



## User satisfaction survey 2013-14 report



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# Introduction

Mimas ran the annual Jisc Historic Books user satisfaction survey from 20 December 2013 to 28 February 2014. A pop up prompt appeared after logging into the platform and 84 responses were received from the community. This is a report on the results of the survey.

Results from last years survey (2012-13) have also been included for comparison. There were 162 responses last year.

## Summary

We were pleased to see that 82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their work would take longer if Jisc Historic Books was not available (compared to 65% in 2012-13 survey). Also, 78% of respondents advised they strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend the service (compared to 61% in 2012-13 survey).

However, while it's clear the collections themselves are considered very valuable, and the ability to easily view rare texts online and the fact it saves researchers a visit to the holding library is appreciated, some comments indicated that access to the content via the Jisc Historic Books interface did not meet their needs. Some people advised that although they would recommend the service it was because it was the only method of access to the material for them, not because they liked using it.

We asked how people found using Jisc Historic Books and while 40% said it's very easy or easy, 36% advised they found it difficult or very difficult. This is similar to the findings from the 2012-13 survey and indicates work needs to be done to improve usability, however, how people find using it may also depend on what they're trying to do with it.

When asked what support and training was required, 33 out of 110 responses were for improved help pages/user guides. There were 31 selections for 'none' though and a further 13 for 'other' with several comments stating respondents didn't want help using the system they wanted a more user-friendly interface instead. Short introductory videos received 15 requests.

Responses to the question of how Jisc Historic Books could be improved confirmed key areas that we're already aware of such as the PDF download process, viewing images clearly, limited advanced search options and search results relevance.

We're currently building a new platform using different search software which we hope will address many of the issues raised. It will include a specially designed user interface to make searching for and viewing texts a lot easier. Feedback from this survey has already fed into the development process for the new platform and helped to confirm we're on the right track with the features and functionality we're developing. The new platform will be released in summer 2014.

# Questions

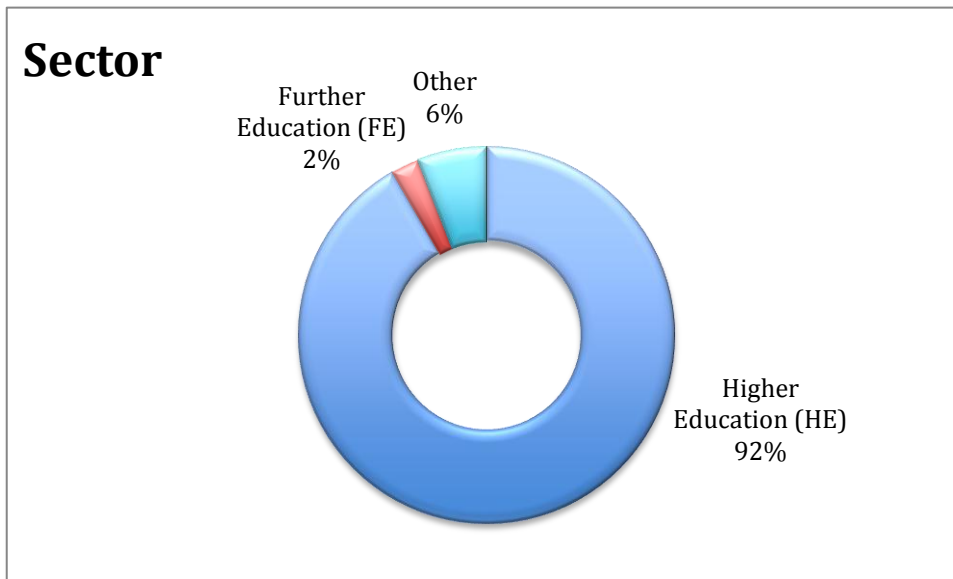
## About You

The 'About You' section of the survey asked for information on which sector the respondents studied or worked in along with their role and subject area.

### Q1: In which sector do you study/work?

Most respondents indicated they were in the HE Education sector (92%) and of the few who chose the 'other' category (6%) they mostly indicated they were independent researchers or PhD candidates.

This is consistent with the 2012-13 survey results where most respondents were from the HE sector (83%).

