

The Results of the Survey of Members on the USPCS Website

The USPCS Board met in December to review options for improving the website to make it more appealing to members, increase traffic, and to help recruit new members. Subsequent to that, Gordon Eubanks and Mark Schwartz designed a short survey that could be administered on-line *via* SurveyMonkey. On January 15, 2015, an email was sent to 733 regular members and 126 Life members.

After 2-3 days the number of responses reached 345, an excellent response rate of over 40%. At this point, the analysis contained in the report was done. While the response rate eventually reached 48%, a review of the additional data indicated that did not have a meaningful effect on the results.

Analysis of the results for All Respondents is shown in the bar charts below. Charts were not made for the subgroups (based on when they last visited the site), but differences among these groups were noted in the text below each question. Note that those who answered “never” were not asked any follow-up questions.

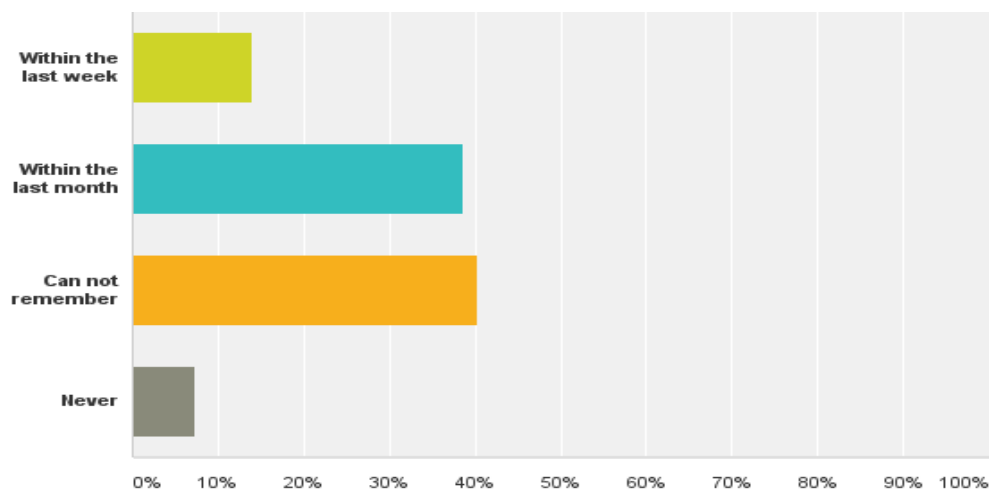
Key Findings

- Over half the members surveyed claim to have visited the website within the last month.
- Of the members who visited most often (“last week” or “last month”), about 18% felt the site was either difficult to use, or that we should focus on making it easier. However, further analysis does not support the idea that navigation issues reduce their frequency of visiting the site. This may not be the case for the “can not remember” group, where 33% wanted us to focus on improving the ease of use of the site.
- All groups tend to visit mostly to search or browse the Chronicle. However, the “can not remember” group (which appears to use the site the least often) seems to visit much less for research purposes. Perhaps some are less interested in research, perhaps the website may not have the kind of content important to their collecting interests, or perhaps the navigation issues they raise inhibit their using the site for research.
- A large plurality of each subgroup thought the biggest improvement would be to add more content. This was confirmed in the answers to Q.6 (*What resource, features or activity, if added to the site, would make it more likely for you to visit.*).
- While the level of commitment to participation in a Study Group was difficult to ascertain, half or more of the respondents liked the idea. The very wide range of Study Groups suggested likely paralleled their broad range of philatelic interests. The two most frequent Study Groups mentions were for the 1851-57 issue (stamps) and for foreign/transatlantic/maritime mail. Following that were groups for the other early classic issues (through the 1869s)
- The two groups that visited most often were most likely to suggest specific additions that would increase their likelihood of visiting the site. These were predominantly in the areas of more of the same content already there – censuses,

exhibits, books/literature – and one that was not, presentation videos. There was also a definite interest in our establishing a chat board for classic U.S. philately. The third group made fewer and more wide-ranging specific suggestions, although censuses, exhibits and chat rooms were mentioned by 3-5 members each.

