

# Benefits and Impact Achievements – SUNCAT 2013

## Introduction

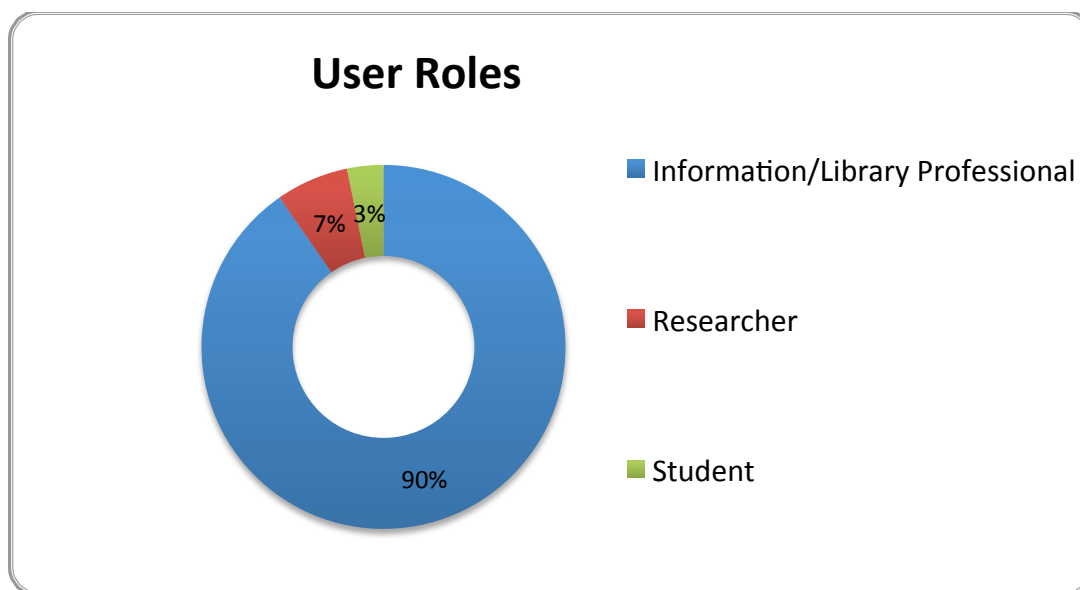
SUNCAT conducted an online survey between November 2012 and January 2013 to ascertain information about:

- Who is using the service
- How the service is being used
- How SUNCAT benefits users
- The current level of satisfaction with the service
- How users would like to see the service develop

