

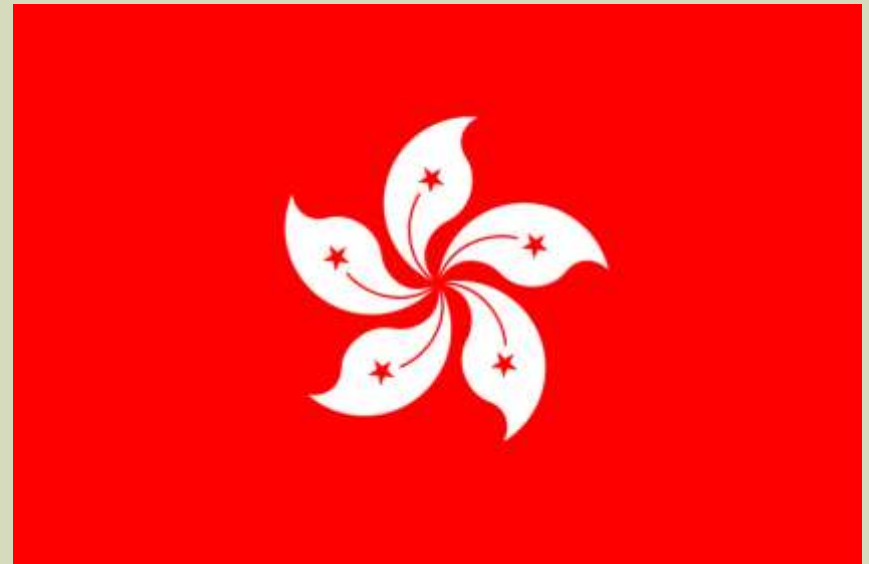
**Does  
Generation  
Google  
REALLY  
Need Us?**



**Peter Sidorko & Dianne Cmor**  
IFLA 2012 - Helsinki, Finland

# Hong Kong

- South-eastern tip of China
- 1,104 km<sup>2</sup>, comprising Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories and Outlying Islands
- Population ~ 7 million
- Both Chinese and English are official languages



# Hong Kong

- A Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China on 1 July 1997, after a century and a half of British administration
- 'A barren rock with hardly a house upon it'
- Now a financial, trading and business centre, and a city of towering buildings

