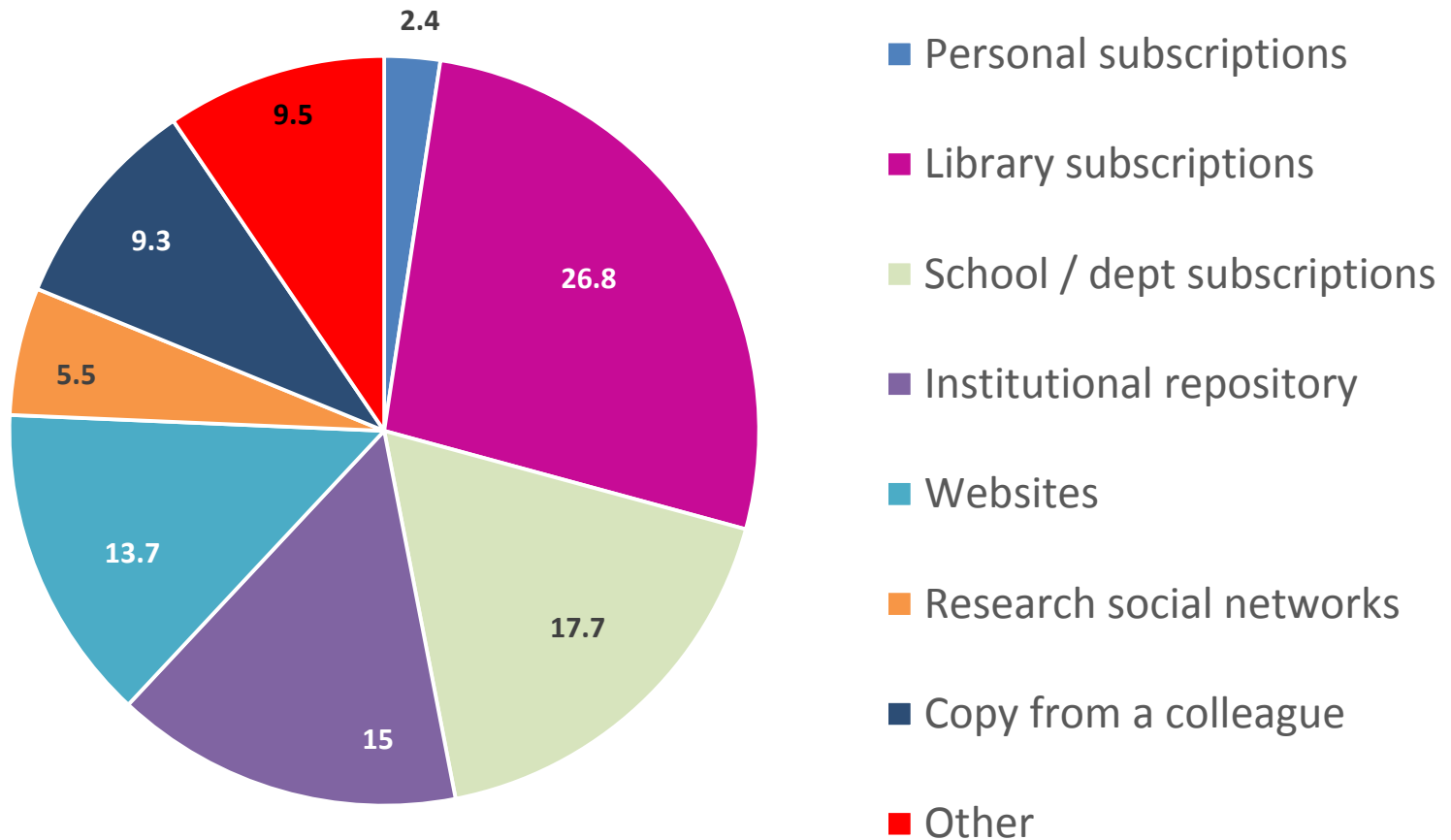
# Reading of other publications (M=69/month)