## Uptake by discipline, role and purpose

### Role

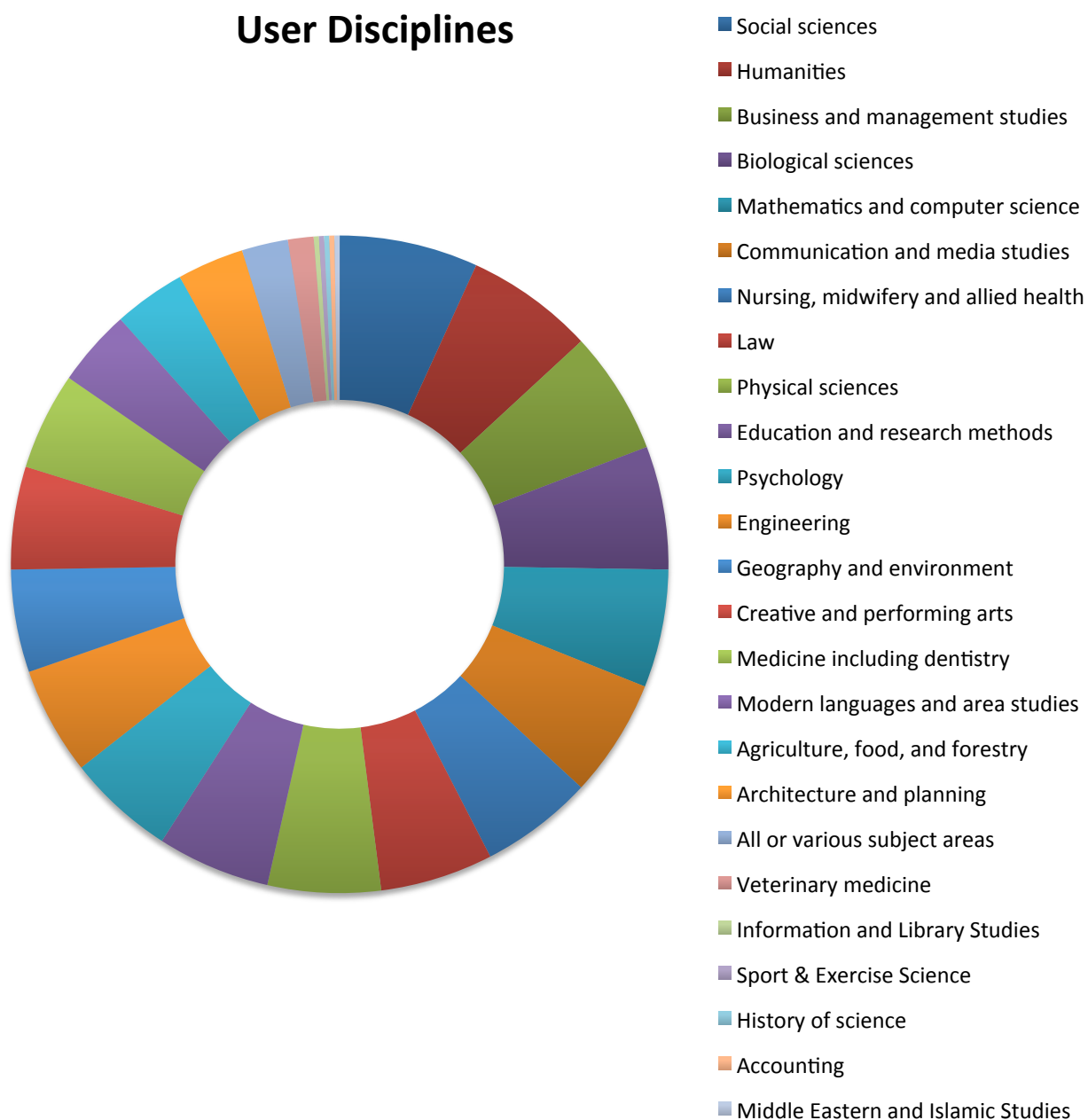
Of the 62 respondents most of them, 90%, identified themselves as Library/Information Professionals. A further 7% identified themselves as Researchers and 3% as Students.



### Discipline

Seventy-three percent of respondents reported working across more one than one subject area, with a large number working across a wide range of disciplines. Of the responses falling under 'Other', a significant percentage stated that their use of SUNCAT was library work and multi-discipline. These results reflect the high number of respondents who identified themselves as information professionals (see above), who often work in a multi-disciplinary environment.

