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Public Policy 291A: Survey Methods  
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## Analysis of pilot data

### **Abstract**

This project looks at how conspiracists conduct research, paying particular attention to which resources and institutions they trust, what emotions they feel in the course of conducting research, and where they most frequently go to conduct research. I was also interested in their own self-perception as it related to conducting research. Conspiracism was measured using the Conspiracy Mentality Questionnaire. Although this is a pilot project (60 respondents) and thus cannot demonstrate generalizable results, the pilot data indicate that, in general, people who consider themselves “researchers” tend to trust institutions (libraries, archives) over news organizations, mainstream and fringe alike; felts a variety of feelings over the course of conducting research; and prefer to conduct their research online. Further, they tend to think of themselves most commonly as “critical thinkers.”

Initially, I had some trouble getting responses for my questionnaire, having posted it on smaller subreddits (subject-specific subsections of the forum website “reddit.com”) without much response. I posted the survey on five larger subreddits, ultimately: r/UAP (dedicated to “unidentified aerial phenomena,” and whose rules insist that posts be “low on speculation, high on facts,”), r/SpecialAccess, (“a community dedicated to uncovering Special Access Programs of the last 50 years”), r/Intelligence (dedicated to news about spies, intelligence, etc.), r/ConspiracyFact (“for conspiracy theories that have substantial evidence to back them up,”), and r/UnresolvedMysteries (devoted to unsolved mysteries). These subreddits are mostly conspiracy-leaning, except for r/UnresolvedMysteries and r/Intelligence, which are two of the larger subreddits in this group of five. In this paper, I will first analyze the pilot data according to

insight it could give into my research questions. At the end of this paper, I will go into what I have learned from this process and how I will be revising my survey.

My research questions are as follows:

1. Which resources and institutions do individuals who demonstrate high conspiracism (i.e., those who score highly on the Conspiracy Mentality Questionnaire [CMQ])<sup>1</sup> trust? How does this compare to the sources trusted by individuals with mid-level and low conspiracism?
2. What emotions do individuals who demonstrate high conspiracism most often experience at the beginning and in the midst of the research process? How strongly do they feel these emotions? How does this compare to those who do demonstrate mid-level and low conspiracism?
3. Where do individuals who demonstrate high conspiracism most often go to conduct research? How does this compare to those who demonstrate mid-level and low conspiracism?

I will refer to each of these questions when discussing the relevant section(s) of the survey, as RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3.

The first question in this questionnaire asks how often an individual does research, with one option being “I don’t do research.” This question acts as a filter question,<sup>2</sup> so that when a respondent indicates that they did not do research, the survey automatically ends. I received four

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Bruder et al., “Measuring Individual Differences in Generic Beliefs in Conspiracy Theories Across Cultures: Conspiracy Mentality Questionnaire,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 4 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00225>.

<sup>2</sup> Sheila B. Robinson and Kimberly Firth Leonard, *Designing Quality Survey Questions* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2019), Kindle Edition, p. 219.

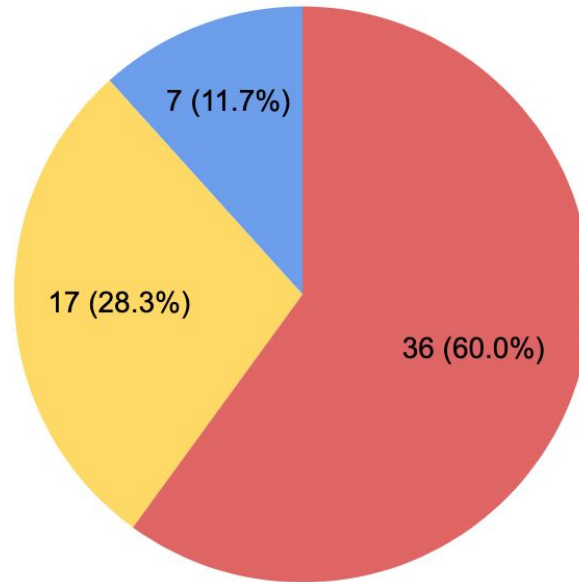
of these responses out of 64 total responses, meaning that some null values had to be removed from the dataset before working with it.

To test for conspiracism, I used the Conspiracy Mentality Questionnaire (CMQ) devised by Bruder et al. to be a cross-cultural diagnostic for conspiracism. The CMQ is composed of five questions, rated on a five-point Likert scale, from agree to disagree. Respondents who indicate agree or strongly agree for 60% or more of the questions can be considered to score highly. Respondents who indicate disagree or strongly disagree for 60% or more of the questions can be considered to have low scores. Other combinations or distributions can be considered mid-level scores. 36 of the 60 survey respondents (60%) displayed high conspiracism, 17 survey respondents (28.33%) displayed mid-level conspiracism, and seven survey respondents (11.67%) displayed low conspiracism. High CMQ scorers may occasionally be referred to as HCMQ, mid-level as MCMQ, and low as LCMQ. Having distributed the survey on two large non-conspiratorial forum websites (r/Intelligence and r/UnresolvedMysteries), I expected there to be a higher number of mid- and low-level CMQ scores. However, both r/Intelligence and r/UnresolvedMysteries could be said to be tangentially related to conspiratorial thinking, so in a future iteration I may try to post the survey on very non-related research areas. Ideally, and in the final iteration, I would have a more balanced distribution of CMQ scores across respondents. For the purposes of this paper, however, I will be treating the scores as though they are--mostly--evenly distributed across high, medium, and low.

Total number of respondents w/ high CMQ scores	Total number of respondents w/ mid-level CMQ scores	Total number of respondents w/ low CMQ scores
36 (60%)	17 (28.33%)	7 (11.67%)

## CMQ Scores

● High CMQ Scores    ● Mid-level CMQ Scores    ● Low CMQ Scores

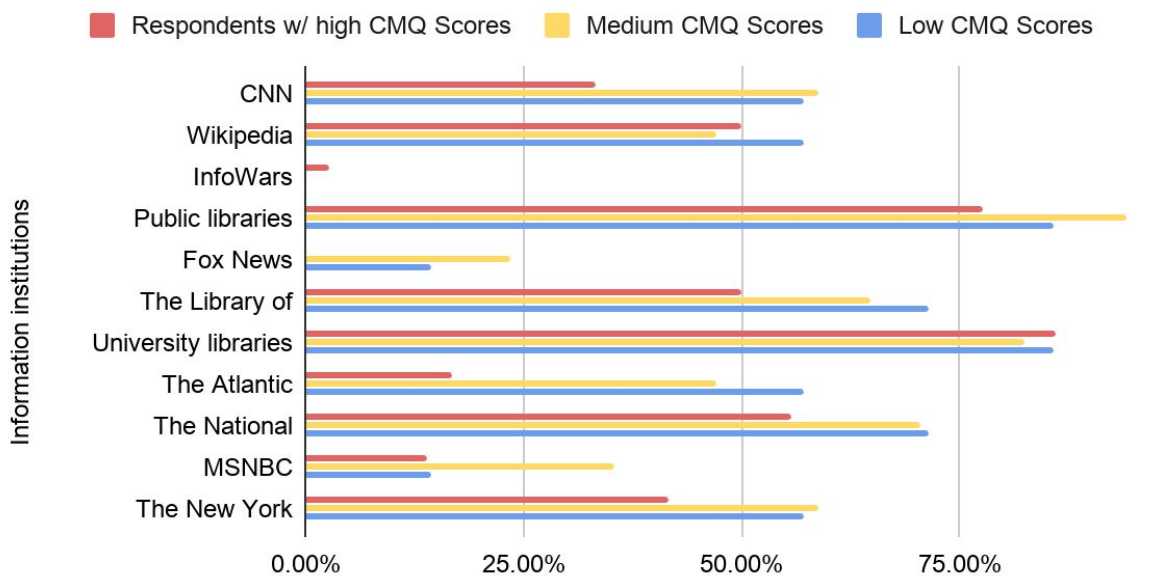


The following analysis will address RQ1. The survey asks respondents to rate eleven information sources/ institutions on a five-point Likert scale, from untrustworthy (1) to trustworthy (5). High trust in a given institution is indicated by a 4 or a 5, and low trust is indicated by a 1 or a 2. A “3” can be considered neutral, and indicates mid-level trust. For this analysis, I am most interested in high scores, which indicate trust.

