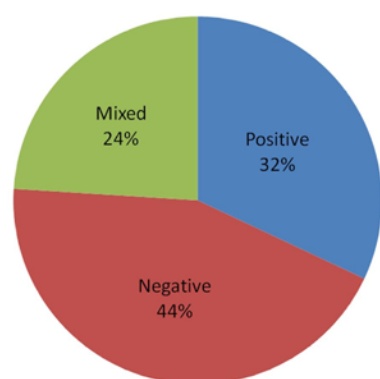


# Optimizing Intellectual Workflow

Authors: Jay Bhatt, Dana Denick, Peggy Dominy, Tim Siftar

**Abstract:** Several new platforms designed to support collaboration between researchers have launched in the past year, giving rise to a need for evaluative criteria and a basis for recommendation by Drexel Librarians. Faculty and PhD researchers in the Drexel University community were surveyed for their intellectual workflow habits and collaborative platform preferences. The data collected from the survey was then analyzed to establish any trends among researchers.

Would you prefer to accomplish all these functions through a single integrated platform?



### Sample Responses

*I don't see this as offering any synergy. So I don't see a clear advantage.*

*It would take some getting used to, but as long as I had remote (home) access, yes.*

*I suppose there could be a benefit to that. However, the logistics of a single platform are hard to envision if your research interests are diverse and/or interdisciplinary.*

*No - I prefer loose integration of distributed systems where each does what it does best.*

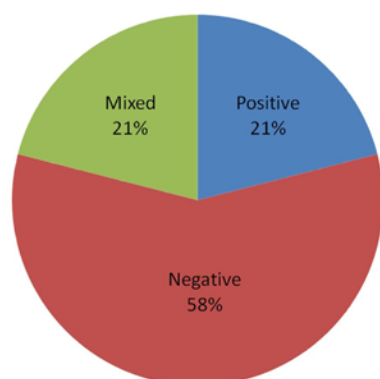
*Yes, I would like to be able to manage files, collaborations, and communications through an intuitive easy-to-use on-line tool*

*The tools that exist are pretty good- the cost needs to be low (or zero) and the learning curve low.*

*If it is intuitive and efficient.*

*Not until teleportation is part of the platform.*

Do you find social networking tools helpful toward research activities leading to publication? Why or why not?



### Sample Responses

*Not really. I'm interested in high-quality long-term collaborations, which involve face-to-face character evaluation.*

*Yes, many of my research ideas come from conversation and email discussions.*

*Not really - most people use social networking for fun, not work-related interaction. Additionally, many of the people I interact with are not totally open to new technologies (that wouldn't even use a shared Google calendar!)*

*Yes, because sometimes it can lead to contacts and collaborations that wouldn't have occurred through other media.*

*So far none of the web-based tools have been helpful in this regard but there may be some future potential there and for this reason I'm maintaining a linked in account.*

*No. My experience with multi-site collaborations is limited. Many individuals in my area of research are easily accessible at conferences or are known personally.*

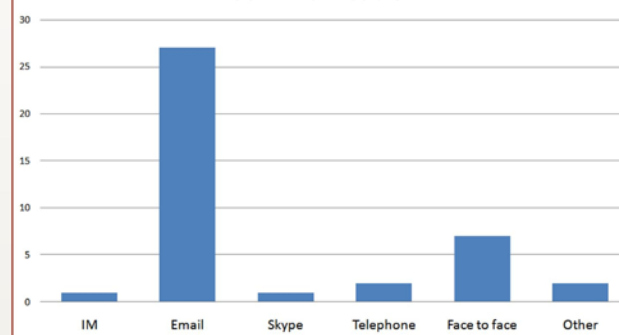
*I do not see them as professional forums. Listservs are a form of professional social networking forums.*

*Do not know what those are- if email is one, then yes I use that extensively for research activities*

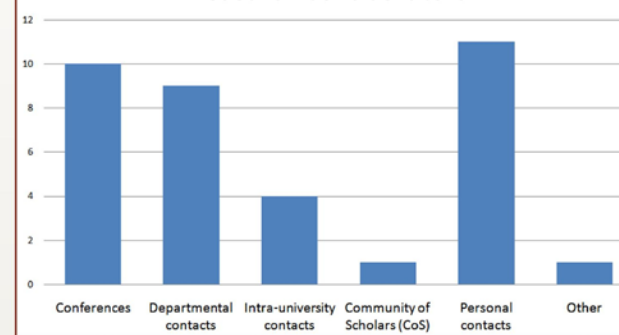
*Yes I have met most of my collaborators via social networking tools, mainly Second Life, FriendFeed and blogs.*

*No - haven't tried much, but they seem to be too much effort to set up and learn the interface*

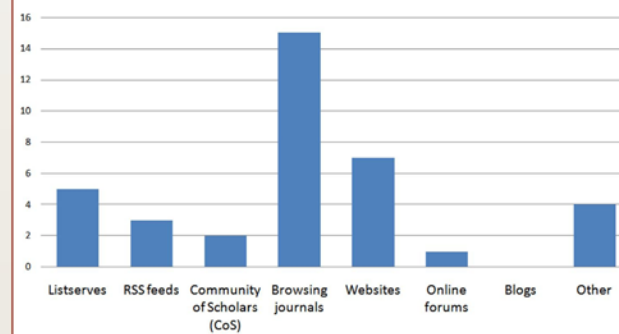
### Predominant Means of Research Communication



