

ResearchImpact
and the Use of Social Media Tools

Survey Results

April 2010

KMb Unit at York University



Background

ResearchImpact launched its web site (www.researchimpact.ca) in 2006, with substantial changes made in 2007 and 2009; we launched our delicious feed (delicious.com/ResearchImpact) in April 2009; our blog, Mobilize This! (researchimpact.wordpress.com) and monthly email newsletter in May of 2008; and our twitter feed ([@researchimpact](https://twitter.com/researchimpact)) on May 11, 2009. We started using the online collaborative research platform [O3](#), developed by ORION (Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network), in May of 2009.

We believe that social media or Web 2.0 tools are an important part of the research collaboration process and wanted to understand our community's satisfaction with our online services, how they were using social media tools (ours and in general) and what features they would like to see us add in the future.

In November 2009, we conducted a survey asking our community to rate our online services and social media tools. We sent a message with a link to our Survey Monkey survey to everyone who receives our monthly email newsletter, anyone who had been to one of our KMb events, as well as anyone who had received one of our funding opportunities. We sent out the first notification on November 11, 2009 and sent two more notifications two weeks apart to those who had not yet completed the survey.

Responses

In total, we received 99 responses to the survey (75 complete responses and 24 partial) out of the 1151 people who were invited to participate (8.6%).

We asked a total of 25 questions and below are the results:

Questions 1 & 2- Informed consent

87 people agreed to take the survey and indicated their consent; 8 people opted out of the survey.

Question 3- Are you aware of ResearchImpact's web site?

80.8 % of people were aware of our web site; 19.2 % were not aware of it.

Question 4- How often do you visit www.researchimpact.ca?

The majority of respondents (54.8 %) visited the site rarely or never; 39.7% visited monthly; 4.1 % visited weekly and 1.4% visited daily

Question 5- Why do you visit www.researchimpact.ca?

For information on knowledge mobilization	54.2%
To learn about upcoming events	43.1%
I don't	30.6%
To seek knowledge mobilization services (connect to researchers)	20.8%
To read your blog	18.1%
To seek funding opportunities	15.3%
To seek knowledge mobilization services (connect to community/policy makers)	13.9%
Other (please specify)	11.1%
To seek knowledge mobilization internships	11.1%
To seek information on knowledge mobilization graduate courses	6.9%

Some of the “Other” responses included:

- get some good ideas that can potentially be adopted for our own KE/KM purposes
- to look at the research projects online
- to look at research summaries
- just checking out what is going on at KM in general

Question 6- Satisfaction with www.researchimpact.ca

This question asked people to rate their satisfaction with various features on our web site.

The majority of people who could rate the features were either satisfied or very satisfied with the features; and no more than 5% of respondents found anything very unsatisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Features	% Satisfied or Very Satisfied
Look and feel	65.2%
Quality of information provided	63.2%
Navigability	59.4%
Research summaries	54.4%
Links	49.2%
Contact info for knowledge brokers	40.3%
Blog	39.4%
FAQs	36.4%
Videos	28.8%
Web 2.0 tools	25.8%

RSS feeds	16.7%
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Question 7- What features would you like to see in www.researchimpact.ca?

Success Stories/examples of KM successes	67.2%
Calendar of Events	62.3%
Ask a Mobilizer (forum for questions to a KM researcher or practitioner)	45.9%
Pod casts	31.1%
Other	14.8%
More Videos	8.2%

The most prominent “Other” suggestions were for list of journal articles and books published on knowledge mobilization and related issues and to include more international examples of KMB.

Question 8- Are you aware of ResearchImpact's blog?

49.3% responded yes, while 50.7% were unaware of our blog

Question 9- How often do you visit www.researchimpact.wordpress.com either directly or via www.researchimpact.ca?

The majority of respondents rarely or never visited our blog (41.4%); 35.7% only read our blog stories by way of our monthly email newsletter; 20% read it monthly; and the final 2.8% read it weekly or daily.