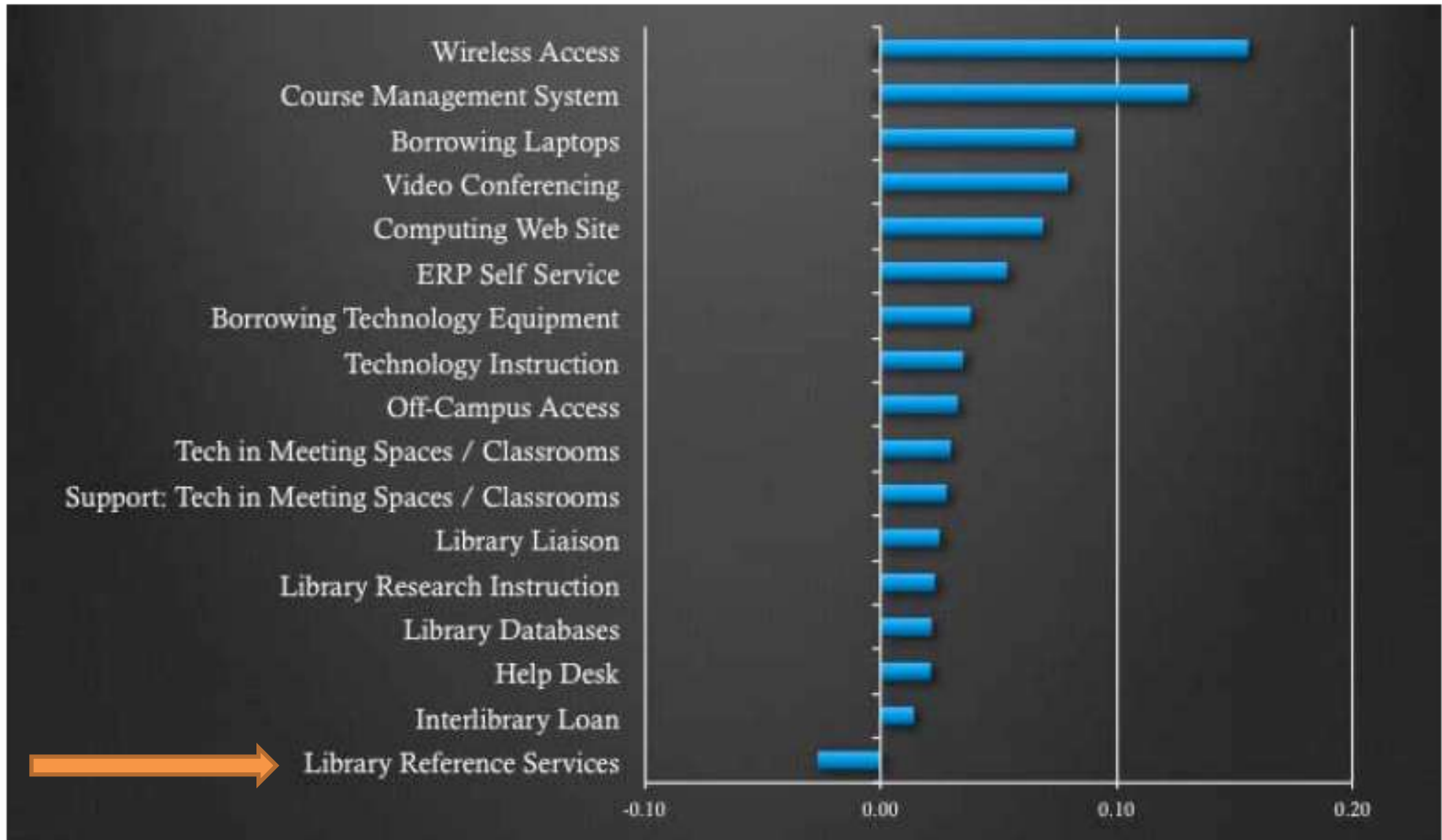


# Hong Kong Higher Education



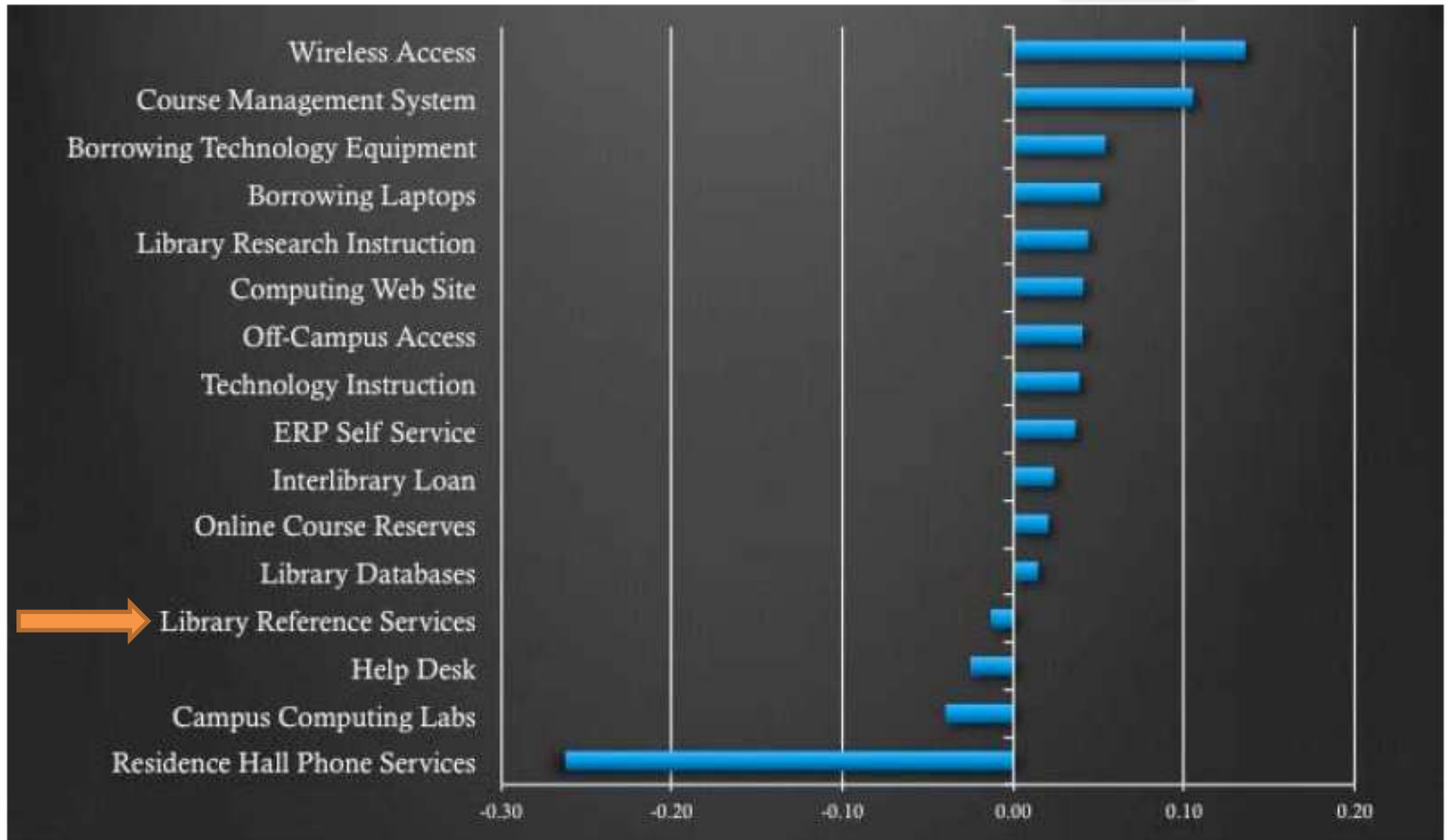
- 8 government funded institutes of higher learning (UGC)
- 3 ranked in the top 50 in the world (QS Rankings, 2011)
- British and US based systems
- 168,000 students (2010) an increase of 110% since 2000
- 76,000 UGC funded (2011/12) – 14% non-local
- Desire for “deep collaboration” among the eight
- Desire to be *THE* Asian education hub
- Move towards 3+3+4 Curriculum Reform