% of respondents indicating trust in the following resources:	Respondents w/ high CMQ Scores	Medium CMQ Scores	Low CMQ Scores
CNN	33.3%	58.8%	57.1%
Wikipedia	50%	47.1%	57.1%
InfoWars	2.8%	0%	0%

Public libraries	77.8%	94.1%	85.7%
Fox News	0%	23.5%	14.3%
The Library of Congress	50%	64.7%	71.4%
University libraries	86.1%	82.4%	85.7%
The Atlantic	16.7%	47.1%	57.1%
The National Archives	55.6%	70.6%	71.4%
MSNBC	13.9%	35.3%	14.3%
The New York Times	41.7%	58.8%	57.1%

% of respondents with high - low CMQ scores who trust specific information institutions



I have divided the information institutions up into “mainstream (media),” “non-mainstream (media),” and “mainstream (non-media).”

Mainstream (media)

CNN

The Atlantic

MSNBC

The New York Times

Non-mainstream (media)

InfoWars

Fox News

Mainstream (non-media)

Wikipedia

Public Libraries

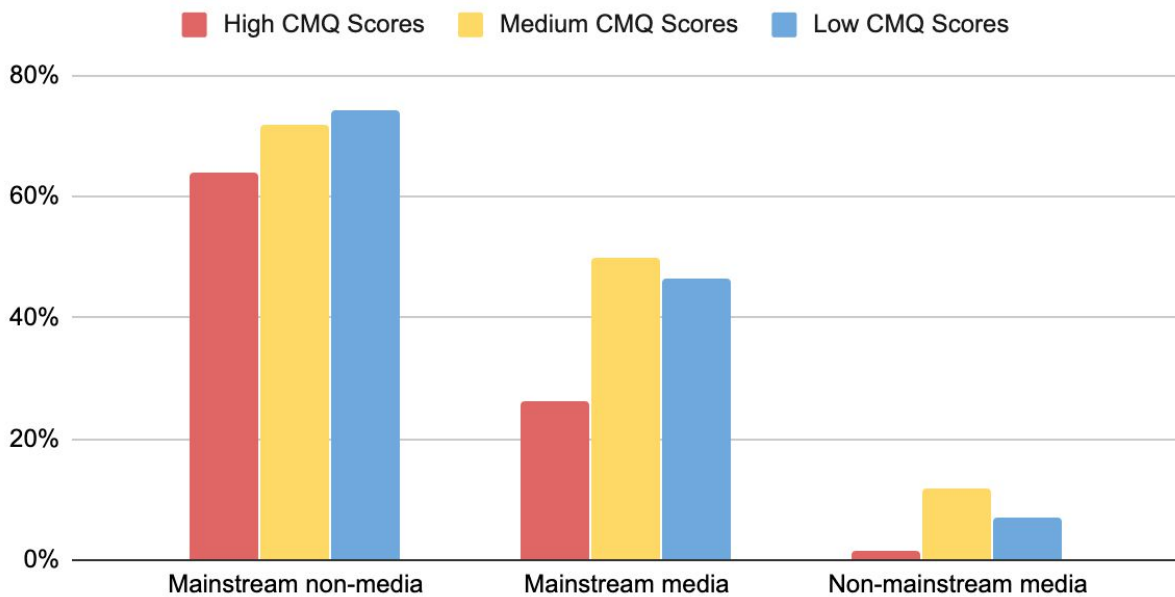
The Library of Congress

University Libraries

The National Archives

	<b>Respondents w/ high CMQ Scores</b>	<b>Medium CMQ Scores</b>	<b>Low CMQ Scores</b>
Mainstream (media)	64%	71.78%	74.26%
Non-mainstream (media)	26.40%	50%	46.40%
Mainstream (non-media)	1.40%	26.45%	7%

## % of respondents with high - low CMQ scores who trust mainstream & non-mainstream information institutions



What is most apparent in these data is that *all* respondents, regardless of CMQ scores, trusted mainstream non-media institutions the most, mainstream media less, and non-mainstream media the least. In a revision of this survey, I will include more than just two non-mainstream media sources so as to ensure that the category is balanced with the other two. These data also illustrate that CMQ scores may be related to degree of trust in resources, but the sample size is so small that it cannot be said definitively. If the trend were replicated in a larger dataset, it would be possible to claim that high CMQ scores are negatively correlated with degree of trust in information institutions overall (media and non-media alike), as compared to mid-level and low CMQ scores. Interesting as well in this data is that mid-level CMQ scorers appear to demonstrate higher trust than low CMQ scorers in mainstream media and non-mainstream media. Again, there is not enough data to say whether or not this may be a statistically significant trend.

RQ2 asks what emotions individuals who demonstrate high conspiracism feel in the course of doing research. In my questionnaire, I asked respondents to rate how strongly they felt specific emotions that the literature<sup>3</sup> has suggested are commonplace in the course of information seeking. In accordance with Kuhlthau's model of information seeking, which suggests that different emotions are felt at the beginning, in the midst, and towards the end of the research process, I asked respondents to rate the emotions they felt at the beginning and in the middle of the search process. I decided not to ask about the end of the search process to curtail the length of the survey. In processing the pilot data, I divided the Likert scale upon which they rated their feelings into the following subcategories:

Scores of 4 - 5: strong feeling

Score of 3: mid-level feeling

Score of 2: weak feeling

Score of 1: does not feel at all

**For High CMQ scores:**

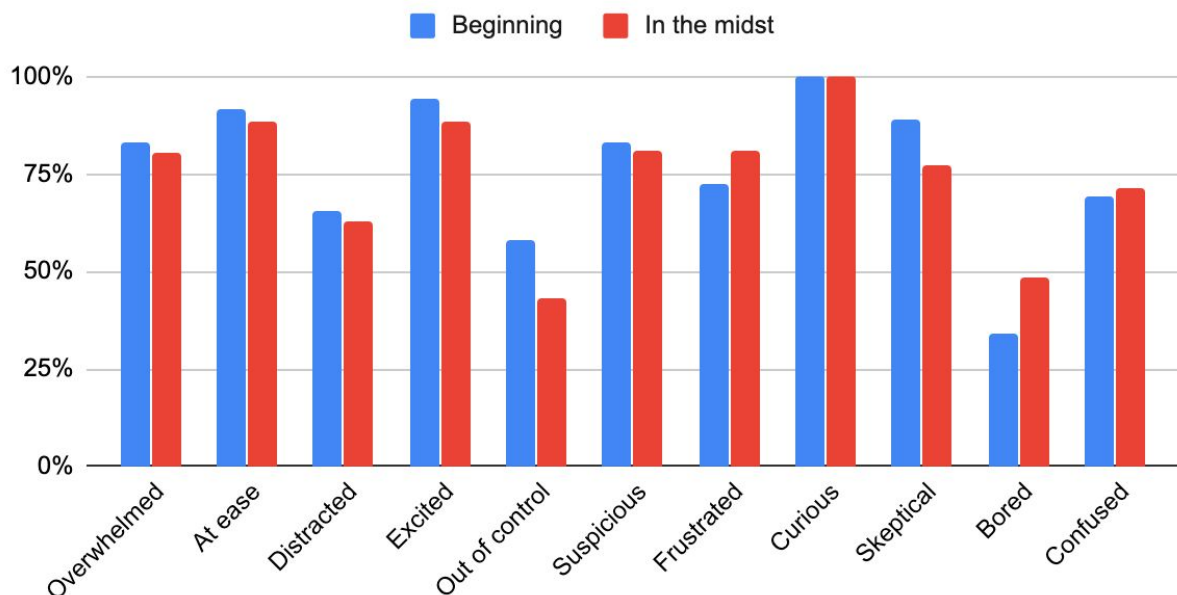
Emotion felt	Point in process	Degree: no feeling	Degree: weak feeling	Degree: mid-level feeling	Degree: strong feeling
Overwhelmed	Beginning	17.10%	23%	31.40%	28.60%
	Midst	19.40%	11.10%	47.20%	22.20%
At ease	Beginning	8.60%	22.90%	22.90%	45.70%
	Midst	11.40%	8.60%	40.00%	40.00%
Distracted	Beginning	34.30%	20.00%	23%	22.90%