Question 10- Satisfaction with the Mobilize This! blog

This question asked people to rate their satisfaction with the blog.

The majority of people who could rate the features were either satisfied or very satisfied with the blog; and no more than 6% of respondents found the blog very unsatisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Question 11- Were you aware that you can leave a comment or ask a question on any blog story?

The majority of people (52.9%) were not aware that they could comment or ask a question on our blog postings.

Question 12- Have you ever left a comment on a story you saw in Mobilize This!?

The majority of people (91.2%) have never left a comment on our blog.

Question 13- What stories or subjects would you like to see featured in future blogs?

Responses included the following suggestions:

- "If I had a wish" blog in which mobilizers [sic] brainstorm or think up any possible "wish" in which they could utilize KM in any manner. The wish may not come true, but this type of "wish" brainstorming can stimulate ideas and lead to future KM possibilities.
- Successful KT strategies
- Needs to be expanded outside York, possibly international blogs
- I am looking for clearer stories that speak to direct economic impact of knowledge mobilization
- There seem to me to be alot [sic] of organizations doing similar work to this and it would be useful to know how these organizations [sic] are working together
- Students research
- Practical application of KMb, lessons learned, professional development [sic]
- building KM into the culture of the university
- opportunities and seminars or workshops
- Always indigenous education, decolonizing methodologies, critical approaches to conducting research. Issues encountered when conducting research -- solved and unsolved.
- Consumer research topics, topics related to arts and culture, topics related to regional economic development
- Success stories ;upcoming events; research for graduate students
- Find the information and contacts useful for doing research when looking to start on a particular topic

Question 14- Would you like us to subscribe you to the monthly email version of Mobilize This!?

56.3% of respondents were already subscribed to monthly email newsletter and 26.8% requested to be added to the list

Question 15- Are you aware that ResearchImpact is on Twitter?

The majority of people (63.4%) were unaware that we were on Twitter.

Question 16- If you're on Twitter (you have signed up and have a twitter profile) have you followed ResearchImpact?

The majority of respondents (71%) were not on Twitter; 14.5 % were on Twitter but not following us; 8.7% were on Twitter and follow @researchimpact; and a final 5.8% did not know what Twitter was.

Question 17- Please rate your satisfaction with the ResearchImpact's tweets

The majority of respondents who could rate our tweets were either satisfied or very satisfied (12%) with them.

Question 18- What type of content and how frequently would you like to see ResearchImpact tweet?

Responses included the following suggestions:

- Daily
- Resources or links to resources
- New updates, opportunities, links
- There are too many ways to connect with ResearchImpact and each one provides different information. I [sic] summary of tweet topics would be useful in the monthly newsletter for those of us who do not work using twitter

Question 19- Use of Common Social Media Tools

This question asked people how often why use some of the most common social media or Web 2.0 tools.

Reading blogs and using Wikipedia, were the most common activities (40.6% read blogs on a monthly basis; and 54.5% used Wikipedia on a monthly basis).

The majority of people never used tools such as facebook (37.3%), Myspace (93.7%), flickr (62.9%), delicious (90.6%), ning (89.1%), friendfeed (93.8%) or LinkedIn (60.7%). In addition, most people never wrote blogs (79%), commented on blogs (77.8%), read wikis other than Wikipedia (50.8%) or contributed to wikis other than Wikipedia (81.3%).

Question 20- If the following social media options were offered by ResearchImpact how frequently would you use them?