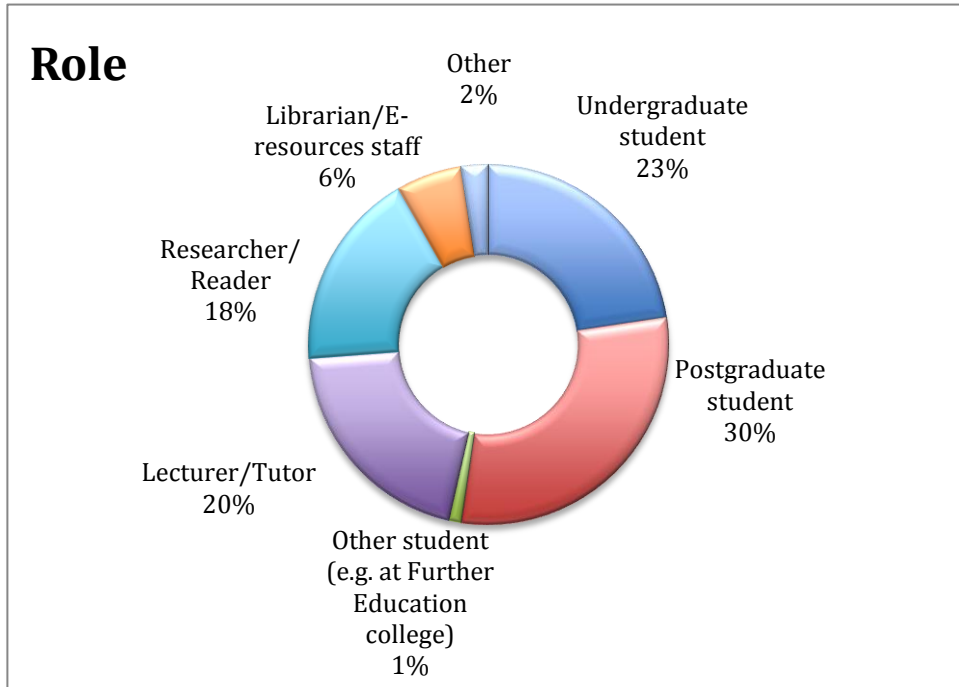


| Category                                  | No. of responses |                   |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
|   | 2013-14          | 2012-13           |
| Higher Education (HE)                     | 77 (92%)         | 134 (83%)         |
| Further Education (FE)                    | 2 (2%)           | 8 (5%)            |
| Other Education (e.g. Sixth Form College) | 0 (0%)           | 3 (2%)            |
| Research Council                          | 0 (0%)           | 0 (0%)            |
| Other                                     | 5 (6%)           | 17 (10%)          |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>84 (100%)</b> | <b>162 (100%)</b> |

**Q2: In which role are you using Jisc Historic Books?**

Over half of the respondents indicated they were students (54%) with 20% selecting lecturer/tutor and 18% researcher/reader. Of the few who selected the 'other' category (3%) most were independent researchers.

In the 2012-13 survey, the largest groups indicated they were students (44%) and researcher/readers (31%).