News articles	48.6
Magazine or trade journal	8.6
Blogs	4.3
Scholarly books / book chapters	2.9
Govt. documents, technical or research reports	2.5
Conference proceeding articles	2.4
Fiction	1.1
Other	1.1
Other Non-fiction	0.8

n=454, 2016, Finland

2. Many readings come from the library  
(but not all)

# Source of article readings (for all purposes)



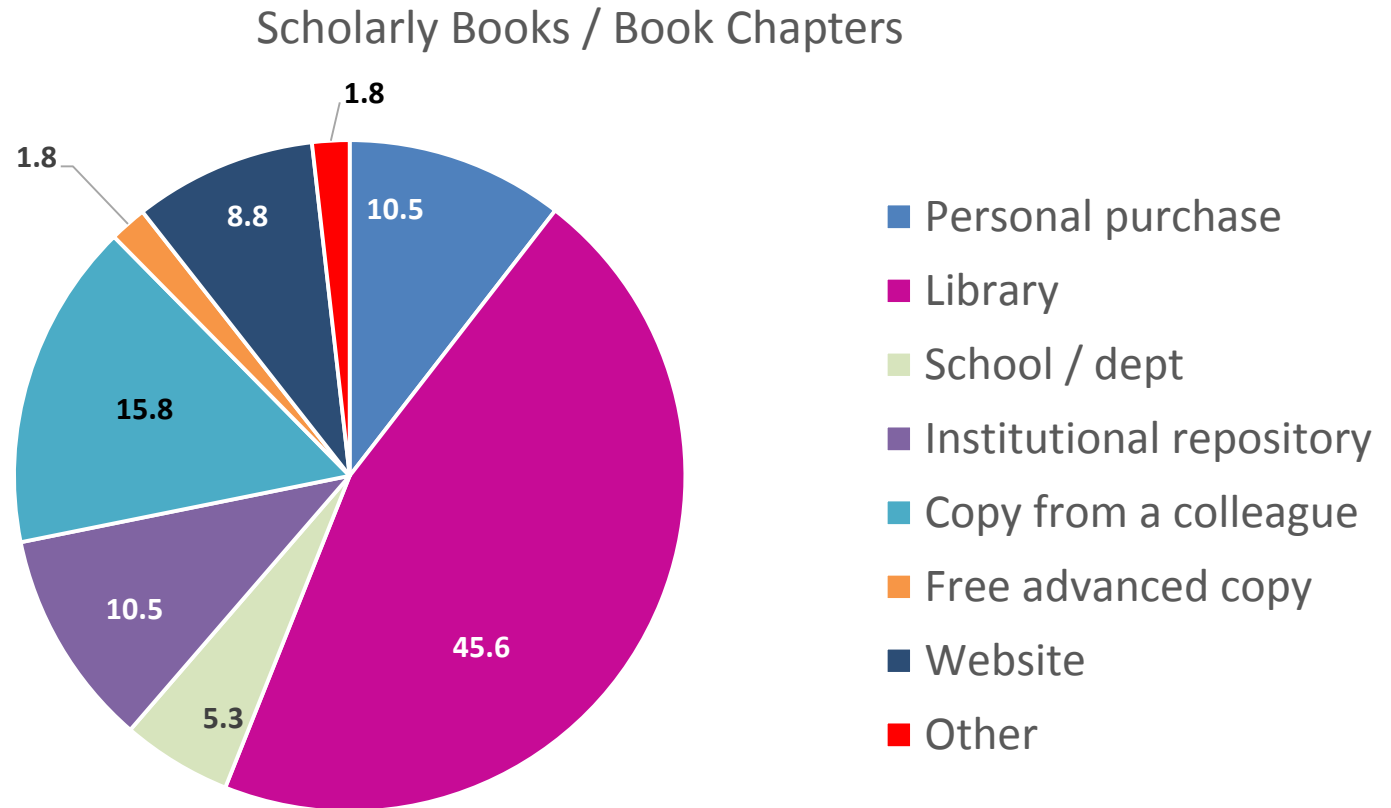
# Library provided articles are...