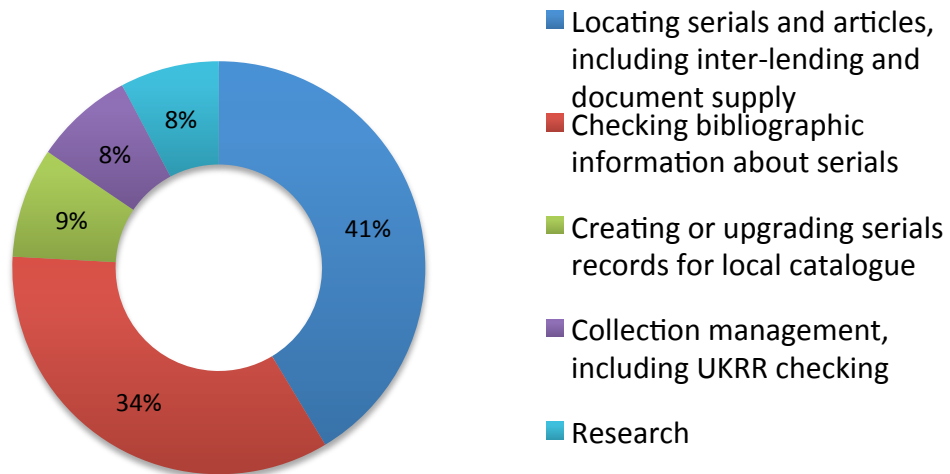
## User Disciplines



## Purposes for Using SUNCAT

The most popular reason selected for using SUNCAT, with 41% of the responses, unsurprisingly related to locating serials and articles. However, a high number of respondents also indicated that they used the service to check bibliographic information, with smaller numbers selecting purposes such as creating or upgrading bibliographic records for their local catalogue; supporting collection management or general research.

## Purposes for Using SUNCAT

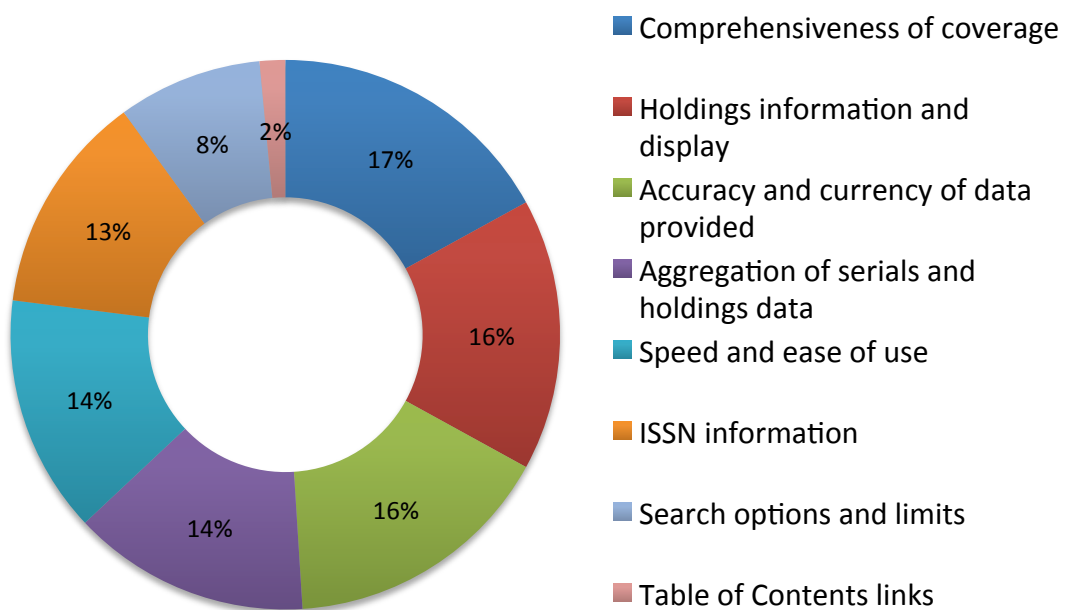


## Key Features of SUNCAT

The most popular features highlighted by respondents were the comprehensiveness of coverage; the serials holdings information and display and the accuracy and currency of the data. Almost as popular features were the aggregation of serials and holdings data which closely relates to the coverage of the service and also the speed and ease of use of SUNCAT.