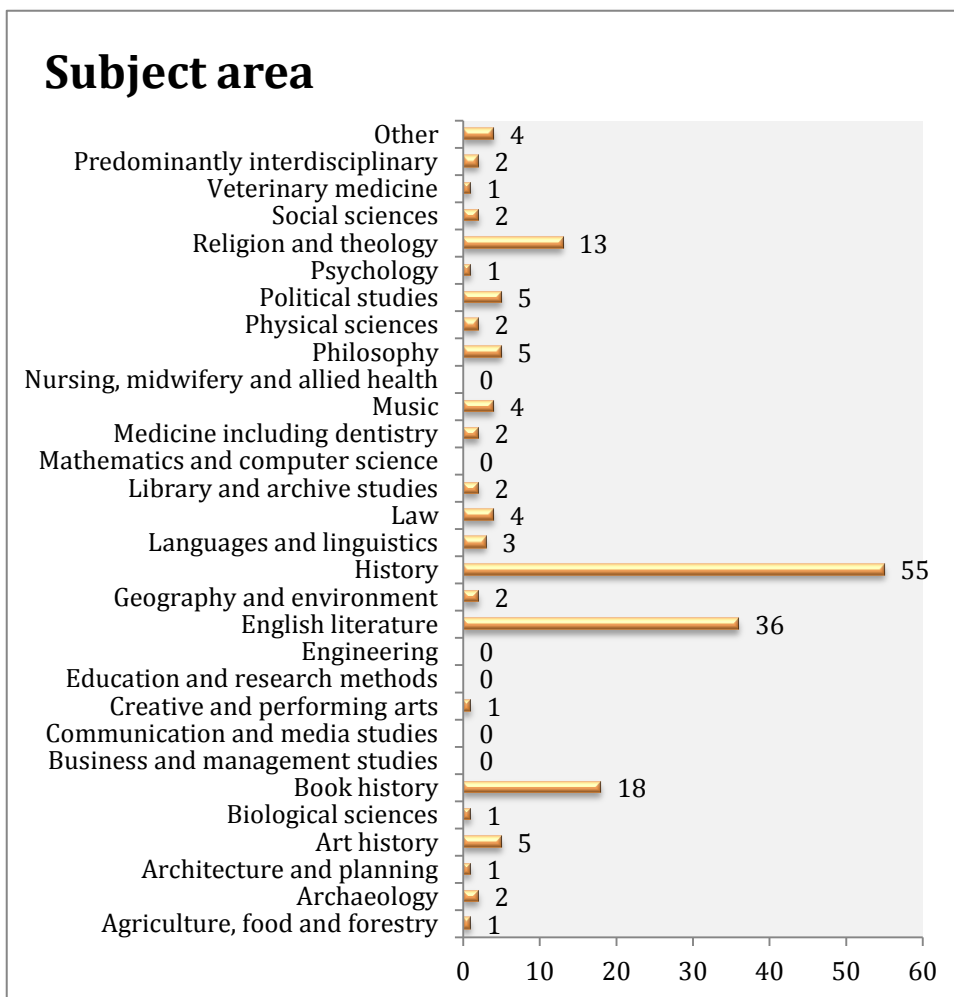


| Category                    | No.of responses  |                   |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                             | 2013-14          | 2012-13           |
| Undergraduate student       | 19 (23%)         | 27 (17%)          |
| Postgraduate student        | 25 (30%)         | 43 (26%)          |
| Other student               | 1 (1%)           | 2 (1%)            |
| Lecturer/Tutor              | 17 (20%)         | 22 (14%)          |
| Researcher/Reader           | 15 (18%)         | 50 (31%)          |
| Librarian/E-resources staff | 5 (6%)           | 13 (8%)           |
| Other                       | 2 (2%)           | 5 (3%)            |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>84 (100%)</b> | <b>162 (100%)</b> |

### Q3: Please indicate your subject area

Respondents could select as many subject areas as appropriate and there were a total of 172 selections from 84 respondents. The majority indicated their subject area was History (55) followed by English Literature (36) then Book History (18) and Religion and Theology (13).

This is consistent with the findings from last years survey, where there were 320 selections from 162 respondents and the majority advised their subject area was History (114), followed by English Literature (68).



### Using the service

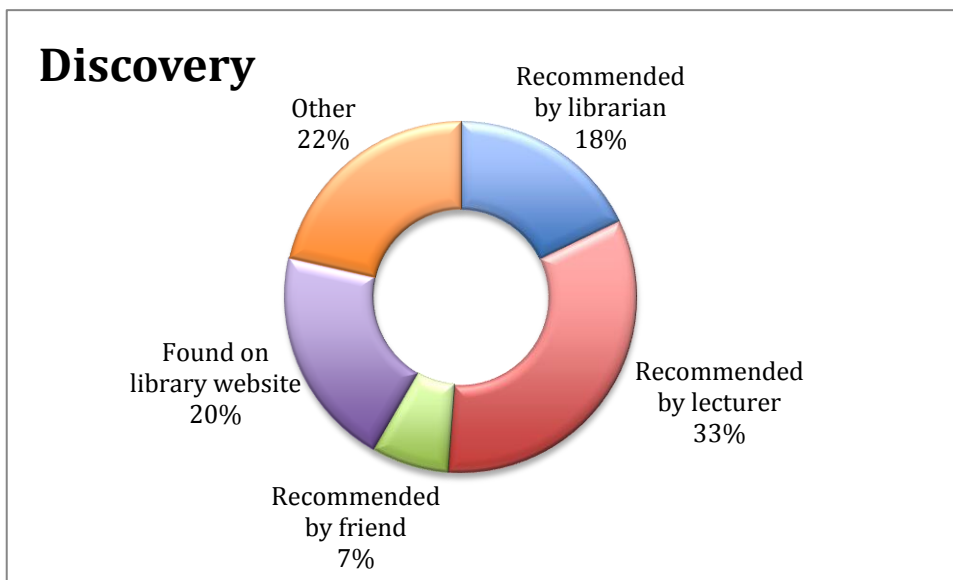
This section of the survey asked about respondents use of the platform, including how easy to use it is, what they like or do not like about it and whether they would recommend it.

**Q4: How did you discover Jisc Historic Books?**

The most common discovery method was through a recommendation from their lecturer (33%), followed by the 'other' category (22%). Many who selected 'other' advised they had been long time users of EEBO or ECCO and simply transferred to using Jisc Historic Books when their institution changed their subscription.