- ...most often for research or writing
- ...more important to principal purpose
- ...more likely to be read in e-format
- ...more likely to be cited (already or in the future)

# Who relies on the library more for articles?

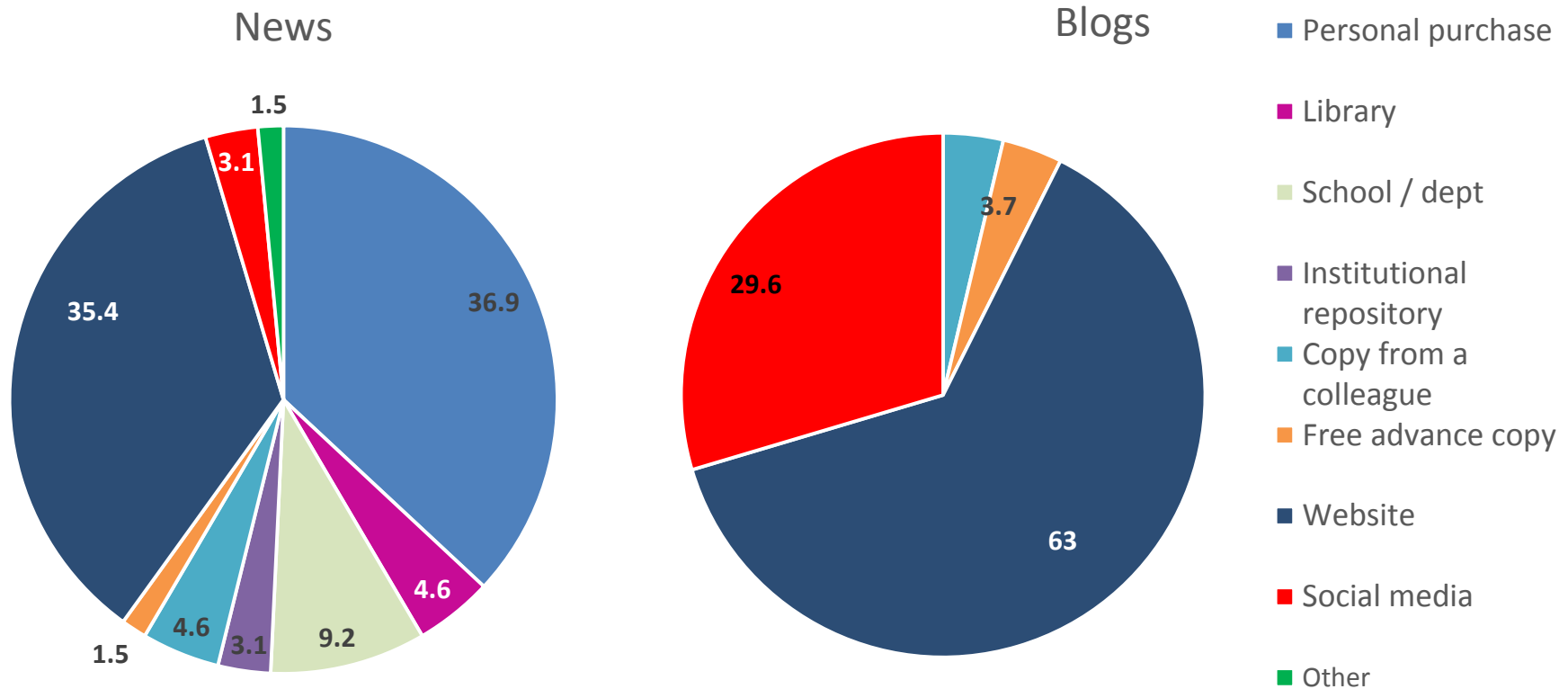
- Research intensive scholars
- Scholars who have won an award in the last 2 years and publish in the top quartile
- Scholars focusing on basic research