Figure 1. Annual Average Change in Importance for Faculty, 2005–2011



*Evaluating IT and Library Services with the MISO Survey*, ECAR Research Bulletin 10, 2011.  
<http://www.educause.edu/Resources/EvaluatingITandLibraryServices/232855>

Figure 2. Annual Average Change in Importance for Students, 2005–2011



*Evaluating IT and Library Services with the MISO Survey*, ECAR Research Bulletin 10, 2011.  
<http://www.educause.edu/Resources/EvaluatingITandLibraryServices/232855>

August 23, 2011

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## What Students Don't Know

August 22, 2011

CHICAGO – For a stranger, the main library at the University of Illinois at Chicago can be hard to find. The directions I got from a pair of clerks at the credit union in the student center have proven unreliable. I now find myself adrift among ash trees and drab geometric buildings.

Finally, I call for help. Firouzeh Logan, a reference librarian here, soon appears and guides me where I need to go. Several unmarked pathways and an escalator ride later, I am in a private room on the second floor of the library, surrounded by librarians eager to answer my questions.

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Most students never make it this far.

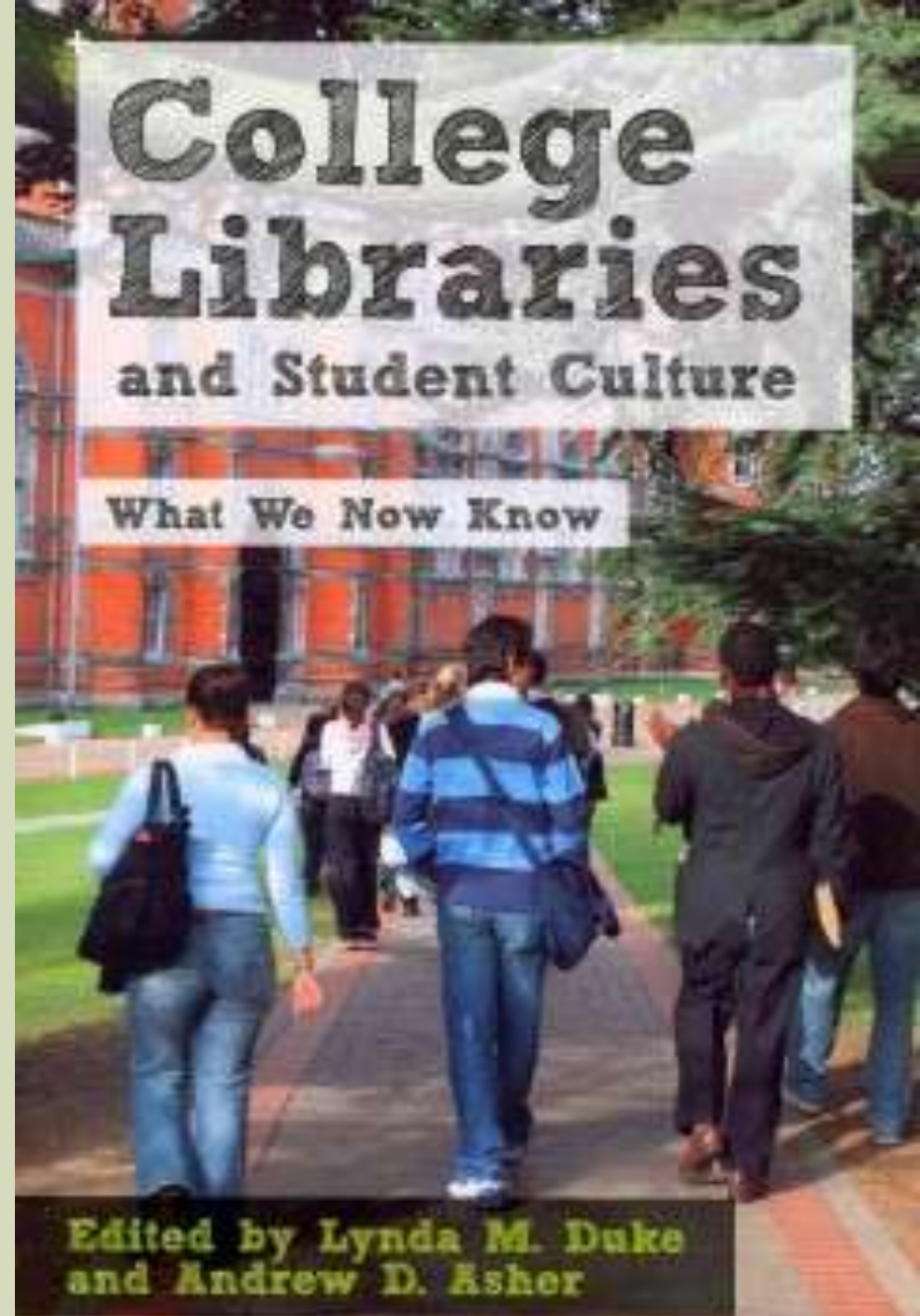
This is one of the sobering truths these librarians, representing a group of Illinois universities, have learned over the course of a two-year, five-campus ethnographic study examining how students view and use their campus libraries: students rarely ask librarians for help, even when they need it. The idea of a librarian as an academic expert who is available to talk about assignments and hold their hands through the research process is, in fact, foreign to most students. Those who even have the word "librarian" in their vocabularies often think library staff are only good for pointing to different sections of the stacks.

The [ERIAL](#) (Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries) project – a series of studies conducted at Illinois Wesleyan, DePaul University, and Northeastern Illinois University, and the University of Illinois's Chicago and Springfield campuses – was a meta-exercise for the librarians in practicing the sort of deep research they champion. Instead of relying on surveys, the libraries enlisted two anthropologists, along with their own staff members, to collect data using open-ended interviews and direct observation, among other methods.

The goal was to generate data that, rather than being statistically significant yet shallow, would provide deep, subjective accounts of what

A two-year anthropological study of student research habits shows that students are in dire need of help from librarians, but are loath to ask for it.

- Students rely on relationships (power and familiar)
- Do not know what work librarians do
- No *relationship* with librarians
- Librarians only help with physical directions
- Want to be self reliant





# Part of the problem

- “Aren’t all the articles I need online – why do I need to go to a database?”
- “Google books gives me parts of books; isn’t that good enough?”
- “How is a blog different from a scholarly article – aren’t they both just opinion?”
- “If a website doesn’t show up on page 1 of results, doesn’t that indicate inferior quality?”
- “I never knew librarians were intelligent.”