<sup>3</sup> Carol C. Kuhlthau, "Inside the Search Process: Information Seeking from the User's Perspective," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 42, no. 5 (1991): 361–71; Elfreda A. Chatman, "The Impoverished Life-World of Outsiders," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 47, no. 3 (1996): 193–206, [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1097-4571\(199603\)47:3<193::AID-ASI3>3.0.CO;2-T](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-4571(199603)47:3<193::AID-ASI3>3.0.CO;2-T).



	Midst	37.10%	25.70%	20.00%	17.10%
Excited	Beginning	5.70%	8.60%	8.60%	77%
	Midst	11.40%	8.60%	17.10%	62.90%
Out of control	Beginning	41.70%	27.80%	13.90%	16.70%
	Midst	57.10%	20%	14.30%	8.60%
Suspicious	Beginning	16.70%	33.30%	19.40%	30.60%
	Midst	19.20%	19.20%	50%	11.50%
Frustrated	Beginning	27.80%	27.80%	27.80%	16.70%
	Midst	19.20%	23.10%	46.20%	11.50%
Curious	Beginning	0%	0%	0%	100%
	Midst	0.00%	7.40%	7.40%	85.20%
Skeptical	Beginning	11.10%	19.40%	36.10%	33.30%
	Midst	22.90%	20.00%	34.30%	22.90%
Bored	Beginning	65.70%	14.30%	11.40%	8.60%
	Midst	51.60%	25.80%	19.40%	3.20%
Confused	Beginning	30.60%	11.10%	33.30%	25%
	Midst	28.60%	22.90%	40.00%	8.60%

## Emotions felt by high CMQ scorers in the course of doing research



In order to simplify data for visualization purposes, I combined all positive scores into a *positive feeling* of the emotion, rather than the degree of that feeling. So, the visualization here illustrates the percent of HCMQ scorers who felt the feeling *at all*. Although we again run into the issue of not having enough data to draw meaningful conclusions, it is true that all feelings seem to lessen slightly--or are felt less frequently--in the midst of during research, apart from feelings of frustration, boredom and confusion.

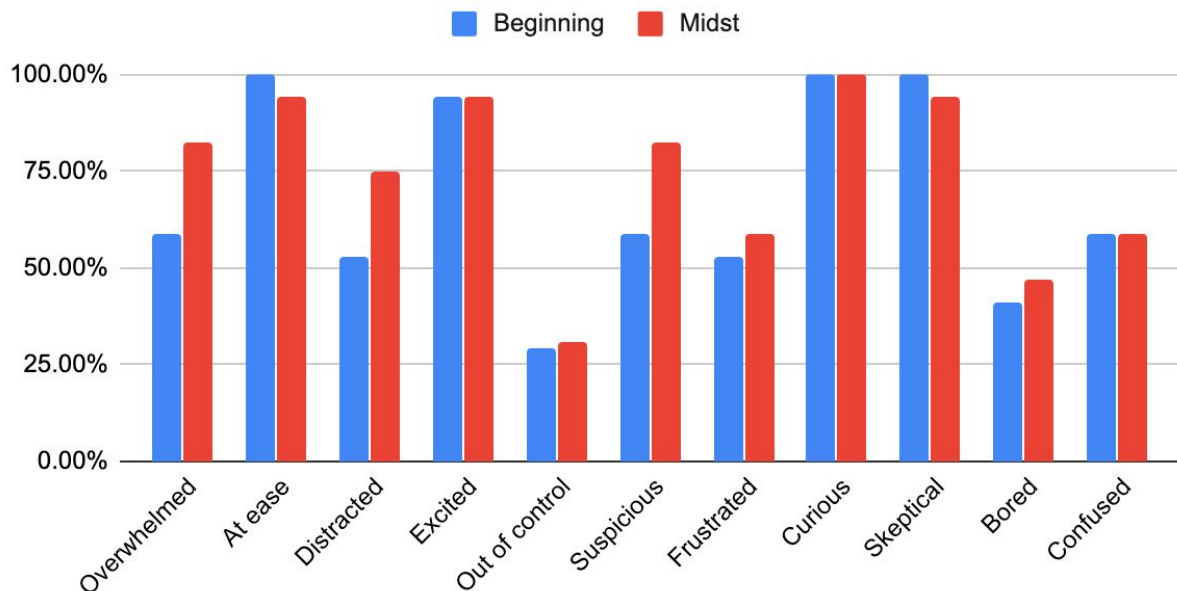
I did the same thing for mid-level and low CMQ scores, included in the tables and figures below:

### For mid-level CMQ scorers:

Emotion felt	Point in process	Degree: no feeling	Degree: weak feeling	Degree: mid-level feeling	Degree: strong feeling
Overwhelmed	Beginning	41.20%	29.40%	17.60%	11.80%
	Midst	17.60%	35.30%	35.30%	11.80%

At ease	Beginning	0%	17.60%	35.30%	47.10%
	Midst	5.90%	29.40%	23.50%	41.20%
Distracted	Beginning	47.10%	17.60%	11.80%	23.50%
	Midst	25.00%	50%	18.80%	6.30%
Excited	Beginning	5.90%	5.90%	5.90%	82.40%
	Midst	5.90%	0.00%	47.10%	47.10%
Out of control	Beginning	70.60%	11.60%	17.60%	0.00%
	Midst	68.80%	25%	6.30%	0.00%
Suspicious	Beginning	41.20%	23.50%	23.50%	11.80%
	Midst	17.60%	17.60%	23.50%	41.20%
Frustrated	Beginning	47.10%	41.20%	5.90%	5.90%
	Midst	41.20%	29.40%	17.60%	11.80%
Curious	Beginning	0.00%	5.90%	0.00%	94.10%
	Midst	0.00%	5.90%	17.60%	76.50%
Skeptical	Beginning	0%	11.80%	47.10%	41.20%
	Midst	5.90%	23.50%	35.30%	35.30%
Bored	Beginning	58.80%	29.40%	5.90%	5.90%
	Midst	52.90%	41.20%	5.90%	0.00%
Confused	Beginning	41.20%	29.40%	23.50%	5.90%
	Midst	41.20%	23.50%	23.50%	11.80%