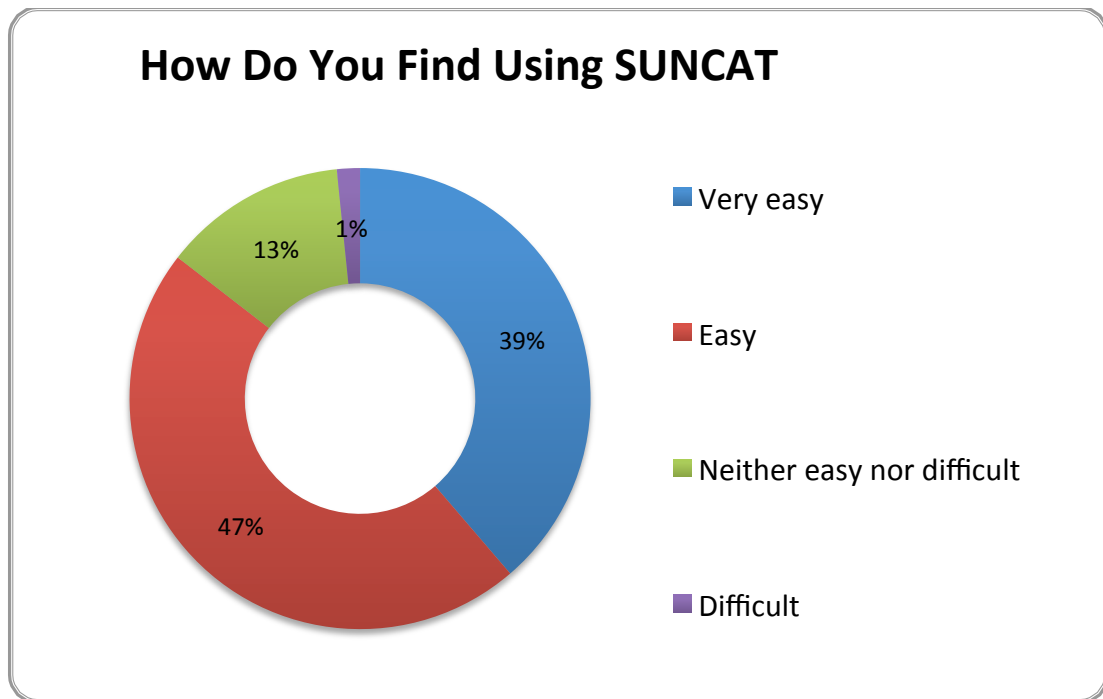
*“Simple for new user who is a rank amateur”*