The library is another key method of discovery as some respondents advised they discovered it on their library website (20%) or it was recommended by a librarian (18%).

In the 2012-13 survey the most common methods of discovery were found on library website (33%) and recommended by lecturer (28%).

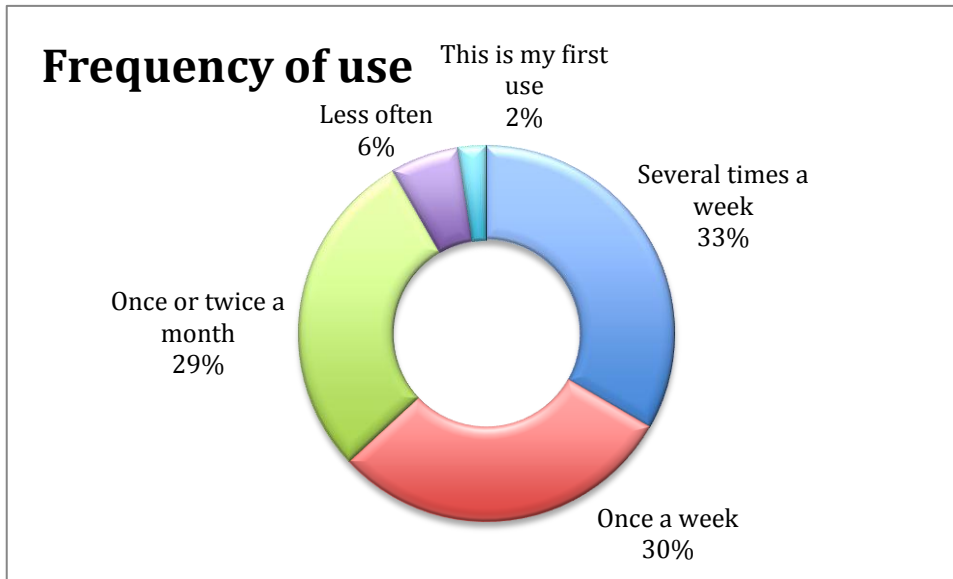


| Category                     | No.of responses  |                   |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                              | 2013-14          | 2012-13           |
| Recommended by librarian     | 15 (18%)         | 22 (13%)          |
| Recommended by lecturer      | 28 (33%)         | 45 (28%)          |
| Recommended by friend        | 6 (7%)           | 8 (5%)            |
| Found on library website     | 17 (20%)         | 53 (33%)          |
| Discovered via google search | 0 (0%)           | 1 (1%)            |
| Other                        | 18 (22%)         | 33 (20%)          |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>84 (100%)</b> | <b>162 (100%)</b> |

**Q5: On average, how often do you use this service?**

Over half of the respondents (63%) said they were regular users of the platform, advising they use Jisc Historic Books either several times a week (33%) or once a week (30%) with a further 29% indicated they use it once or twice a month.

This is a fairly similar usage pattern to 2012-13, where 54% of respondents advised they used it once or several times a week and 27% used it once or twice a month.



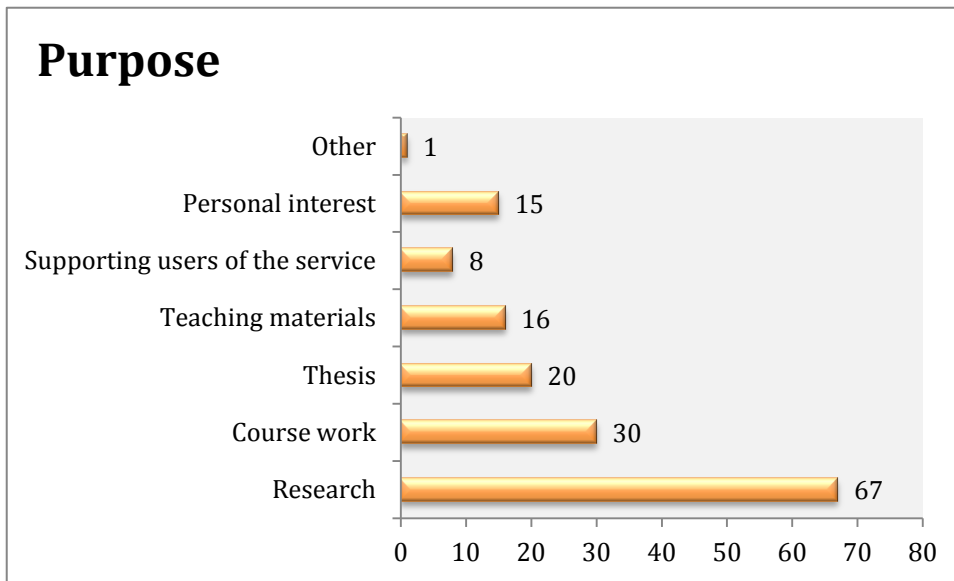
| Category              | No.of responses  |                   |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                       | 2013-14          | 2012-13           |
| Several times a week  | 28 (33%)         | 64 (40%)          |
| Once a week           | 25 (30%)         | 23 (14%)          |
| Once or twice a month | 24 (29%)         | 44 (27%)          |
| Less often            | 5 (6%)           | 14 (9%)           |
| This is my first use  | 2 (2%)           | 17 (10%)          |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>84 (100%)</b> | <b>162 (100%)</b> |