## Emotions felt by mid-level CMQ scorers in the course of doing research



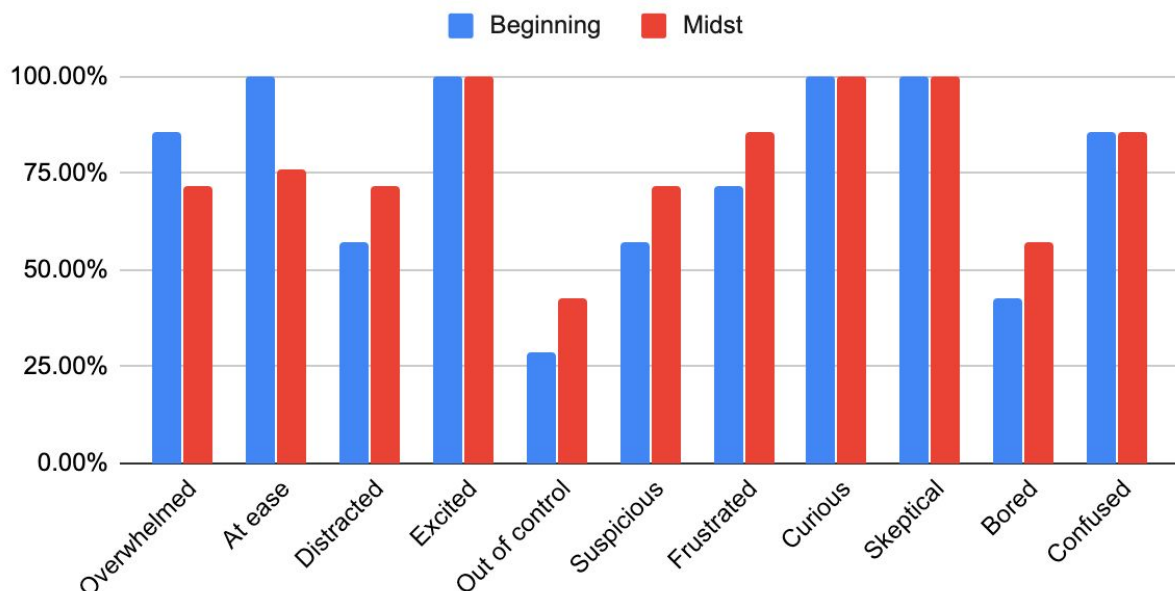
As compared to high CMQ scorers, mid-level CMQ scorers seem to have a more marked difference in frequency of emotions felt at the beginning versus in the midst of the research process. In the middle of the research process, MCMQ respondents felt more frequently overwhelmed, less at ease, more frequently distracted, more frequently suspicious, more frequently frustrated, and more frequently bored. Again, I specify “frequently,” here so as to emphasize that the visualization is of the percentage of MCMQ respondents who indicated that they felt these feelings *at all*, regardless of degree.

### For low CMQ scorers:

Emotion felt	Point in process	Degree: no feeling	Degree: weak feeling	Degree: mid-level feeling	Degree: strong feeling
Overwhelmed	Beginning	14.30%	57.10%	0%	28.60%
	Midst	28.60%	42.90%	0%	28.60%
At ease	Beginning	0%	14.30%	14.30%	71.40%

	Midst	14.30%	28.60%	18.60%	28.60%
Distracted	Beginning	42.90%	42.90%	0%	14.30%
	Midst	28.60%	42.90%	28.60%	0%
Excited	Beginning	0%	0%	28.60%	71.40%
	Midst	0%	28.60%	28.60%	42.90%
Out of control	Beginning	71%	28.60%	0%	0%
	Midst	57.10%	28.60%	14.30%	0%
Suspicious	Beginning	42.90%	14.30%	14.30%	28.60%
	Midst	28.60%	42.90%	0%	28.60%
Frustrated	Beginning	28.60%	42.90%	0%	28.60%
	Midst	14.30%	28.60%	42.90%	14.30%
Curious	Beginning	0%	0%	0%	100%
	Midst	0%	0%	0%	100%
Skeptical	Beginning	0%	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%
	Midst	0%	42.90%	14.30%	42.90%
Bored	Beginning	57.10%	42.90%	0%	0%
	Midst	42.90%	42.90%	14.30%	0.00%
Confused	Beginning	14.30%	57.10%	14.30%	14.30%
	Midst	14.30%	42.90%	14.30%	28.60%

## Emotions felt by low CMQ scorers in the course of doing research



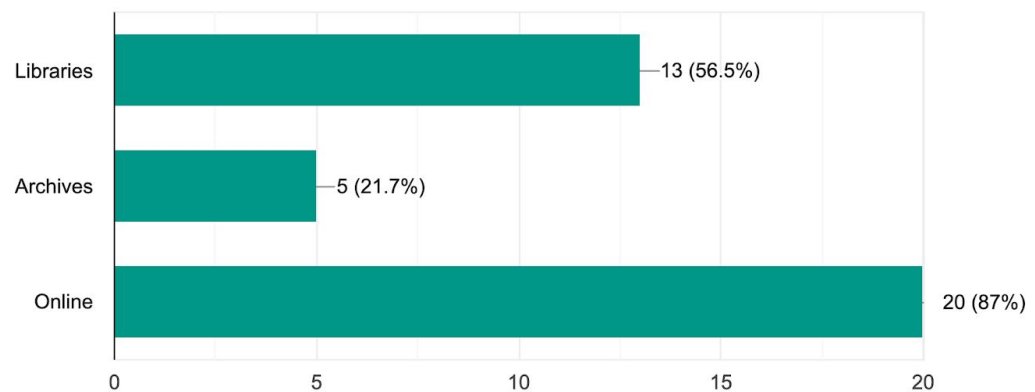
It is important to state, again, that the LCMQ dataset is the least nuanced, as it only consists of seven data points. However, treating this as though it were a bigger dataset, it is intriguing that the emotions felt more frequently in the midst of the research process are again different for LCMQ respondents. Feelings of being distracted, out of control, suspicious, frustrated, and bored become more frequent. Feelings of being overwhelmed and at ease become less frequent. Across all CMQ scores, feelings of curiosity remained high and consistent (with one hundred percent of respondents indicating that they felt this feeling to some degree, often strongly--see appendix). Feelings of confusion also remained somewhat consistent, though where markedly lower than curiosity.

Finally, RQ3 asks where individuals with high conspiracism go to conduct research. 41.7% of high CMQ scorers conducted research in physical places (libraries and archives); 29.4% of mid-level CMQ scorers conducted research in physical places; and 42.9% of low CMQ

scorers conducted research in physical places. Overall, the majority of respondents did not conduct research in physical places (62.3% answered “no” to the question of whether or not they did). Respondents overall also indicated that they prefer to conduct research online, as opposed to in libraries and archives.

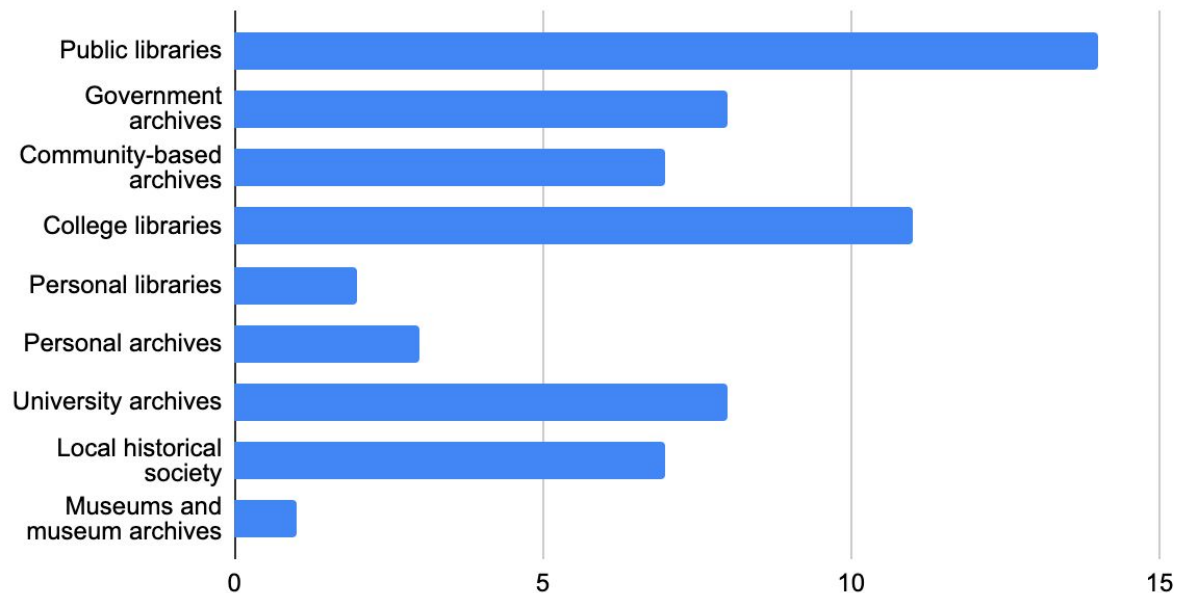
Where do you prefer to do research?