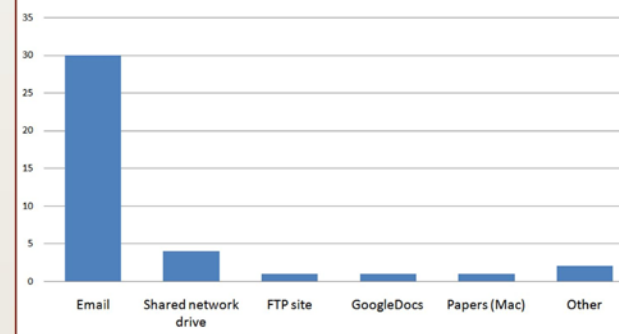
### Predominant Means of Identifying Research Collaborators



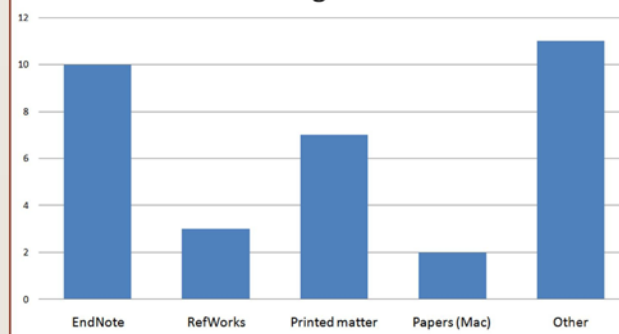
### Predominant Means of Maintaining Research Awareness



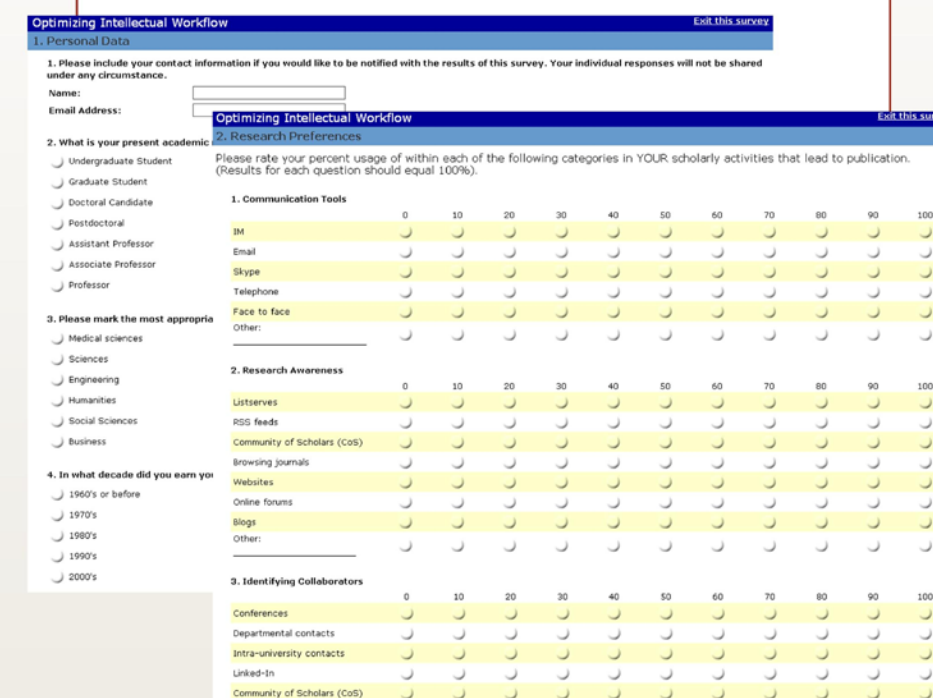
### Predominant Means of Filesharing and Version Control



### Predominant Means of Citation Management



### Survey Sample



**1. Personal Data**

Please include your contact information if you would like to be notified with the results of this survey. Your individual responses will not be shared under any circumstance.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Research Preferences**

Please rate your percent usage of within each of the following categories in YOUR scholarly activities that lead to publication. (Results for each question should equal 100%).

**1. Communication Tools**

Tool	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
IM	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skype	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telephone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Face to face	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**2. Research Awareness**

Tool	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Listservs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RSS feeds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community of Scholars (CoS)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Browsing journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online forums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blogs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**3. Identifying Collaborators**

Method	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Conferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Departmental contacts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intra-university contacts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Linked-In	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community of Scholars (CoS)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Conclusion

Analysis of the responses from the survey of faculty and graduate students resulted in several interesting findings. 21% of the respondents thought social networking tools are helpful toward research activities. 21% tend to prefer single integrated platform for collaborative purposes. Many faculty members and graduate students were not aware of collaborative platforms. Some expressed an unwillingness to spend time to learn these tools, stemming from the fact that many have already established their collaboration networks and work habits. Email and personal contacts still appear to be the predominant means of communication. Traditional approach of browsing journals seems to be a predominant means of maintaining research awareness. Although, how this is done in an electronic environment would be an appealing study.

Undergraduate students also completed the survey. Not surprisingly, analysis of the responses shows that undergrad students tend to find social networking tools more helpful toward research activities. This observation suggests these digital natives are gearing up for a very different research environment.

Since many faculty were unaware of collaborative platforms, we could raise awareness, in partnership with developers, through instructional workshops, online tutorials, small group consultations and individual consultations to assist faculty on using and integrating these tools in their research more effectively.