**Q6: For what purpose do you use Jisc Historic Books?**

More than one purpose could be selected for this question and a total of 156 options were selected by 84 respondents. Research (66) was the most common purpose selected followed by course work (30), and thesis (20).



This is similar to the 2012-13 survey where research was the main purpose selected (it received 137 out of 295 total selections from 162 respondents).



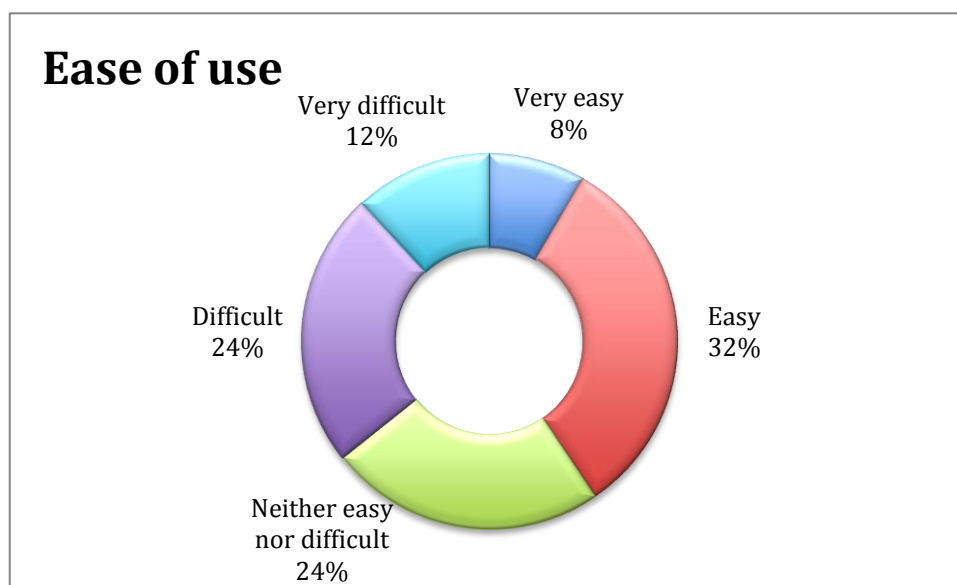
#### Q7: How do you find using Jisc Historic Books?

While 40% of respondents indicated they found Jisc Historic Books either easy or very easy to use, 36% indicated they found it difficult or very difficult, with a similar proportion (24%) finding it neither easy nor difficult.

Of the 34 respondents who found it easy or very easy to use, most were undergraduate students (13) and postgraduate students (8). Of the 30 respondents who found it difficult or very difficult to use, most were lecturer/tutors (10) and postgraduate students (9).

These results are consistent with the findings from the 2012-13 survey, where 39% found it easy or very easy, 34% found it difficult or very difficult and 27% said it was neither easy or difficult to use.

How people find using it may depend on what they are trying to do, with undergraduate students perhaps not requiring the more advanced, detailed searching that lecturers, postgraduate students and researchers often require.