23 responses



Only 23 of 60 respondents total indicated that they conducted research in physical places. Of the fifteen high CMQ scorers who indicated they conducted research in physical places, 14 indicated that they do research in public libraries, 11 in college libraries, eight indicated government archives, seven checked off community-based archives, seven indicated local historical societies, three checked off personal archives, two checked off personal libraries, and one indicated museums and museum archives. For a comparison of these categories, see the figure below:

## Research sites of high CMQ scorers who go to physical places to conduct research



Because data for this area are even thinner than previous data, with only 23 respondents' research practices being in-person at information institutions, I have opted to only visualize HCMQ data. These data indicate that HCMQ individuals who conduct their research in-person go to a wide variety of information institutions to do so, with public libraries, college libraries, and university archives being the most common.

The 23 out of 60 respondents who indicated that they conduct research in physical places indicated the following answers for the following questions:

1. When I do research in libraries, I feel like I can find what I'm looking for easily.
2. When I do research in an archive, I can find what I'm looking for easily.
3. When I am doing research online using a library database, I am usually able to find the information I'm looking for.
4. When I am doing research online using primary sources, or documents, the website is



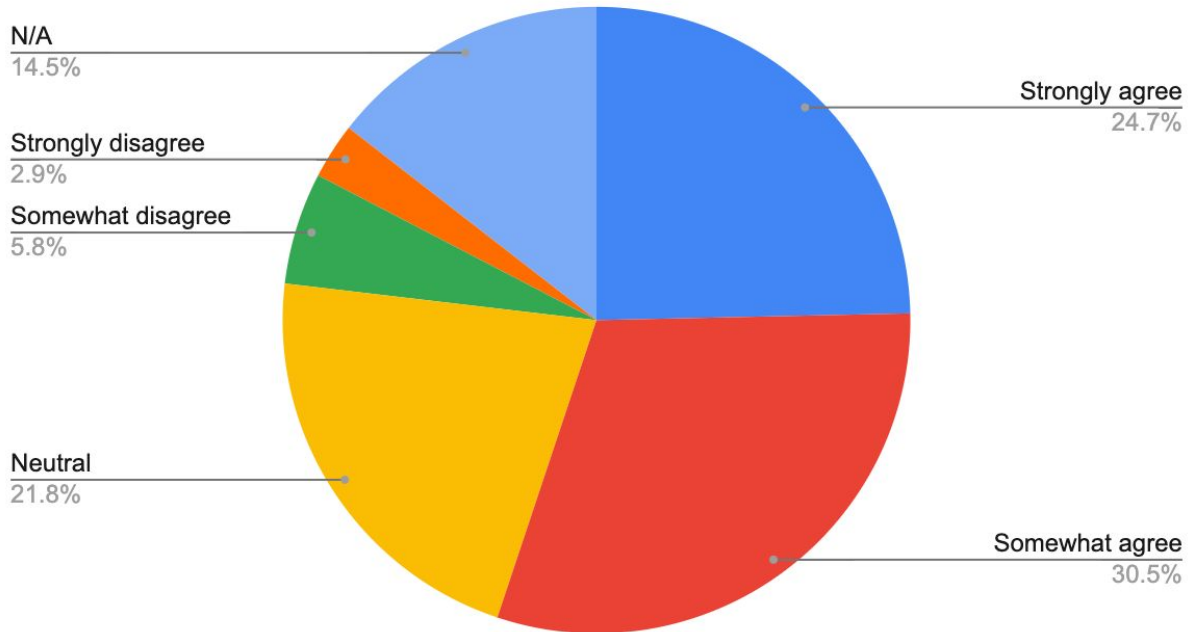
usually straightforward and I can find what I'm looking for.

5. When I have conducted research in an archive, the people who worked there were helpful.

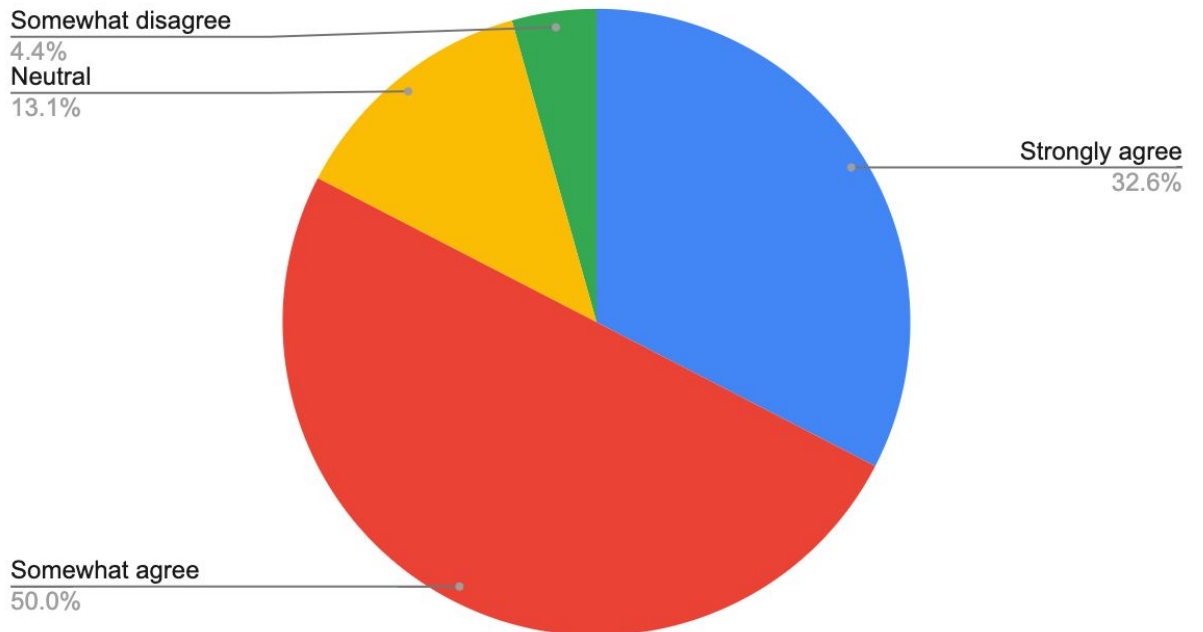
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	N/A
1	30.4%	43.50%	17.40%	8.70%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
2	8.70%	34.80%	26.10%	4.30%	4.30%	0.00%	21.70%
3	34.80%	56.50%	8.70%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
4	26.10%	34.80%	21.70%	13.00%	4.30%	0.00%	0.00%
5	39.10%	21.70%	17.40%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	21.70%

Extrapolating from this, these five questions can be divided into *archives* and *libraries* questions, with questions 1 and 3 referring to research in libraries, and questions 2, 4, and 5 referring to research in archives. From there, I determined the mean value for *archives* questions and *libraries*, questions, giving me an impression of how the respondents felt about how easy or difficult it was to do research in an archive or a library. In this case, “strongly agree,” indicates that the experience with an archive or library was a positive one.