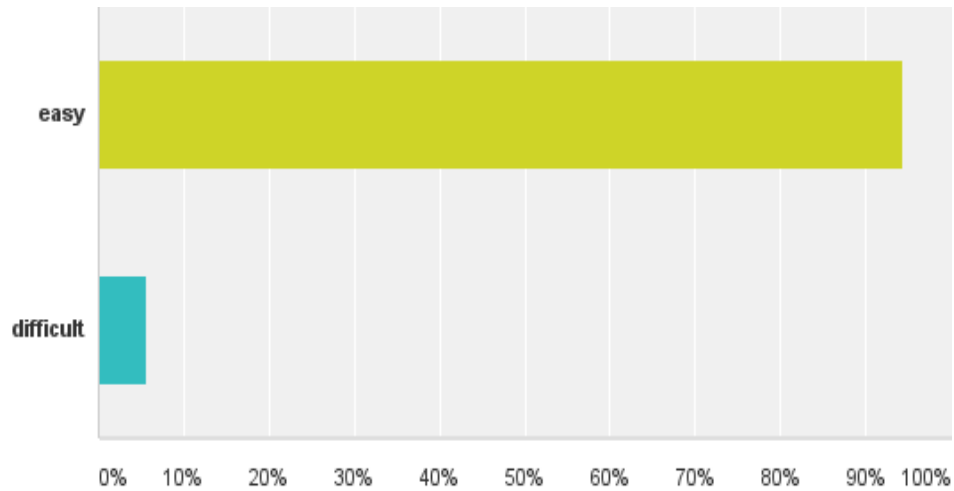
Detailed Analysis

Q1. When did you last visit the USPCS website



Overall, 14% of those surveyed claimed to have visited in the last week and 39% in the last month. 4 in 10 members could not remember when they visited, and 7% said that had never visited the site. Analysis of the responses of the “do not remember” group suggested that 26 should really be treated as “Never” having visited, making the last two percentages 34% and 14%.

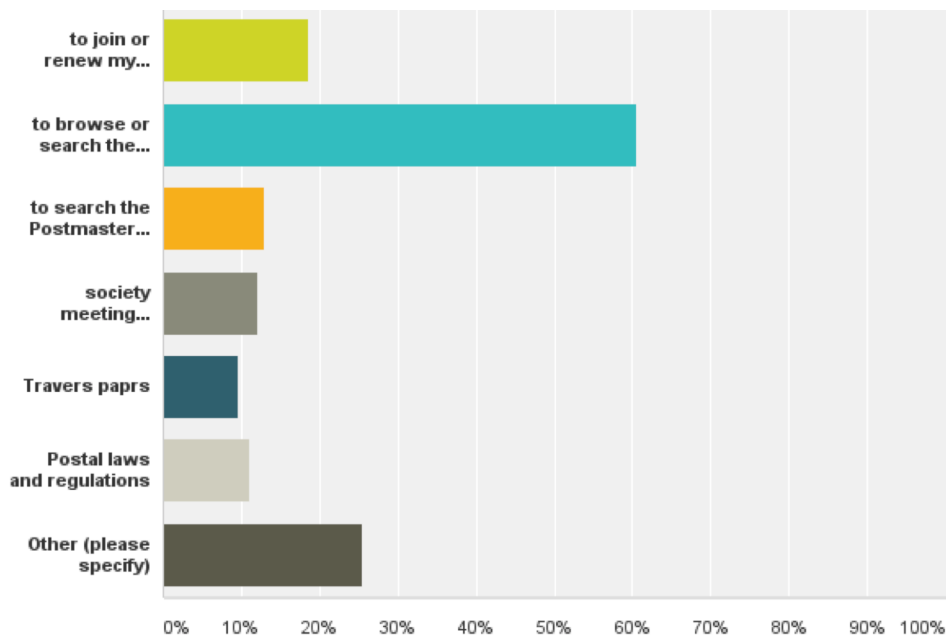
Q2: Do you find the website easy or difficult to use?



Only those who visited in the last week or last month answered this question. It was felt that if they could not remember when they visited, their answers to this would not be terribly accurate, or at least not at all as accurate as the groups that appear to visit more often. They did answer the remainder of the questions, however.

Overall, 96% felt it was easy to use the site, and there was little difference in the answers between the “last week” and “last month” groups. However, when answering Q4, a number of those initially answering “easy” above, did feel that effort should be made in making the site easier to use. Overall, about 26% of the “one week” group felt it was either difficult to use or should be made easier, and about 14% of the “one month” group felt this way. Since a greater percentage of those who actually used it more thought its ease of use needed improvement, one must wonder whether that difficulty actually hindered frequent use.

Q3: Why did you visit the website (select all that apply)



