

IGERT.org Functionality Survey Results

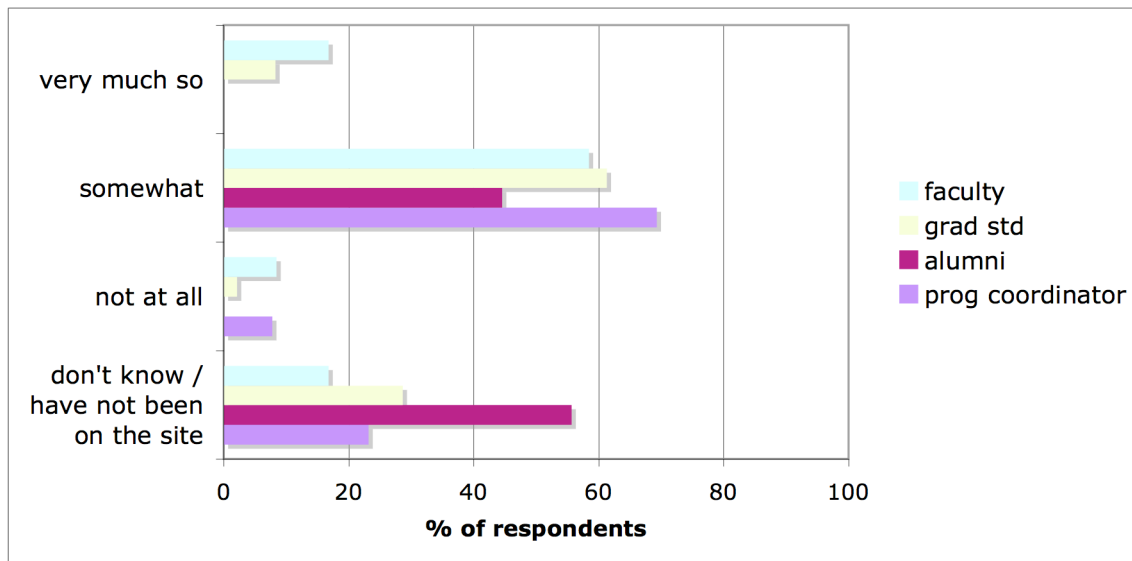
This survey was designed to gather feedback for the next wave of IGERT.org development. IGERT.org community members were asked to comment on existing functionality and to provide suggestions for useful additions in the areas of resources, networking and collaboration.

- 94 members responded to the survey. The majority of respondents were graduate students (53%), with nearly equal percentages of faculty (14%), alumni (19%) and program coordinators (14%).

Resources

IGERT.org provides resources to the IGERT community via three main site sections: Library, News, and Showcase. We asked members to rate their satisfaction with current resources, to provide feedback on how these resources could be improved, and to suggest additional resources they would be interested in seeing on the site.

- Are the current resources that appear in the IGERT.org Library, News, and Showcase useful or interesting?



The majority of members reported that the resources were “somewhat interesting”, with a few saying they were “very” or “not at all” interesting. However, a significant proportion of respondents had not yet visited the Library, News or Showcase sections of the site.

- What suggestions do you have for improving the resources on the site?

The most common user suggestion was to make the resources more user-friendly. Specifically, members suggested making the sections more interactive, reducing the number of clicks necessary to navigate, and making it simpler to post resources.