## Overall ease of doing research in archives



## Overall ease of doing research in libraries



As you can see, there were more mixed feelings about archives. In part, this was because a few of the respondents--14.5% of them--had not done research in archives, whereas all respondents indicated having done research in libraries. 82.6% of respondents indicated a positive experience doing research in libraries, whereas only 55.2% of respondents indicated a positive experience conducting research in archives. This finding is in line with literature in archival studies that indicates that archives struggle with user-friendliness more so than libraries.

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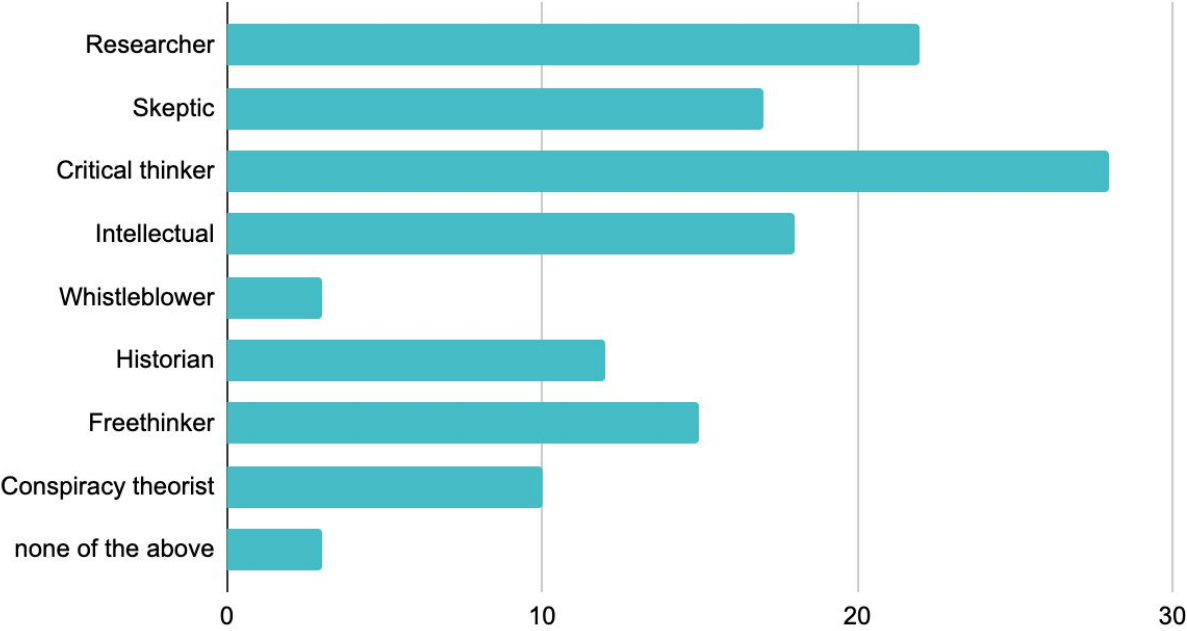
Although research-related identity was not one of my research questions, it is something that I am interested in in relation to this project. I provided several terms to choose from (“check all that apply”), derived from scholarly work that has been done on conspiracy theory, as well as conspiracists’ own vernacular. These included: “researcher,” “skeptic,” “critical thinker,” “whistleblower,” “intellectual,” “conspiracy theorist,” “freethinker,” “historian,” and “none of the above.” The table below includes the number of times each identity was indicated, which does not map onto the number of respondents, as this was a “check all that apply” question. Subsequently, I have included four bar charts below, indicating the distribution of HCMQ, MCMQ, and LCMQ respondents, and then all respondents.

	Research er	Skeptic	Critical thinker	Intellectua l	Whistleblo wer	Historian	Freethink er	Conspirac y theorist	None of the above
HCMQ	22	17	28	18	3	12	15	10	3
MCMQ	9	9	15	5	0	3	5	1	1
LCMQ	4	4	4	1	0	1	3	0	1
TOTAL	35	30	47	24	3	16	23	11	5

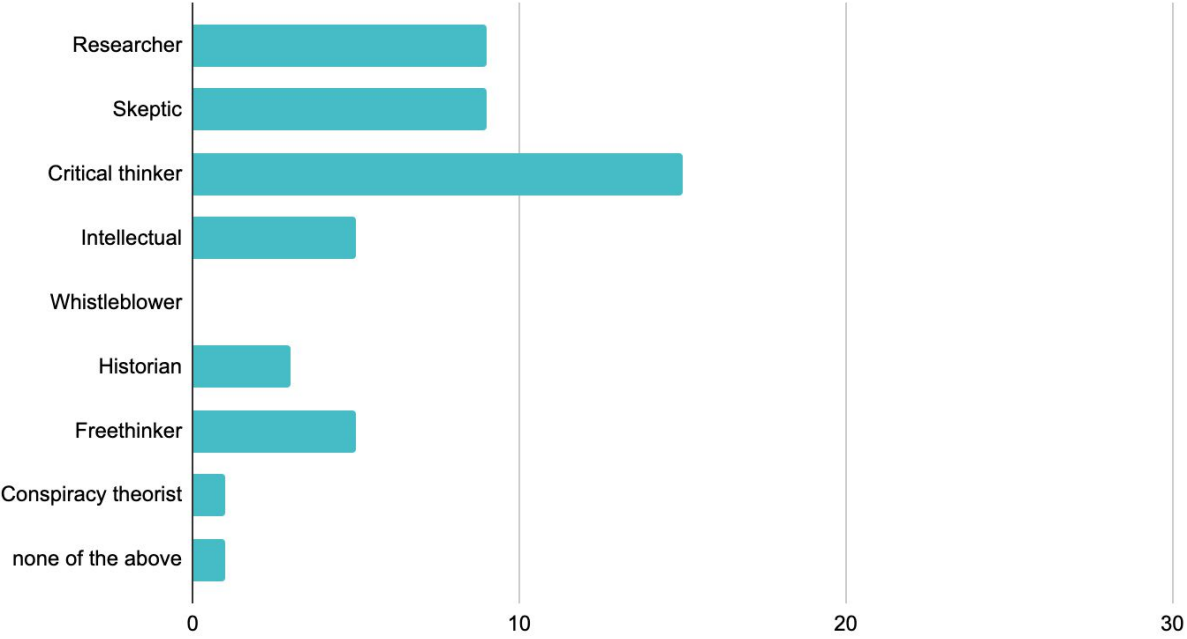
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<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah Torres, “AI: Archival Intelligence and User Expertise,” *The American Archivist* 66, no. 1 (January 1, 2003): 51–78, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.66.1.q022h85pn51n5800>.

