

San Francisco Public Library Online Tutorial Pilot Evaluation

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In December 2009, WebJunction and the San Francisco Public Library began a project to examine the potential for online patron instruction in public libraries. As part of this project, SFPL developed a pilot patron tutorial and launched it for public use in June of this year. During the evaluation period, 78 users completed a post-tutorial survey. This report details the results of that survey and makes recommendations for expansion of the pilot project.

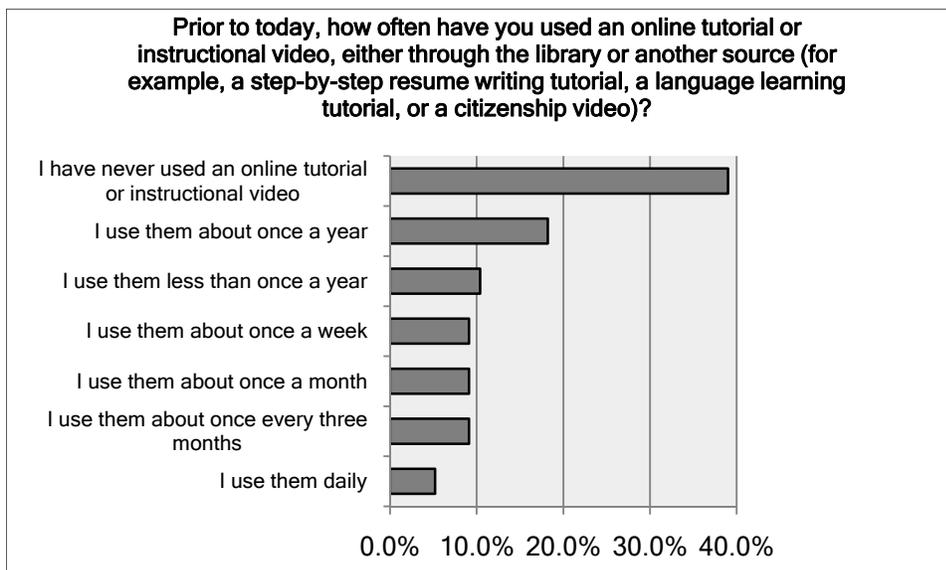
The SFPL pilot online tutorial introduced job seekers to three resources available through the library’s online resources, with the intention being that this tutorial will eventually be one piece of a larger set of tutorials geared towards job seekers. Despite its limited scope, the tutorial proved useful to the vast majority of users.

User satisfaction with tutorial

Of the 78 survey respondents, 94% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “This tutorial introduced me to new employment-related information.” And another 78% indicated that they plan to use at least one of the webpages described in the tutorial.

User receptiveness

Most of the survey respondents reported having limited or no experience using online tutorials or instructional videos, however only three of the indicated that they are “not comfortable,” using library computers, and 17 said they are “somewhat comfortable.” Seventy-four percent are comfortable or very comfortable using library computers. This suggests that the target audience for most tutorials should be patrons who have at least some experience with computers. It also indicates that there may be a population of computer users who are not exposed to existing online instructional opportunities.



Overall, the respondents expressed strong interest in self-directed online instruction, with 29.3% saying that they are, “extremely likely,” to use instructional videos or developed and offered by the library, and another 42.7% saying they are, “likely,” to use them. Only 9.3% said that it is, “not likely,” that they would use such tools.

Potential topics

Survey respondents are interested in a variety of topics. When presented with a list of potential topics for future online instructional tools, respondents expressed the most interest in additional employment-related topics. This is not surprising considering they had just concluded a job search tutorial. However, the second and third most popular topics related to using the library (placing holds and renewing materials, and using databases to find articles), and all topics listed received significant interest. For example, even the least popular of the options, “Preparing your child to read,” was of interest to 29.5% of respondents.

If the library begins offering additional online tutorials or instructional videos, which of the following topics would be most interesting to you? Please mark all that apply.		
Employment-related topics (creating a resume, job searching online)	60.3%	47
Using the library (placing holds, renewing library materials, or searching the catalog, etc.)	55.1%	43
Finding useful articles or information using databases	52.6%	41
Basic computer skills (using computers, email, basic online searching, etc.)	48.7%	38
Social networking or ecommerce (blogging, facebook, ebay, craigslist, etc.)	43.6%	34
Obtaining social services	35.9%	28
Preparing your child to read (activities for promoting early literacy and brain development, etc.)	29.5%	23
Other	7.7%	6

Respondent characteristics

Of the 78 respondents, 97.4% are current members of SFPL. Nearly 46.8% are employed. The respondents are from all over the city, but the majority claim Ortega, Chinatown, Main, Ocean View, or Sunset Beach as their home library branch.

Speakers of other languages

Forty-five of the of respondents report speaking a language other than English at home. Of those, 40 selected Mandarin, Cantonese, or both, and the remaining selected Spanish or Russian. While the sample size was limited, it is worth noting that the speakers of other languages were more likely to indicate they had never used an online tutorial or instructional video before (30.6% of English only speakers, 45.5% of speakers of other languages), and more likely to indicate that they would use them if available (83.4% of respondents that are speakers of other languages are likely or extremely likely to use online instructional tools if made available, compared to 62.5% of respondents who only speak English).



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