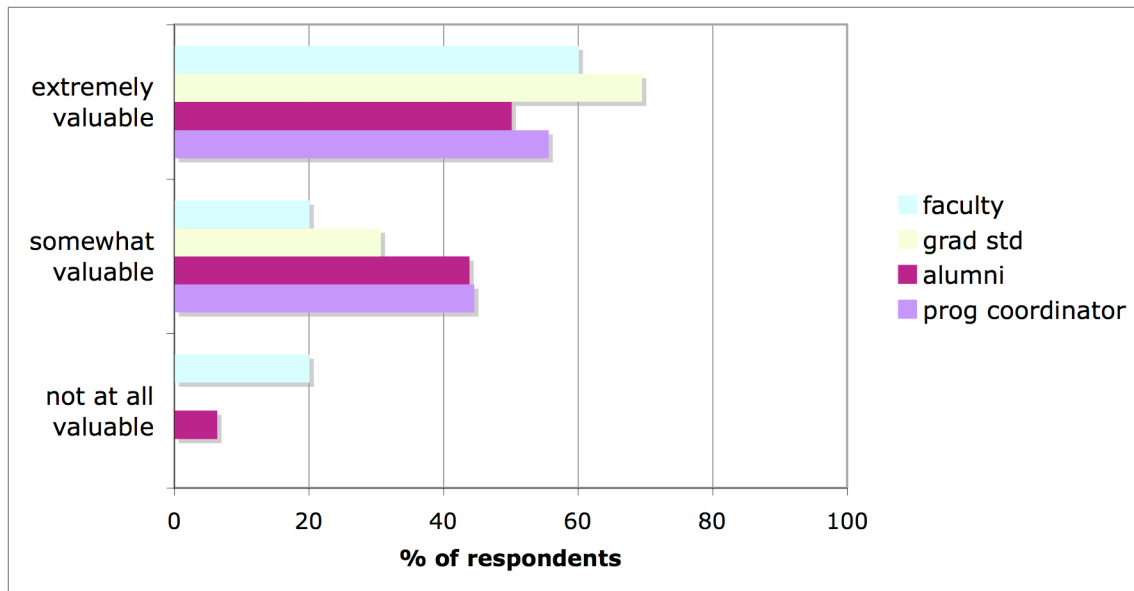
- What types of resources would be most interesting to you?

The types of resources members found interesting tended to vary by role (e.g., faculty, grad student, etc.). Faculty members reported a need for resources to help with administrative issues and recruiting, along with a need for access to literature on interdisciplinarity. Graduate students shared this need for interdisciplinary literature, but also noted a strong need for resources related to job seeking and learning more about the work of others in the community. Alumni, similar to graduate students, reported a need for career and job-seeking information and advice, and a desire to network with other community members. Program coordinators described the need for resources to assist with administrative duties, such as completing the annual report and designing IGERT websites. They also noted a desire to network with people from other IGERTs.

Networking

Prior feedback suggested that IGERT members may be interested in using IGERT.org to network. We asked members several questions in order to assess how to best meet their needs for networking on the site.

- How valuable would it be for us to incorporate a job board into IGERT.org?



The majority of respondents felt as though a job board would be a useful addition to the site, though 20% of faculty reported that these features would not be valuable at all.

- Mentoring

Two-thirds of the alumni and half of the faculty respondents indicated that they would be willing to speak with graduate students from other IGERT projects about career opportunities and externships. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of alumni and faculty responded that they would be willing to answer queries that fell into their area of expertise.

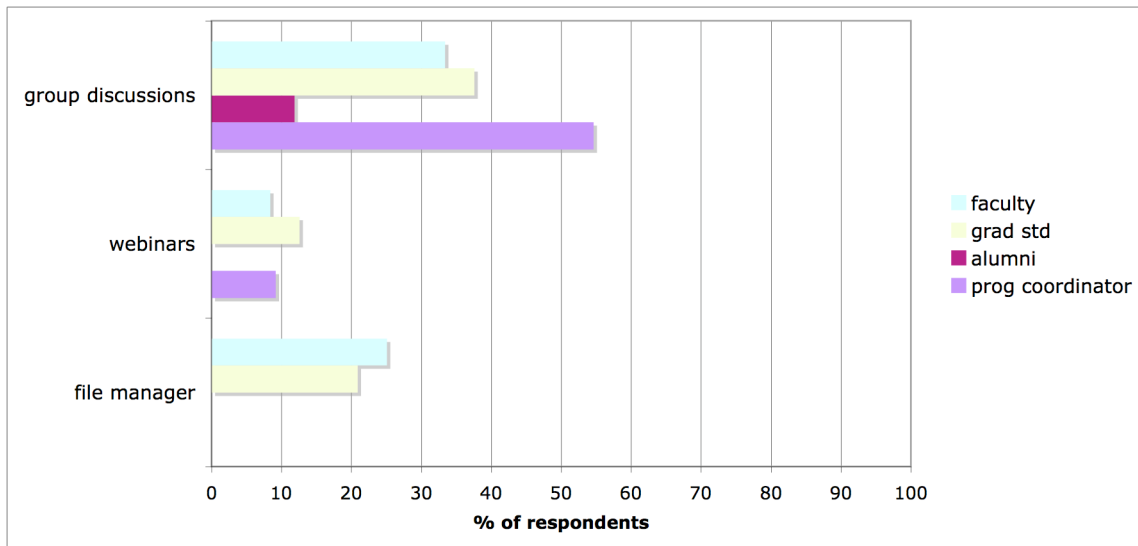
Graduate students were asked if they'd be interested in participating in an online mentoring system with alumni and faculty, and the majority was split between yes and maybe, while a smaller proportion said no.