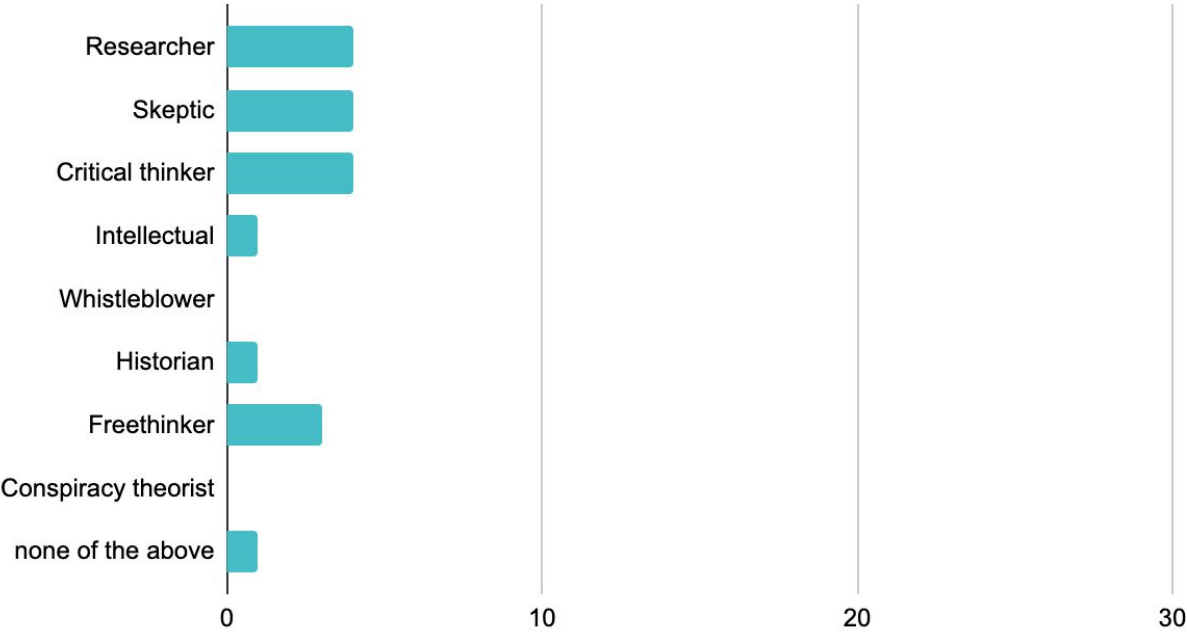
High CMQ Scorers' research identities



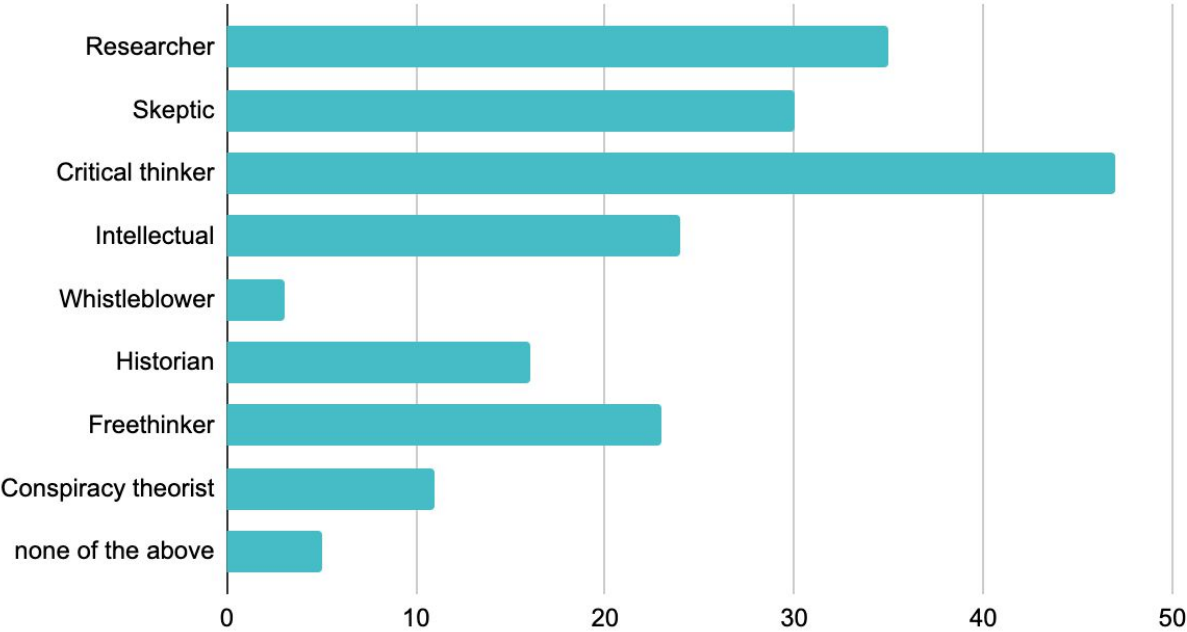
Mid-level CMQ scorers' research identities



Low CMQ scorers' research identities



Distribution of all respondents' research identities



Overall, the most popular designation among all three groups was “critical thinker,” followed by “researcher,” and then “skeptic.” HCMQ scorers were the most likely among the three classes to think of themselves as “conspiracy theorists.” HCMQ scorers were also the only group to self-identify as “whistleblowers,” but this may also be due to the level of detail available for the HCMQ dataset.

Working with this pilot data has given me several insights into how I will re-work this survey. First, if it would not be too intrusive a question, I want respondents to be able to indicate which forum, subreddit, or listserv they found the survey on. This way, I can see what the distributions are by subreddit, as well as by CMQ score. In this same vein, I want to distribute the survey to a much wider variety of subreddits and forum websites, so as to try to get a larger sample of MCMQ and LCMQ respondents. This may include r/genealogy, and other historical research subreddits and forums, as well as citizen science forums and listservs. It may be more difficult than I am anticipating to acquire an equivalent sample of LCMQ respondents, as the norm could be HCMQ.

Further, my data analysis techniques were equivalent to a layperson’s, as I have not yet had the opportunity to take a statistics course. I will be doing that in the next year or so to strengthen my data analysis skills. I also received some feedback from respondents via the posts I made on reddit--this is another thing I would need to incorporate into my survey: a space for general feedback--more than one user stated that they lived outside the United States, and that they felt that the media organizations listed and the political affiliations question did not apply to them, so they were not sure how to answer. As the CMQ is designed to be cross-cultural, I think

it is important that I revise these particular questions, as much as possible, to be internationally applicable.

Overall, I felt that the questionnaire as it is now does a relatively good job of answering my research questions. I think that more detailed data, and a more nuanced analysis of such data, would reveal a lot more about the answers to my research questions than I was able to in this paper. Because my questions are comparative, it is of particular importance that a detailed set of MCMQ and LCMQ data be obtained for the full study.

## **Appendix**

Full distribution of questionnaire responses listed below. For this full distribution, I have not subdivided into the HCMQ, MCMQ, and LCMQ classes--rather, I include responses from respondents overall.

For the full questionnaire, please visit this link: <https://forms.gle/bjDBoSr7XRDiBMgq5>

Question	Response options	No of respondents indicating option & percentage
How frequently do you do in-depth research on a single topic?	1-2 times per week	13 (20.30%)
	3-4 times per week	16 (25%)
	A couple of times a month	10 (15.60%)
	Every day	14 (21.90%)
	I don't do research	4 (6.30%)
	Less than twice a month	7 (10.90%)
When you do in-depth research, on average, how many sources do you consult?	1-5	17 (28.30%)
	11-20	12 (20%)
	6-10	25 (41.70%)
	More than 20	6 (10%)
What makes you want to do research?	OPEN-ENDED QUESTION: unique answers provided, too long to list here	
I think that many very important things happen in the world, which the public is never informed about	Strongly agree	27 (45%)



	Agree	28 (46.70%)
	Neutral	5 (8.30%)
I think that politicians usually do not tell us the motivations for their decisions	Strongly agree	26 (43.30%)
	Agree	25 (41.70%)
	Neutral	6 (10.00%)
	Disagree	3 (5.00%)
I think that government agencies closely monitor all citizens	Strongly agree	11 (18.70%)
	Agree	17 (28.30%)
	Neutral	16 (26.70%)
	Disagree	10 (16.70%)
	Strongly disagree	3 (5.00%)
	Don't know	3 (5.07%)
I think that events which superficially seem to lack a connection are often the result of secret activities	Strongly agree	4 (6.70%)
	Agree	7 (11.70%)
	Neutral	21 (35.00%)
	Disagree	14 (23.30%)
	Strongly disagree	10 (16.70%)
	Don't know	4 (6.70%)
I think that there are secret organizations that greatly influence political decisions.	Agree	23 (39.00%)
	Disagree	11 (18.60%)

