identifying barriers to break technological boundaries:

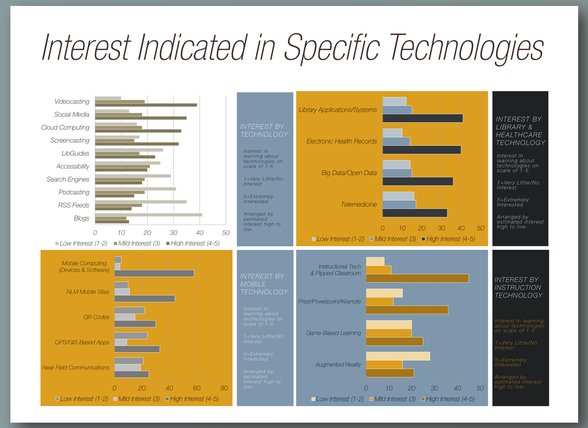
a needs assessment of regional medical librarians

objective...

To investigate interests, continuing education needs, and barriers to implementation of emerging technologies for librarians in the Southeast/Atlantic region.

...methods

The Technology Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) of the National Networks of Libraries of Medicine Southeastern/Atlantic Region conducted an online survey of librarians in the region in an effort to gather information that could inform the design and delivery of continuing education opportunities on technology topics. The survey was authored and disseminated in Fall 2012.



results...

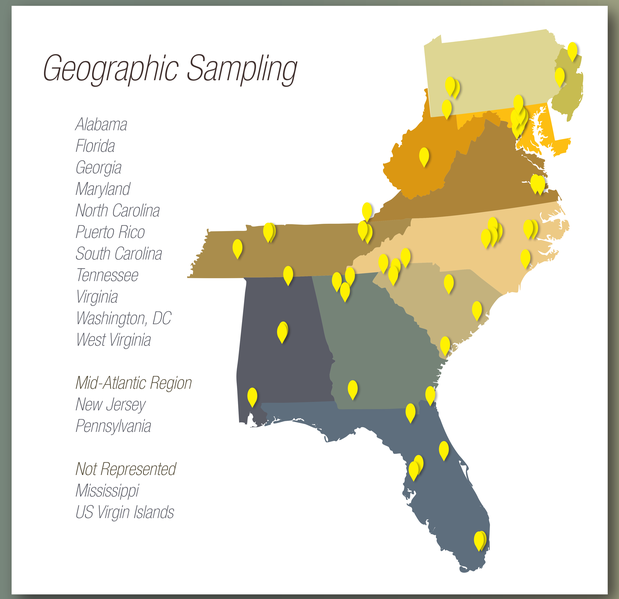
Respondents represented states in both the Mid-Atlantic and Southern Chapter regions and included:

- ***health sciences librarians (58%)***
- ***hospital librarians (28%)***
- ***nonprofit representatives (7%)***
- ***others***

Information about the effectiveness of learning environments was collected:

- ***75% of participants respond well to synchronous online environments***
- ***60% respond to asynchronous online environments***
- ***70% respond well to on-site workshops***

Respondents rated their awareness of emerging technologies and their institution's adoptions of technologies. Respondents also rated what they felt would be the most important technologies to their users in the next 5 years. Reponses from this open-ended question aligned with popular thought leader forecasting and included such topics as mobile, tablets, and content databases. Respondents also rated their interest in 23 specific technologies. Higher interest was reported for videocasting, social media, cloud computing, mobile computing, instructional technology, presentation software, library applications and electronic health records (EHRs). Survey respondents reported that the main barriers to exploring and implementing technologies were a lack of time (70%), followed by firewall restrictions (43%), and network security problems (28%).



...conclusion

Survey results have helped identify emerging technologies that could serve as appropriate topics for future technology instruction. Survey responses also provide insight into challenges that librarians may face when learning about or trying to use emerging technologies in their organizations. This information will also guide the development of relevant funding opportunities and other support mechanisms.

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