## Key Features of SUNCAT



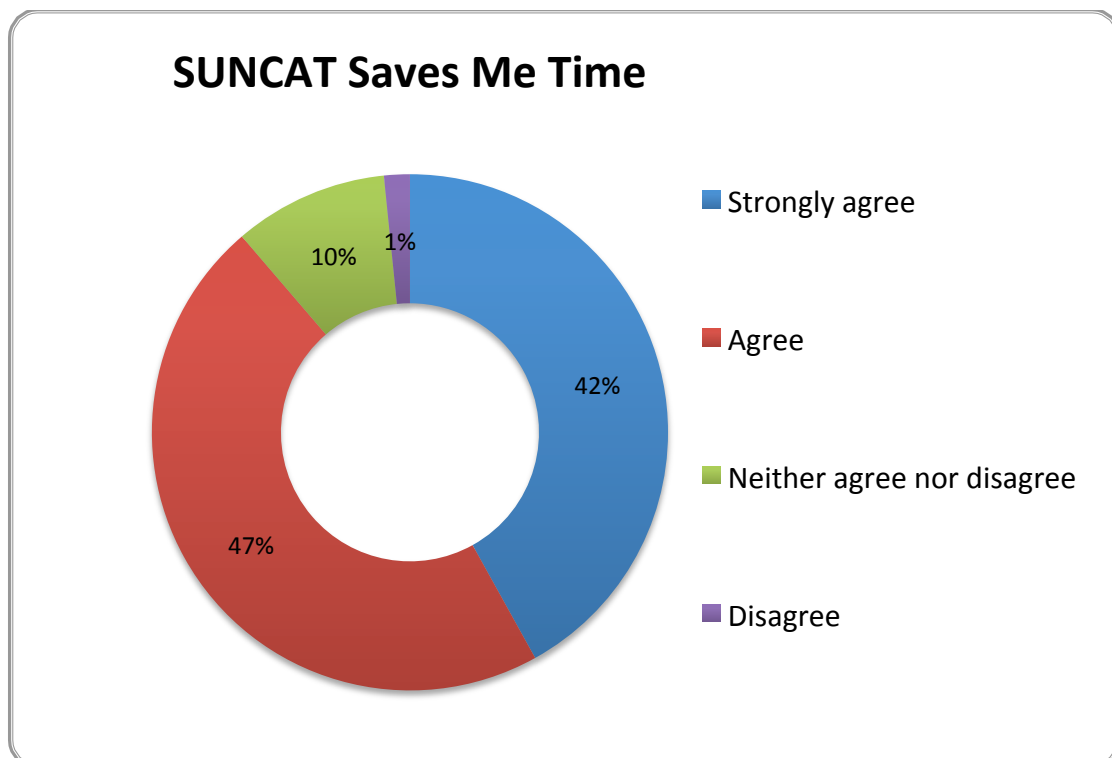
## Ease of use

The majority of respondents, 86% reported that SUNCAT was either “Easy” or “Very Easy” to use. Only one respondent indicated that the service was “Difficult” to use.



## Cost and or Time Saving

Eighty-nine per cent of respondents either “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” that their work would take longer without SUNCAT. Only 1% reported that their work would not take longer.



The main reasons reported as to how or why SUNCAT saved respondents' time included:

- That it provides an aggregation of serials information and holdings in one source
- That it provides comprehensive coverage and an overview of collections across the UK research community
- The speed and ease of use of the interface compared to similar services
- That it provides reliable and quality information and serials records for creating or upgrading local catalogue records
- That it is a dedicated source of serials information
- That it distinguishes between print and electronic holdings

*"Best site for UK national aggregation of serials holdings data"*

*"I'd be searching in more than one place which would take longer. Plus SUNCAT gives a picture across the research landscape of holdings and specialisms which is very useful."*

*"I'm an inter-library loans librarian and you're my first port of call when looking for articles from journals which British Library is unable to supply. Your coverage is better than COPAC and SUNCAT is easier to browse."*

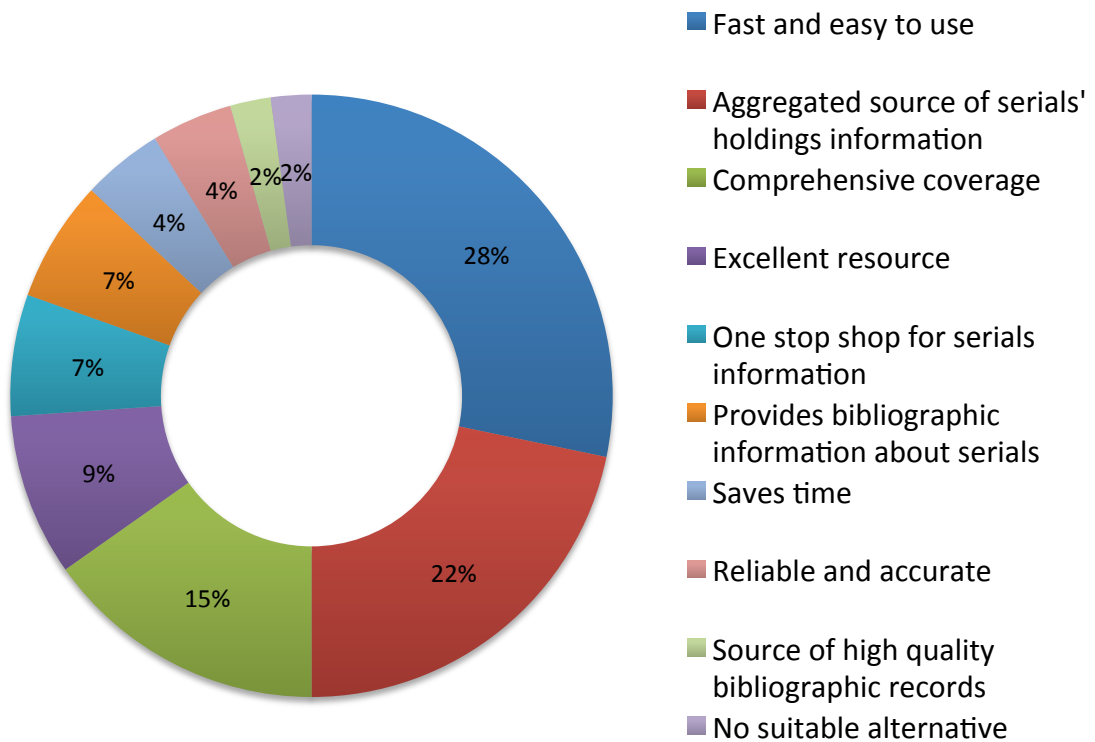
*"It is such a comprehensive reference source it would take me much longer to check information elsewhere."*