# Book readings come from the library...



n=451, 2016, Finland

# Some readings do not...

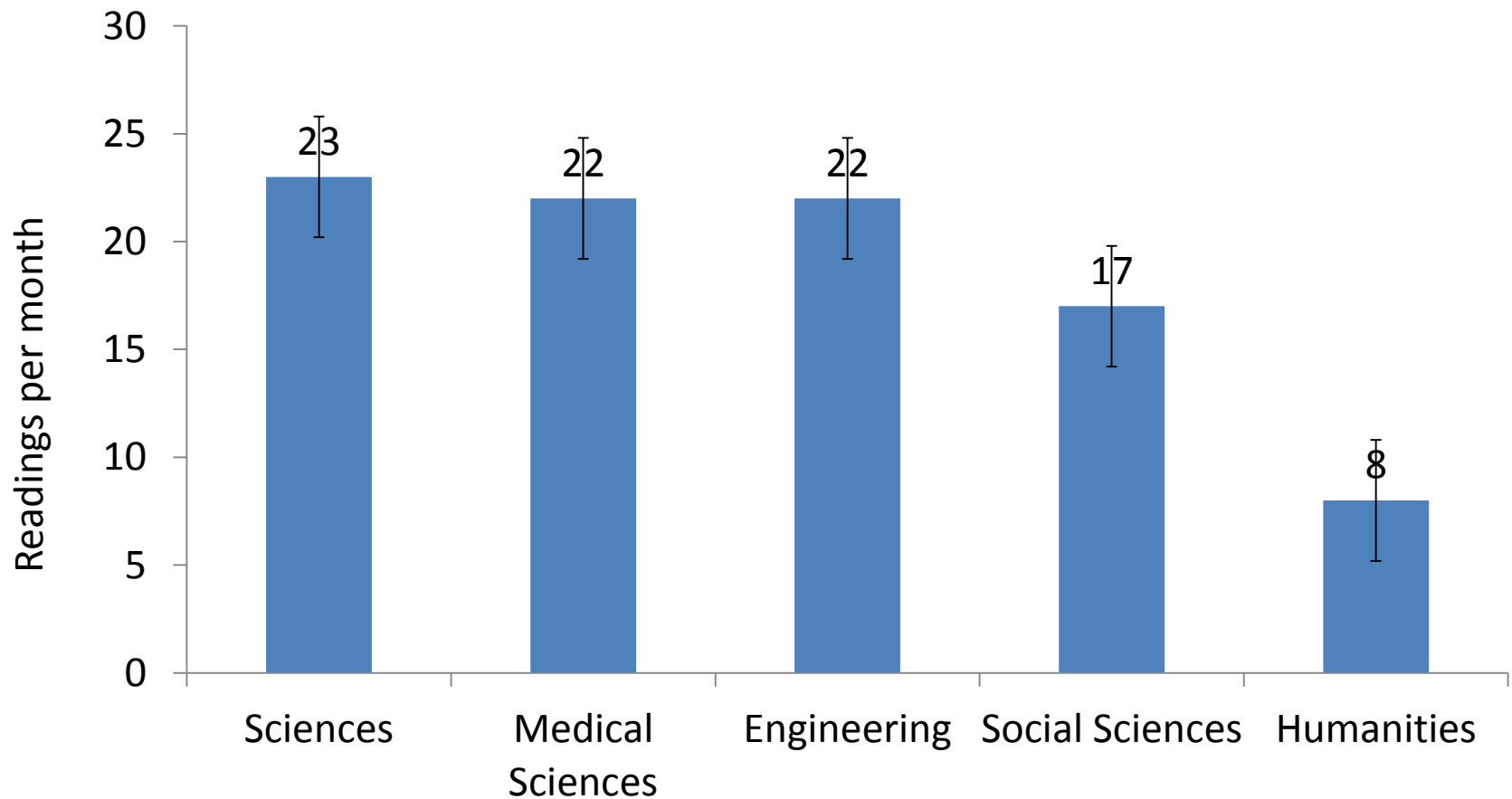


n=451, 2016, Finland

### 3. Not every reader is the same

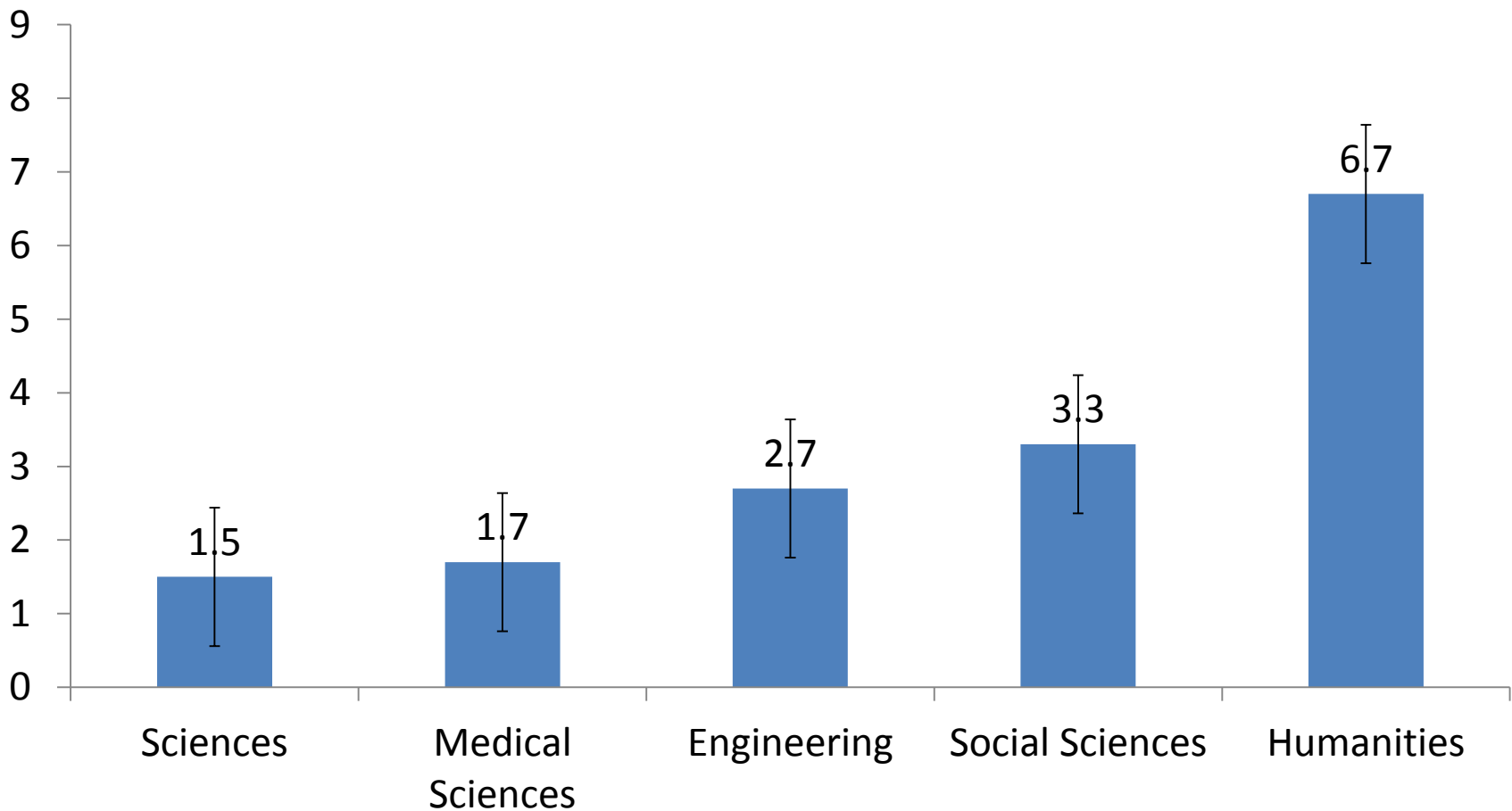
# Article Readings differ by discipline

(average per month)



n=439, Finland, 2016

# Book or chapter readings differ by discipline (average per month)



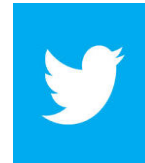
n=450, Finland, 2016

# Medical sciences readers are more likely to...

- ...rate journal article readings as essential
- ...spend the least amount of time per article reading (34 minutes/reading on average)
- ...find articles by searching
- ...read articles with “great care”