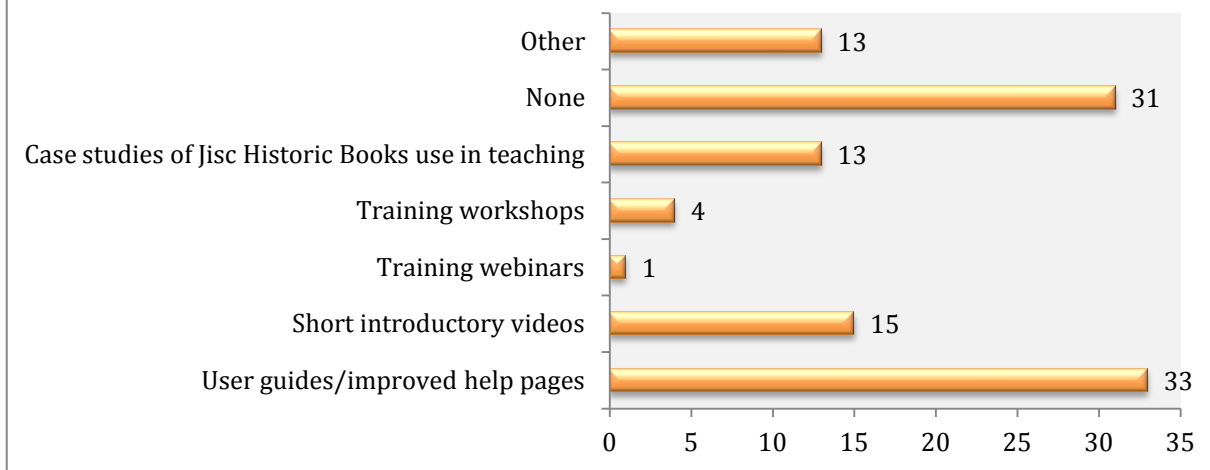
| Category                   | No.of responses  |                   |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                            | 2013-14          | 2012-13           |
| Very easy                  | 7 (8%)           | 12 (8%)           |
| Easy                       | 27 (32%)         | 50 (31%)          |
| Neither easy nor difficult | 20 (24%)         | 44 (27%)          |
| Difficult                  | 20 (24%)         | 36 (22%)          |
| Very difficult             | 10 (12%)         | 20 (12%)          |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>84 (100%)</b> | <b>162 (100%)</b> |

#### Q8: What support and training would you like for Jisc Historic Books?

More than one option could be selected for this question and 110 responses were received. There was a fairly even split between those who wanted user guides/improved help pages (33) and those who indicated they didn't need any support or training (31). Some of those who selected the 'other' category said the interface needs to be more user-friendly rather than them needing support or training for it.

This is consistent with the findings from the 2012-13 survey, where user guides/improved help pages were the most popular option and comments for the 'other' category indicated some respondents would prefer the system to be more user-friendly rather than requiring training on it. A new platform is currently in development which we hope will help to address how user-friendly the interface is.

## Support and training



### Q9: What do you like about Jisc Historic Books?

We received 45 responses to this optional free text question. Many respondents valued remote access to rare texts which they may not otherwise have access to, full text searching, the wide coverage and the fact it saves them from travelling to libraries holding physical copies.

A selection of comments can be found below.

HE, postgraduate student:

The chronological range of publications is excellent and the coverage by subject area is marvellous.

HE, undergraduate student:

Being able to search by full-text is the absolute winner as it reveals unexpected sources.

HE, undergraduate student:

It provides access to books that I can't get in any other way. It's great to see the original print and illustrations rather than a transcript. The little green box with the search pages highlighted is an excellent idea. The ability to download page images is great.

HE, Librarian/e-resources staff:

Users can access hard to find books fairly easily e.g. rare edition of a William Blake title that our University cannot access within its own physical stock. From my own research into a local country house library, finding books on the shelves but being able to read online. This means physical damage is minimised on actual books but the printed information is still available for me to use and research further. From a local history view (I've published on a small circle of male and female seventeenth-century Cheshire readers) Jisc HB was vital for finding books read that no longer exist in a collection but only in lists of books borrowed.

**Q10: We are designing and building a new platform for Jisc Historic Books. To ensure it meets your needs, please tell us how we can improve on the current platform (e.g. improvements to specific features or suggestions for additional ones).**

We received 50 responses to this optional free text question. The key areas mentioned by several respondents are:

- delays/failures in receiving PDF downloads
- difficulties viewing page images clearly (cluttered viewer, clunky zoom, no proper full screen view)
- quality of full text (some OCR is poor quality)
- speed (slow returning results and loading images)
- volume information (missing from bibliographic information on results page)
- additional advanced search options

The new platform we are building will address most of these issues. The quality of the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) full text, however, is not something we have any control over though. The full text has been given to us by the data providers rather than generated ourselves. For ECCO it's the same OCR that powers the full text searching in the Cengage platform, the difference being that we expose it in the interface so researchers can see where the errors are and adjust their searches accordingly.

A selection of comments can be found below.