*"I am the journals library assistant, charged with upgrading our serials records - SUNCAT is an invaluable one-stop shop. I also use it for locating article requests for inter-library loan - the interface is much speedier than COPAC."*

### **Perceived Quality of Information (Relevance, Coverage and Usefulness)**

Almost all of the respondents, 97%, indicated that they would recommend SUNCAT to others. The main reasons reported for recommending SUNCAT are displayed in the following chart.

## Why Would You Recommend SUNCAT?



*“SUNCAT is easy to use and its coverage of UK serial holdings is great.”*

*“Very trustworthy, fast and comprehensive. Records are to a very high standard.”*

*“Whenever new ILL librarians ask about how to locate journals in the UK I point them towards SUNCAT because it is comprehensive and easy to use.”*

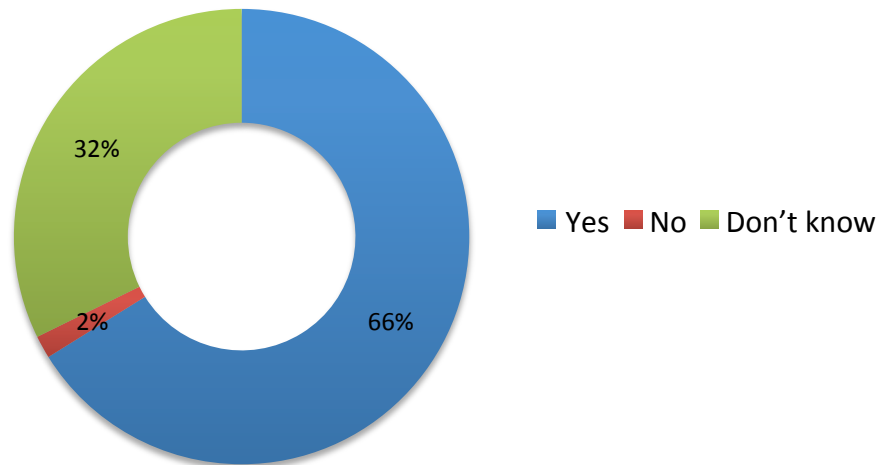
*“Very easy to use; clear, accurate records; time-saving as don't have to search numerous catalogues or databases to locate a library which holds a particular journal.”*

Two respondents indicated that they would not recommend SUNCAT. One reported that they didn't find it necessary as the British Library provides a document delivery service for articles and the other stated that they didn't find the service useful for locating older serials.

### Alternative Services if SUNCAT were not available

Sixty-six per cent of respondents indicated that they would need to use an alternative service if SUNCAT was not available. A further 32% did not know of a suitable alternative.