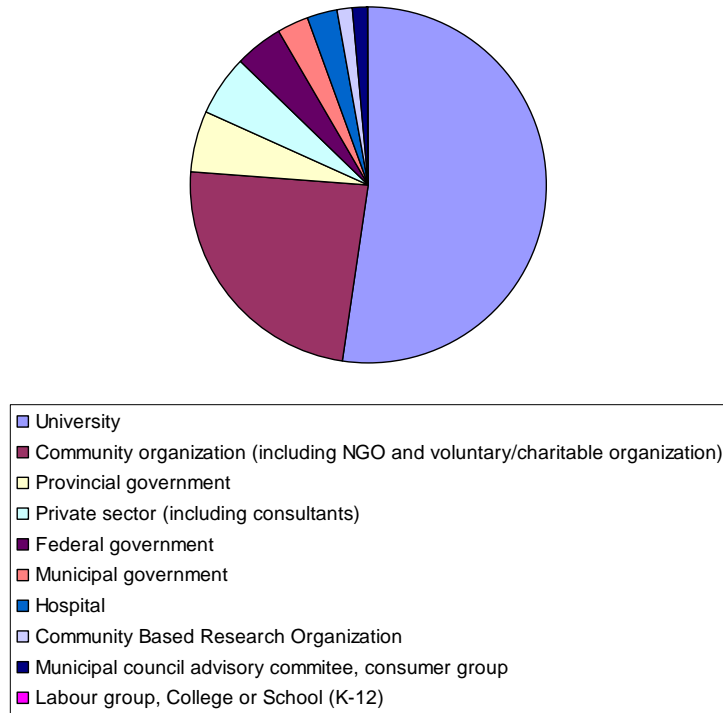
The most popular tools were:

Discussion forums	51.6% would use monthly
Collaboration tools such as document sharing, wiki	49.2% would use monthly
Connection tools such as database to find researchers, receptors, brokers, students	54.1% would use monthly

Most people (71.7%) indicated they would never use an instant chat tool.

Question 21- Affiliations

Respondent affiliations were as follows:



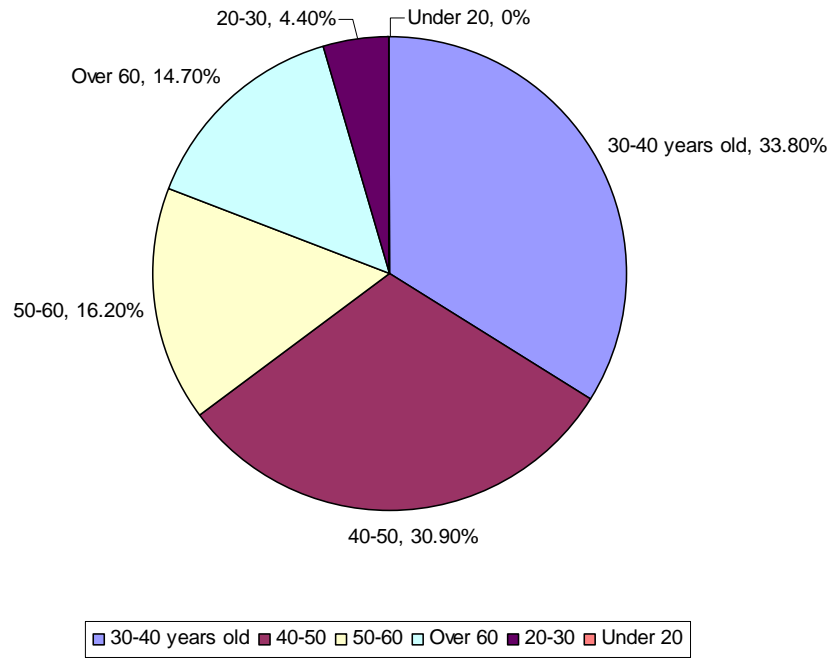
Question 22- Employment status

The majority of people were employed full time (81.3%), followed by students (10.9%), self employed (7.8%) and finally part time employees (6.3%).