	Neutral	10 (16.90%)
	Strongly agree	10 (16.90%)
	Strongly disagree	5 (8.50%)
Trust in following news sources:	CNN	26 (44.8%)
	Wikipedia	30 (50%)
	InfoWars	1 (1.8%)
	Public libraries	50 (84.7%)
	Fox News	5 (8.5%)
	The Library of Congress	34 (60.7%)
	University libraries	51 (85%)
	The Atlantic	18 (32.1%)
	The National Archives	37 (64.9%)
	MSNBC	12 (21.1%)
	The New York Times	29 (50%)
How confident were you, overall, in assessing the trustworthiness of the organizations listed in the previous question (number 4), on a scale of 1 - 5 (1 being not at all confident, 5 being wholly confident)?	confident (score of 4 or 5)	38 (63.3%)
I tend to do research on a lot of topics at once.	Strongly agree	12 (20%)
	Agree	22 (36.70%)
	Neutral	6 (10.00%)
	Disagree	17 (28.30%)
	Strongly disagree	3 (28.30%)
I have been researching the same topic(s) for	Strongly agree	16 (26.70%)

months or years.		
	Agree	32 (53.30%)
	Neutral	6 (10%)
	Disagree	4 (6.70%)
	Strongly disagree	2 (3.30%)
I find myself getting “sucked in” to the research process when I am interested in a topic.	Strongly agree	36 (61.00%)
	Agree	15 (25.40%)
	Neutral	5 (8.50%)
	Disagree	3 (5.10%)
	Strongly disagree	0 (0%)
I get bored easily when conducting research into a topic that I initially found interesting.	Strongly agree	1 (1.70%)
	Agree	4 (6.90%)
	Neutral	9 (15.50%)
	Disagree	36 (62.10%)
	Strongly disagree	8 (14.8%)

When doing in-depth research, please rate all emotions you feel AT THE BEGINNING/ IN THE MIDST of the research process on a scale of 1 to 5. If you do not feel one of the emotions at all, please indicate 1. Indicate 5 if you feel the emotion very strongly.

Emotion	Point in process	strong	mid-level	low	none
Overwhelmed	Beginning	14 (23.3%)	14 (23.3%)	18 (30%)	14 (23.3%)
	Midst	12 (20%)	23 (38.3%)	13 (21.7%)	12 (20%)
At ease	Beginning	30 (50%)	15 (25%)	12 (20%)	3 (5%)
	Midst	23 (39%)	20 (33.9%)	10	6 (10.2%)

				(16.9%)	
Distracted	Beginning	13 (21.7%)	11 (18.3%)	13 (21.7%)	23 (38.3%)
	Midst	7 (12.1%)	12 (20.7%)	20 (34.5%)	19 (32.8%)
Excited	Beginning	46 (76.7%)	7 (11.7%)	4 (6.7%)	3 (5.0%)
	Midst	33 (55.9%)	16 (27.1%)	5 (8.5%)	5 (8.5%)
Out of control	Beginning	6 (10%)	8 (13.3%)	14 (23.3%)	32 (53.3%)
	Midst	3 (5.2%)	7 (12.1%)	13 (22.4%)	35 (60.3%)
Suspicious	Beginning	15 (25%)	12 (20%)	17 (28.3%)	16 (26.7%)
	Midst	13 (22.0%)	21 (35.6%)	12 (20.3%)	13 (22.0%)
Frustrated	Beginning	9 (15%)	11 (18.3%)	20 (33.3%)	20 (33.30%)
	Midst	7 (11.9%)	20 (33.9%)	14 (23.7%)	18 (30.5%)
Curious	Beginning	59 (98.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.7%)	0 (0%)
	Midst	50 (84.7%)	6 (10.2%)	3 (5.1%)	0 (0%)
Skeptical	Beginning	21 (35.6%)	23 (39%)	11 (18.6%)	4 (6.8%)
	Midst	17 (28.8%)	19 (32.2%)	14 (23.7%)	9 (15.3%)
Bored	Beginning	4 (6.7%)	5 (6.3%)	14 (23.3%)	37 (61.7%)
	Midst	2 (3.4%)	7 (11.9%)	19 (32.2%)	31 (52.2%)
Confused	Beginning	11 (18.3%)	17 (28.3%)	13 (21.7%)	19 (31.7%)
	Midst	7 (11.9%)	19 (32.2%)	15 (25.4%)	18 (30.5%)

What is the purpose of your research? (check all that apply)	Curiosity	56
	Investigation	24
	Writing a book	6
	Casual interest	46
	Blogging	7
	Other	6
Do you go to physical places to do your research? ("yes" directs to next section)	Yes	23 (38.3%)
	No	37 (61.7%)
Check off the types of places you have visited:	Public libraries	14
	Government archives	8
	Community-based archives	7
	College libraries	11
	Personal libraries	2
	Personal archives	3
	University archives	8
	Local historical society	7
	Museums and museum archives	1
Where do you prefer to do research?	Libraries	13 (56.5%)
	Archives	5 (21.7%)
	Online	20 (87%)

1. When I do research in libraries, I feel like I can find what I'm looking for easily.
2. When I do research in an archive, I can find what I'm looking for easily.

3. When I am doing research online using a library database, I am usually able to find the information I'm looking for.
4. When I am doing research online using primary sources, or documents, the website is usually straightforward and I can find what I'm looking for.
5. When I have conducted research in an archive, the people who worked there were helpful.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	N/A
1	7 (30.4%)	10 (43.5%)	4 (17.4%)	2 (8.7%)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
2	2 (8.7%)	8 (34.8%)	6 (26.1%)	1 (4.3%)	1 (4.3%)	0.00%	5 (21.7%)
3	8 (34.8%)	13 (56.5%)	6 (8.7%)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
4	26.10%	34.80%	5 (21.7%)	13.00%	4.30%	0.00%	0.00%
5	9 (39.1%)	5 (21.7%)	4 (17.4%)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5 (21.7%)

Where do you go to do research online? (check all that apply)		
Wikipedia		52
Google		58
YouTube		32
Facebook		12
Reddit		48
Library websites		44
News websites		51
Blogs		40

	Library databases	40
	Archive websites	46
	Other	12
EXPERIMENTAL SECTION	Total responses	Number/ % trust (score of 4 or higher)
Quotation of “In October 2017, the National Archives declassified a cache of documents related to the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Not much new information was contained in these documents. The remaining documents that are still classified--less than 1%--likely pose national security risks.” as attributed to:		
The New York Times	11	5 (45.5%)
The National Archives	21	9 (42.9%)
InfoWars	5	2 (40%)
an academic article	12	2 (16.7%)
a user in r/conspriacy	12	1 (8.3%)
Do you consider yourself to be any of the following? Check all that apply.		
	Researcher	35 (18%)
	Skeptic	30 (15.5%)
	Critical thinker	47 (24.2%)
	Intellectual	24 (12.4%)
	Whistleblower	3 (1.5%)

	Historian	16 (8.2%)
	Freethinker	23 (11.9%)
	Conspiracy theorist	11 (5.7%)
	none of the above	5 (2.6%)
Age	Under 18	2 (3.30%)
	18-24	12 (20%)
	25-35	26 (43.30%)
	36-56	17 (28.30%)
	57-67	2 (3.30%)
	68-75	1 (1.70%)
Education level	Some high school	1 (1.70%)
	High school diploma	5 (8.50%)
	Some college	13 (22.00%)
	College diploma	20 (33.90%)
	Some graduate school	8 (13.60%)
	Master's level degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)	11 (18.60%)
	Doctoral degree (PhD, M.D., etc.)	1 (1.70%)
Political affiliation	Strong democrat	8 (14.30%)
	Democrat	10 (17.90%)
	Democrat-leaning independent	7 (12.50%)
	Independent	5 (8.90%)
	Republican-leaning independent	4 (7.10%)
	Republican	1 (1.80%)
	Strong republican	0 (0.00%)
	Other	21 (37.50%)