When asked to report the types of resources or advice they'd be willing to share with students, faculty and alumni said they'd provide career advice, job seeking strategies, assistance with discipline-specific questions, and information on finding internships and post docs, among others. These topics coincided with the types of questions graduate students said they would be interested in asking of alumni and faculty.

Collaboration

IGERT.org currently provides members with the opportunity to collaborate via Groups and Projects Share (webinars). We sought feedback on members' use and impressions of these functionalities, as well as suggestions for future improvements.

- Which of the following IGERT.org tools have you used for collaboration?



The majority of members had not used any of the collaborative functionalities. Program coordinators were the most active when it came to group discussions, though faculty and graduate students more consistently used each of the functionalities.

- What suggestions do you have for improving these functionalities?

Members cited two main areas for improvement: enticing people to be more active on the site in order to make it more meaningful to collaborate in this way, and making the tools more user-friendly.

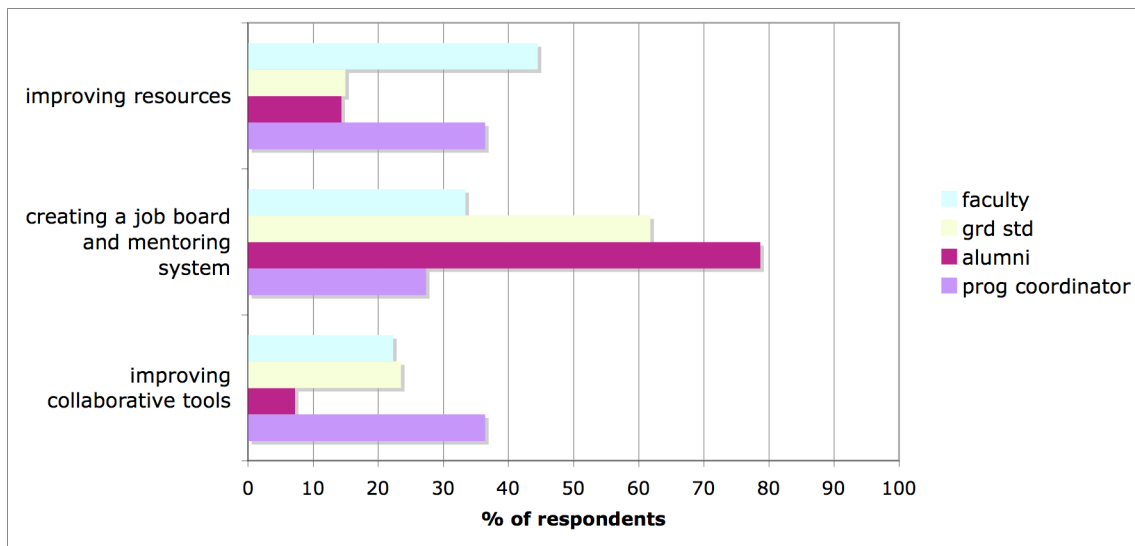
- What new interactive functionalities would you like us to provide to enhance online sharing, communication, or collaboration?

The feedback provided here was quite varied, from requests for chat functionality to a need for improvements in the visual layout to suggestions for adding in third-party tools like Google Docs.

Summary Question

This survey focused on three main areas: resources, networking, and collaboration. In order to best meet the needs of our users, we sought to understand the relative emphasis members place on these features.

- As we look to the future, where would you like to see the most investment?



Graduate students and alumni clearly favored the addition of networking tools such as a job board and mentoring system. Faculty showed a slight preference for improving site resources, while program coordinators were nearly evenly split between the three.