HE, undergraduate student:

Better display of search results; a search returns several pages of similar results without sufficient information in the summary display to distinguish between bibliographic variants. More facets/advanced search features to narrow search results would also help. The ability to search by ESTC number would be especially wonderful.

HE, researcher/reader:

Easier downloads, and plain text - rather than page images - of items. Being able to correct the inevitable errors in OCR'd text.

Other, researcher/reader:

Difficulties in working out which edition or printing one is seeing. The downloading is frustrating, so I'm delighted to hear that you are changing that.

Other, researcher/reader:

Enable opening of search result links in new tabs, and use of stable links in search results so easier to save to favourites. Instant PDF downloads Full screen viewing online.

FE, librarian/e-resources staff:

Make it faster. Relax your policy about only transcribing first editions -- often the later editions are more important.

HE, postgraduate student:

Quality of many scans are poor (assuming many come from microfilm) / navigation for zooming in and out could be easier / descriptions of items could be provided in greater detail, such as inclusion of contemporary readers marks, anything about the binding, etc. I know this is a lot of work but it would bring the database to a new level.

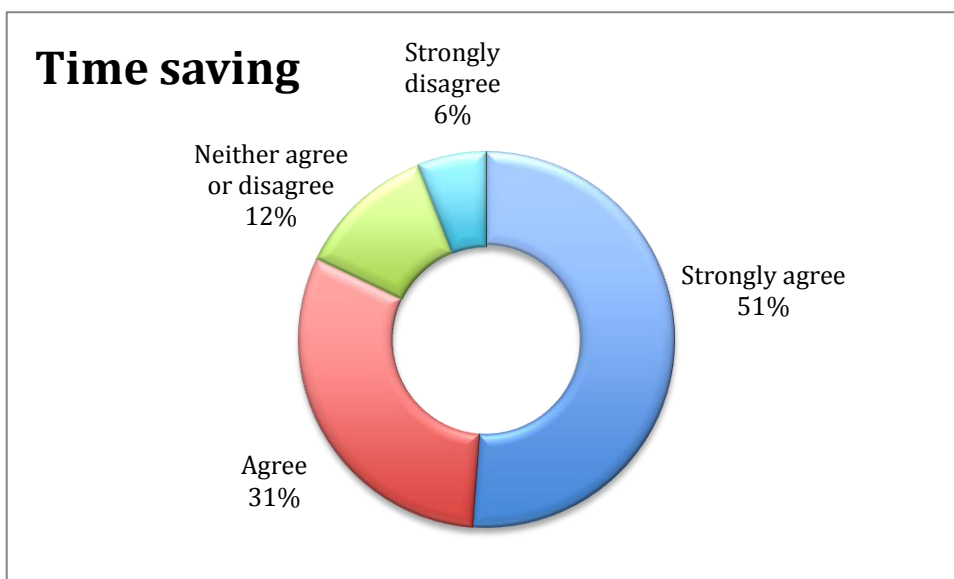
HE, postgraduate student:

Permanent URLs, and books displayed on the page rather than with some sort of pop-up window. And some sort of crowd-sourcing to fix the awful OCR.

**Q11: My work would take longer if Jisc Historic Books were not available.**

The majority of respondents (82%) agreed or strongly agreed their work would take longer if Jisc Historic Books was not available. Of the respondents who strongly disagreed (6%), some had accessed EEBO or ECCO via other providers previously and advised their work would be faster using the alternative platforms.

This is an improvement from last years survey where 65% strongly agreed or agreed their work would take longer if Jisc Historic Books were not available.



| Category                  | No.of responses  |                   |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                           | 2013-14          | 2012-13           |
| Strongly agree            | 43 (51%)         | 63 (39%)          |
| Agree                     | 26 (31%)         | 43 (26%)          |
| Neither agree or disagree | 10 (12%)         | 29 (18%)          |
| Disagree                  | 0 (0%)           | 8 (5%)            |
| Strongly disagree         | 5 (6%)           | 19 (12%)          |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>84 (100%)</b> | <b>162 (100%)</b> |

A selection of reasons can be found below.

HE, postgraduate student:

It would be less complete - often I wouldn't even be aware of the resources I was missing. In the case of books I am specifically looking for, I wouldn't have the time and money to go to libraries where the originals were available.

HE, librarian/e-resources staff:

Users have such amazing resources available to them and people are astounded when you can say we don't have it in stock but you can access it here at JHB. I evangelize to other librarians about it. For my own local history research, without JHB I would be able to find titles from COPAC or the British Library catalogue but would then have to make journeys to libraries that contained the books I needed. With JHB, it's like having an historic library, the Bodleian or the John Rylands at one's fingertips.