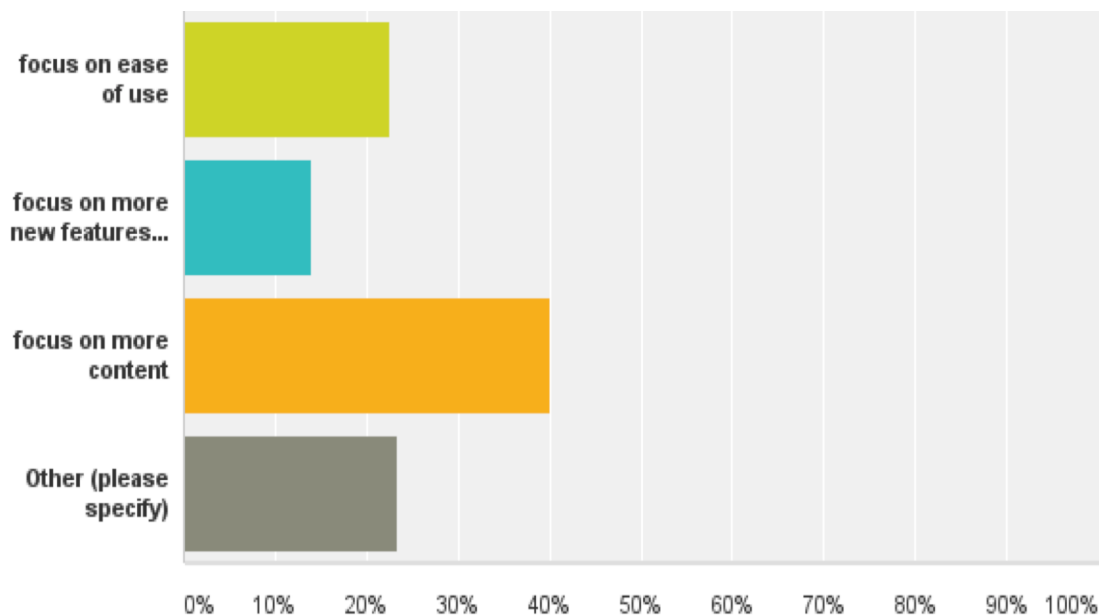
Overall, 19% of All Respondents visited to either join or renew their membership. More than three of five (61%) did so to browse or search the Chronicle. 10-13% each visited to use the Censuses, the PL&R or the Travers Papers, or to obtain Society meeting information. About one-quarter (26%) indicated that they had another reason for visiting.

Among the subgroups, those who visited in the last week tended to visit a bit more to use the Censuses (19% vs. 23%) and for Society meeting information (21% vs. 13%), and less for joining or renewing membership (12% vs. 19%) and for the PL&R (6% vs. 11%). They tended to answer “other” more often than All Respondents (43% vs. 25%), with half of those “other” reasons being to use membership directories.

The “last month” group visited the website for pretty much the same reasons as All Respondents, except for a much lower use to obtain Society meeting information (8% vs. 21%), and a greater use to use the PL&R (16% vs. 6%). That they balance off the “last week” group in this regard suggests that these differences may not really be significant.

Finally, the “do not remember” group showed a lower tendency to use any of the “research” content sections, including the Chronicle (46% vs. 61%); Censuses (9% vs. 13%); Travers Papers (6% vs. 9%); and PL&R (7% vs. 11%). Similarly, fewer respondents in this group having multiple reasons for visiting the website. This group may either be less interested in research or the website may not have the kind of content important to their collecting interests. It may also be possible that navigation difficulties deter them for using the site for research.

Q4. If we were to focus on one issue for improving the website what would it be?



Among All Respondents, 23% wanted us to focus on ease of use and 14% wanted us to add new features and capabilities. The largest number (40%) wanted more content, while 23%

answered “other”. As noted earlier, the proportion who wanted us to focus on ease of use was higher than those who found using the website difficult (23% vs. 10%).

Answers from the “last week” subgroup were quite similar to those for All Respondents. Those who visited the site in the “last month” were more likely to want more content. Among those who could not remember when they visited, more wanted better ease of use (33% vs. 23%) and fewer (although still a large number) wanted more content (31% vs. 40%). As noted above, it may be that for this group, difficulty in using the site is responsible for their less frequent use. The small number of “other” responses in this section was wide-ranging or included the closed-end responses (of ease of use, content, and features).

Q5. If the ability of members who share the same collecting interest to interact with each other, conduct virtual meetings, and virtually share images and information was added to the web site, would you use it? If yes, what study groups would you form? If not, why not?

Definite interest in participating in a Study Group ranged from 45-65%, corresponding to the frequency with which they currently visit the site (i.e., the “last week” group was highest, and the “can not remember” group was lowest). Another 10-20% indicated a possible interest, although those in this group had so few specifics as to the type of Study Group preferred, that I doubt they would participate. The most frequent suggestions for a group are the 1851-57 issues and maritime/TA/foreign mail. Other suggestions include the early classic stamps (although whether on- or off-cover is unclear); early stampless and Colonial mail; and a Frajola-type chat board.

Q6. What resource, features or activity, if added to the site, would make it more likely for you to visit?

In the first two groups (“last week” and “last month”), the most commonly cited additions included more censuses, exhibits, books/literature, and establishing a section with videos of presentations. A few mentioned the Study Groups, several mentioned a chat board, and some seemed to get the two mixed up. There were a great many responses that were seen only once or twice.

In the “can not remember” group, a much smaller proportion felt capable of making a suggestion. Among those who did, we did not see as large a concentration of answers in the census/book/literature/exhibits area. Only about 10% of respondents mentioned exhibits, censuses and chat boards.