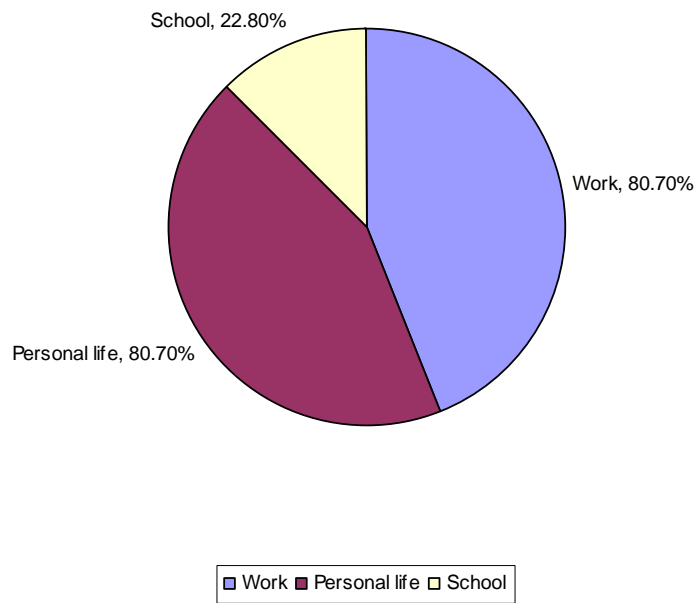
Question 23- Location

The majority of respondents worked in Canada (91.2%), with 3.2% in the UK and 1.6% in Iran

Question 24- Age



Question 25- Use of Social Media Tools for school, personal or work use



Observations

One observation from the responses that really stood out was that in general, people who answered our survey are not yet using social media or Web 2.0 tools. However, this is in contrast with how people responded to the last question, which asked whether people used these tools primarily for work, personal life or school, which indicated that most people are using these tools.

Also, the fact that people were as likely to use social media tools for work as they were for their personal life, suggests to us that while people may not be using these tools regularly at the moment, there is an interest in using these tools more regularly.

Response to user suggestions

Web feature suggestions

In the question regarding new features on our web site that users would like to see, two of the highest rated features were Success Stories/examples of KM successes, Calendar of Events, Cross disciplinary examples and more international KMb stories and examples.

Success stories/examples of KMb successes

In response to the request for more success stories and examples of KMb successes, we are currently working on adding more KMb stories to the KMb in Action section of our web site found at www.researchimpact.ca/kminaction/. We anticipate adding three more stories to this section in April and then adding regular content here over the summer of 2010.

KMb Strategies

We are currently working on a series of tool kits that will focus on a number of KMb strategies that we use in our Unit. Some examples include, how to run a research forum, how to develop clear language research summaries, developing an effective social media strategy and more. We will continue to work on these over the summer of 2010 and will be posting them on our website.

Calendar of events

We now have a calendar of events on the site at www.researchimpact.ca/resources/events/, and users can subscribe to alerts for upcoming events using the Upcoming Events RSS feed.

Cross disciplinary examples

This is a topic we often address on our blog and we direct reader to researchimpact.wordpress.com to view these stories. Two examples of this include our blog posts about the research partnership between Stephen Gaetz, Faculty of Education, York University and Bernie Pauly, School of Nursing, University of Victoria (read it [here](#)) and the

Aboriginal Policy Research Forum which brought together faculty members from four universities, as well as policy makers and citizens from across Canada (read it [here](#)).

International KMb stories and examples

We are planning to add a new regular series of posting to our blog called KMb World, which will feature stories and examples of KMb units and projects from across the world. We are currently in the process of soliciting stories and anticipate being able to share some of these stories in the coming months.

Blog story suggestions

In the question asking for stories or subject people would like to see covered in our blog, we once again received the suggestion for more international KMb stories, along with an idea for an “if I had a KMb wish” blog story, which we have plan to implement in the near future.

Another suggestion was for examples of successful KMb strategies, and in response to this, we are developing a series of KMb tool kits which will cover a variety of KMb strategies that we use, such as how to develop research summaries, how to plan a KMb event, how to set up a social media strategy, etc. We plan to post this series of tool kits or “how-to’s” on the ResearchImpact web site in the coming months.

Next Steps

Besides implementing the above measures based on the suggestions we received, we plan to conduct two more surveys of our users over the next year, as well as publish an article based on our results.