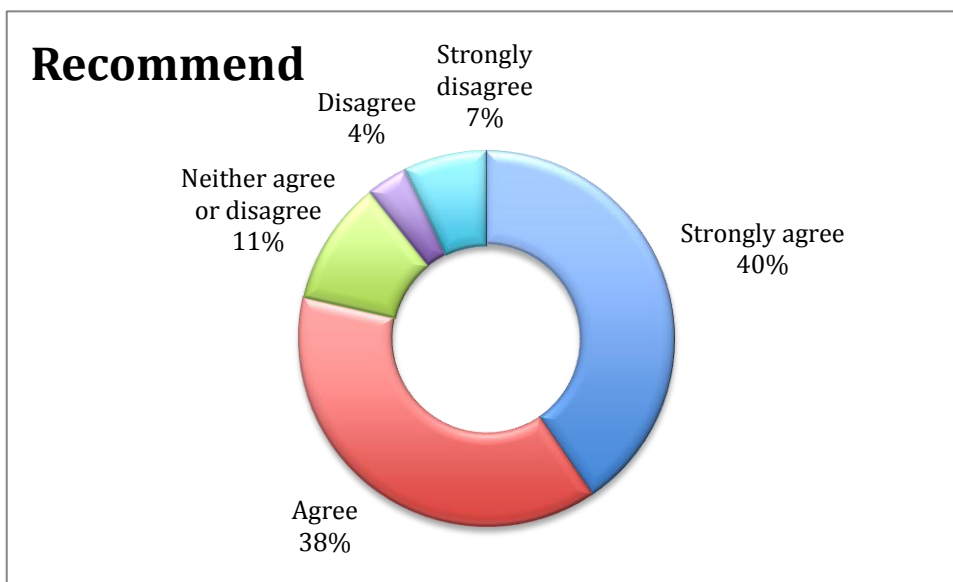
HE, undergraduate student:

Largest collection online, prevents issues of travel & gaining access to physical collections, can quickly browse items to see if they are useful, can view multiple copies of same item.

**Q12: I would recommend Jisc Historic Books to others.**

Just over three quarters of respondents (78% ) indicated they would recommend Jisc Historic Books to others with only 11% of respondents advising that they would not recommend it. Of the 11% who said they neither agreed or disagreed about recommending it, some comments indicated that while they value the content highly they did not like the interface. Others commented that it was the only method of access to the content for them, so there was no alternative.

This is an increase in likelihood of recommendations from the 2012-13 survey, where 61% agreed or strongly agreed they would recommend Jisc Historic Books. It's also a decrease in the number of respondents who advised they disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would recommend the service as 20% selected these options last year.



| Category                  | No.of responses  |                   |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                           | 2013-14          | 2012-13           |
| Strongly agree            | 34 (40%)         | 63 (39%)          |
| Agree                     | 32 (38%)         | 35 (22%)          |
| Neither agree or disagree | 9 (11%)          | 31 (19%)          |
| Disagree                  | 3 (4%)           | 15 (9%)           |
| Strongly disagree         | 6 (7%)           | 18 (11%)          |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>84 (100%)</b> | <b>162 (100%)</b> |



A selection of reasons can be found below.

Other, researcher/reader:

Access to rare material and access to little-known but fascinating works. Also, being able to read contemporary works as they appeared to their first readers.

HE, researcher/reader:

Because the material it holds isn't easily accessible elsewhere.

HE, lecturer/tutor:

I would recommend it for its convenience but would hesitate to do so for more computer illiterate people as the interface is not at all intuitive.

HE, postgraduate student:

it's not a question of recommending, since there are no alternatives.

**Q13: In the future we may be looking for volunteers to share their opinion of, or tell us how they use, Jisc Historic Books and/or other Mimas services. This will help us improve our services. If you are willing to participate, please enter your email address below.**

Thank you to everyone who provided their contact details. We have already contacted people who were kind enough to leave their details to ask if they would like to join our User Group to advise on decisions for the new platform.

## Thank you

We would like to thank everyone who completed the survey for taking the time to provide this valuable feedback. All comments have been reviewed by the Jisc Historic Books team and are already informing the development decisions we are making for the new platform, and the support and training we provide for it, to ensure that Jisc Historic Books meets the needs of the community.

We're keen to hear your feedback at any time so please contact our helpdesk at [historicbooks@mimas.ac.uk](mailto:historicbooks@mimas.ac.uk) or complete the feedback form in Jisc Historic Books to let us know what you think.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Jisc Historic Books team