# Does age of reader matter?

There is no age difference in use of social media based on age



# Age sometimes matters...

- **30 and under compared to others:**
  - Read more often at the office
  - Spend more time per article reading
  - More often get readings from colleagues
- **61+ compared to others:**
  - Read more books/book chapters
  - Read more from print
  - Read more in Finnish or Swedish

# Reading characteristics of a 'successful' academic:

- Reads a greater variety of materials.
- Spends more time per reading.
- Uses the library for articles, but not as much for other types of publications.
- Considers listservs, cloud services, research social networks, and collaborative authoring platforms to be important to work.



# **4. Some things have changed**

# Estimated e-article reading

2007 15 electronic articles/month average

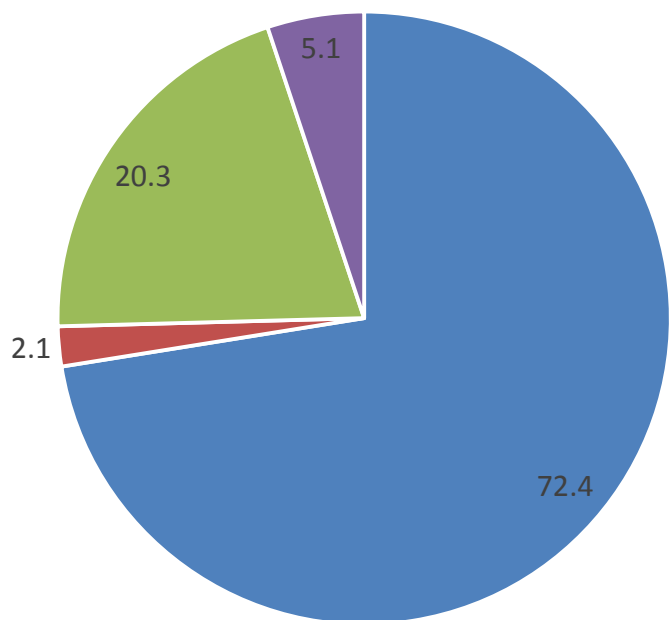
➤ 180 e-articles per year

2017 17 electronic articles/month average

➤ 204 e-articles per year (83% of total readings)

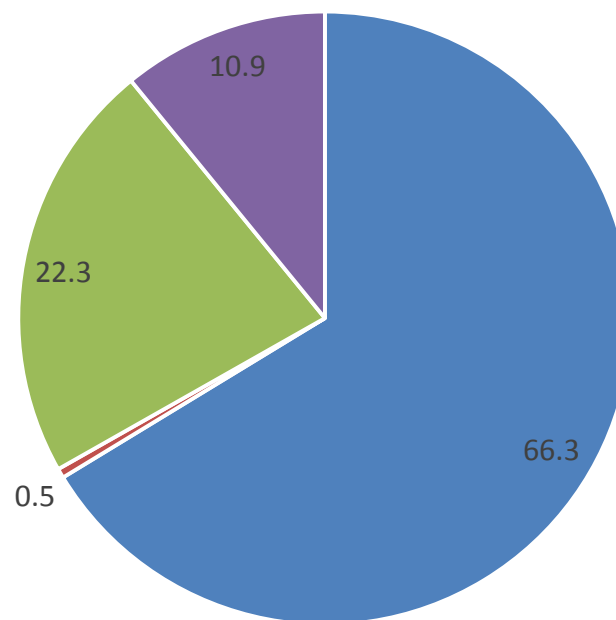
# Where were you when reading the last e-article?