## Would You Use an Alternative if SUNCAT Was Not Available



The most popular alternatives listed included:

- COPAC
- OCLC/WorldCat/FirstSearch
- British Library
- Search25
- Individual library catalogues
- Library of Congress
- SALSER
- ARLIS
- British Union Catalogue of Music Periodicals
- Google
- Other unspecified union catalogues or lists

*"Find Suncat invaluable. If it wasn't available I would try to source an alternative. Don't know what though!"*

*"COPAC, LOC etc. not comparable though in depth or accuracy."*

*"We also use Copac - more difficult to use than SunCat and the display is inferior. However, if there was an alternative, I would indeed use that probably in addition to Suncat to verify the accuracy of the results."*

### Desirable Improvements for SUNCAT

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to suggest how SUNCAT could be improved or developed in the future. Twenty-one per cent of respondents provided some suggestions and the most popular of these related to the following themes:

- Provide more detailed holdings information, e.g. the exact holdings and shelfmarks for all libraries

- Improve the interface, e.g. make a clearer distinction between print and electronic holdings; move the search box to the homepage; provide the ability to be able to compare records in the same screen
- Improve deduplication
- Provide additional information, e.g. display the suppliers of electronic holdings; highlight where library holdings are for reference only or where there are licence restrictions on lending

The remaining suggestions centred around the following improvements:

- Improve searching, e.g. provide ability to limit by print/electronic journals
- Increase number of contributing libraries



## Summary and Comments

Although the survey received a good number of completed responses the results should be considered in the context of the respondents' grouping or designation. Almost all of the respondents were library or information professionals with only a handful of end-users, e.g. researchers and students. In this respect the survey provides a useful insight into the use of SUNCAT as a professional tool and the benefits for these users and their opinions on potential improvements for the service.

SUNCAT's primary role as a centralised source of serials information and UK holdings was confirmed, with 75% of responses stating, either locating serials and articles, or checking bibliographic information, as the primary purposes for using the service.

The key features highlighted by the respondents included SUNCAT's comprehensive coverage; its aggregation and display of serials information and UK holdings; the accuracy and currency of the data provided and the speed and ease of use of the service. The importance given to these features corresponds with the type of usage of SUNCAT mentioned above.

The vast majority of respondents stated that SUNCAT is not only easy or very easy to use but that it also saves them time. Further, 97% indicated they would recommend the service to others.

In relation to desirable improvements for the service, several of these relate to the data provided by the SUNCAT Contributing Libraries. These include the detail of holdings information, plus the shelfmarks of the holdings supplied. EDINA does aim to display as much information and detail as possible, but unfortunately, has no control over the level of information its Contributing Libraries record in their local catalogues and subsequently supply to SUNCAT. This proviso also applies to the suggestions about displaying additional information about lending restrictions etc. If SUNCAT Contributing Libraries were able to supply this type of licensing information, linked to their holdings, EDINA would certainly investigate including it on SUNCAT.

EDINA is currently in the process of redeveloping the SUNCAT platform and is happy to report that we will be addressing a number of the suggested improvements to the interface and search, including:

- Moving the search functionality to the homepage of the service to integrate the service and website more closely
- Providing a print/electronic serials limit to the search functionality to enable users to pre-filter their search by format
- Adding print/electronic icons to the holdings display to enable users to more quickly and easily distinguish between print and electronic holdings

The suggestion to enable users to display, and therefore compare, two records side by side does not form part of the plans for the current redevelopment. However, this along with the provision of any additional information as requested above will be considered and investigated by EDINA and where feasible, added to a list of requirements to be included in future development work.

With regard to the remaining suggestions from respondents EDINA is continuing to expand the coverage of the service, with a number of new libraries to be added throughout 2013.

However, one other improvement requested, that of better deduplication, is particularly difficult to achieve. Duplication is a common problem across union catalogues. The major reason for duplication in SUNCAT is due to the variation in data provided by the Contributing Libraries. This variation in data makes it extremely difficult to match records for the same title together. The issue of variable serials data quality pre-dates SUNCAT and will continue into the foreseeable future. EDINA is aware of the importance of this issue and is continuing to make efforts to improve the quality of data in SUNCAT. Further, in the next phase of the redevelopment of the service, which will involve replacing the current Aleph database, we plan to investigate improving our existing matching algorithm and thereby hope to reduce the level of duplication in the longer term.