2007



■ Office or lab ■ Library ■ Home ■ Elsewhere

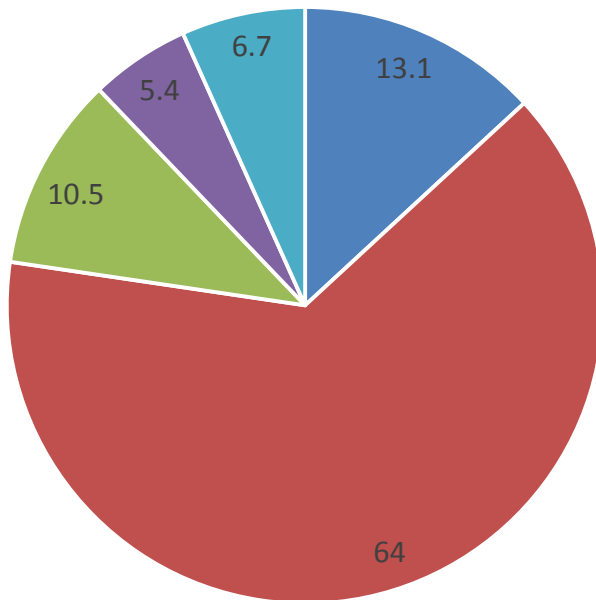
2016



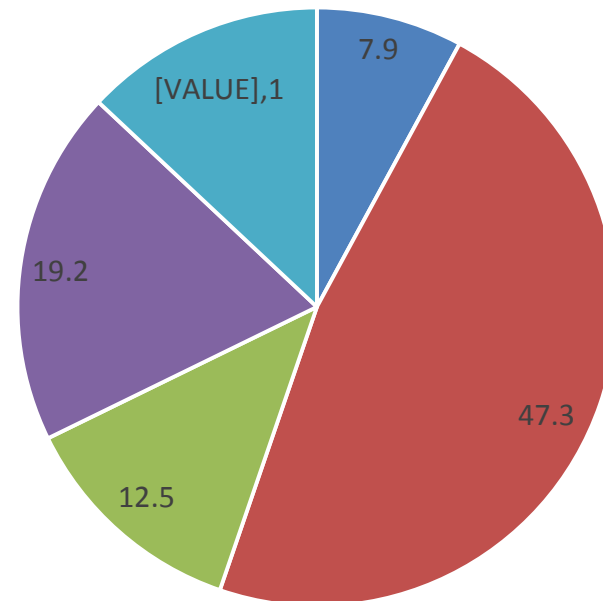
■ Office or lab ■ Library ■ Home ■ Elsewhere

# How did you become aware of the last e-article you read?

2007



2016



■ Browsing ■ Searching ■ Cited in another publication ■ From another person ■ Other

# Finding articles has changed:

*“I find many more papers as a result of being on Twitter.”*

*“I read more working papers and early versions that are freely available on the web.”*

*“The search services available in the Web are completely sufficient for finding materials so there is no need for special search services provided by the library.”*

# Reading has changed for most:

*“I’ve mainly moved onto electronic publications, because they are easy to **save and share**.”*

*“I read more because I can read on the phone and other smart devices.”*

*“Because of haste and time pressures, it’s necessary to only browse through articles and pick up the necessary things. There’s no time to read the full article in peace.”*

## **5. Some things need to change (and some shouldn't)**

Ability to make  
my own notes  
easily

The content is  
more important to  
me than...fancy  
features

Desired  
Future?

Links to cited  
works and links  
to research data

Open peer review  
with public  
comment  
functionality

Open access for  
all

E-reader (i.e.,  
Kindle)  
compatibility

# Any changes must...

...Fit with work patterns

...Be easier than current ways

...Recognize need for quality

...Fit a range of behaviors and devices



# Thank you!

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the **Fulbright** Center