– from M. Sellar, College Students Information Seeking Behaviors,  
<http://www.slideshare.net/msellar/college-students-information-seeking-behaviors>

*I think we're kind of one of the first generations to have **too much information**, as opposed to too little. We've never had instruction really on navigating the Internet and picking out good resources. We've kind of been tossed into this and we've just learned through experience we have to go on a Web site and just raid it for information.*

- Engineering student



## Library activities down

Annual use

### Research specific reference book

81% **▶** 56%  
2005 2010 **31% DECREASE** ▼

### Homework/study

80% **▶** 66%  
2005 2010 **18% DECREASE** ▼

### Get copies of articles/journals

64% **▶** 50%  
2005 2010 **22% DECREASE** ▼

### Get assistance with research

64% **▶** 51%  
2005 2010 **20% DECREASE** ▼

### Use online databases

68% **▶** 59%  
2005 2010 **13% DECREASE** ▼

### Borrow print books

66% **▶** 60%  
2005 2010 **9% DECREASE** ▼

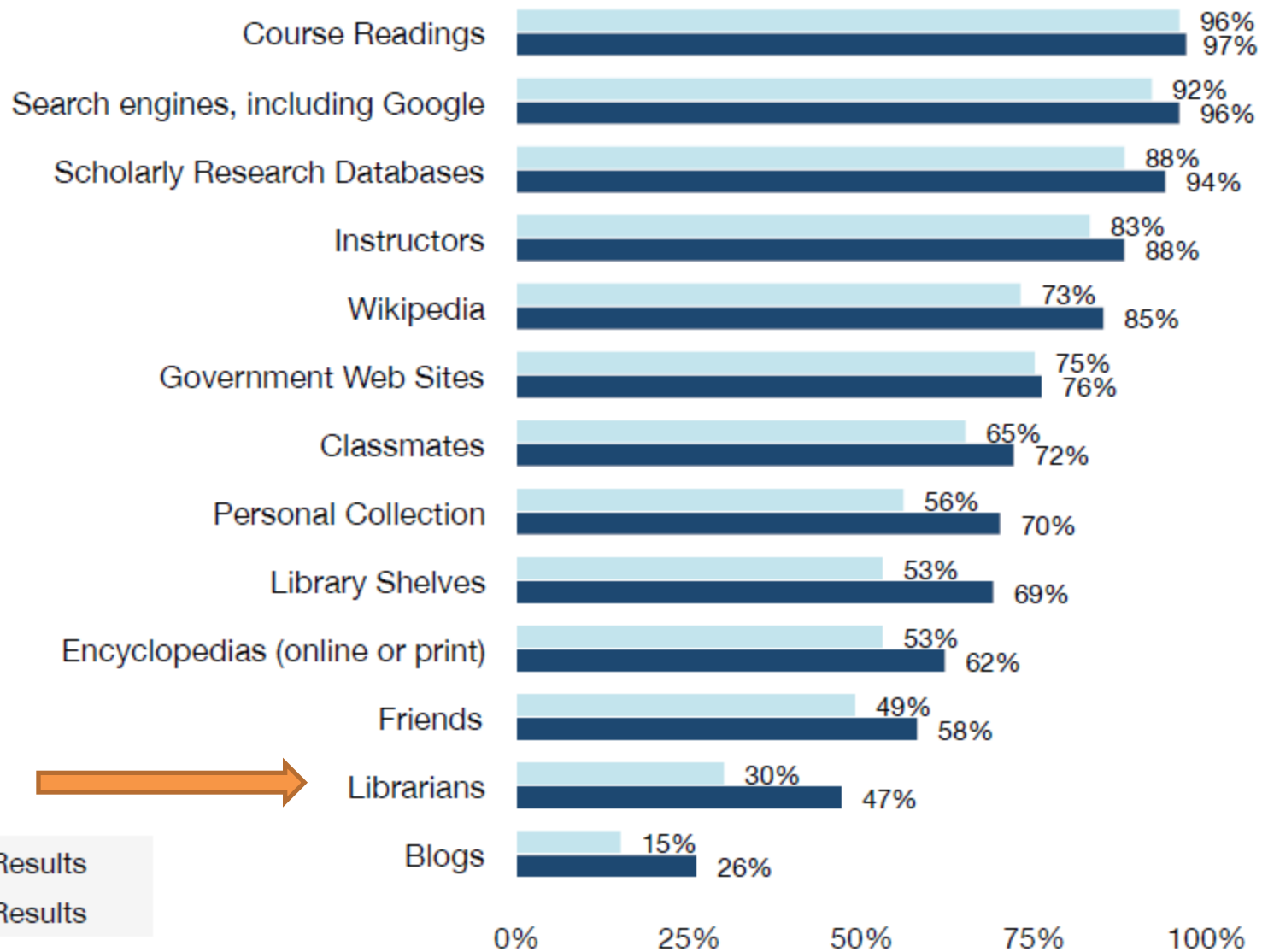
### Leisure reading

52% **▶** 48%  
2005 2010 **8% DECREASE** ▼

# Another part of the problem

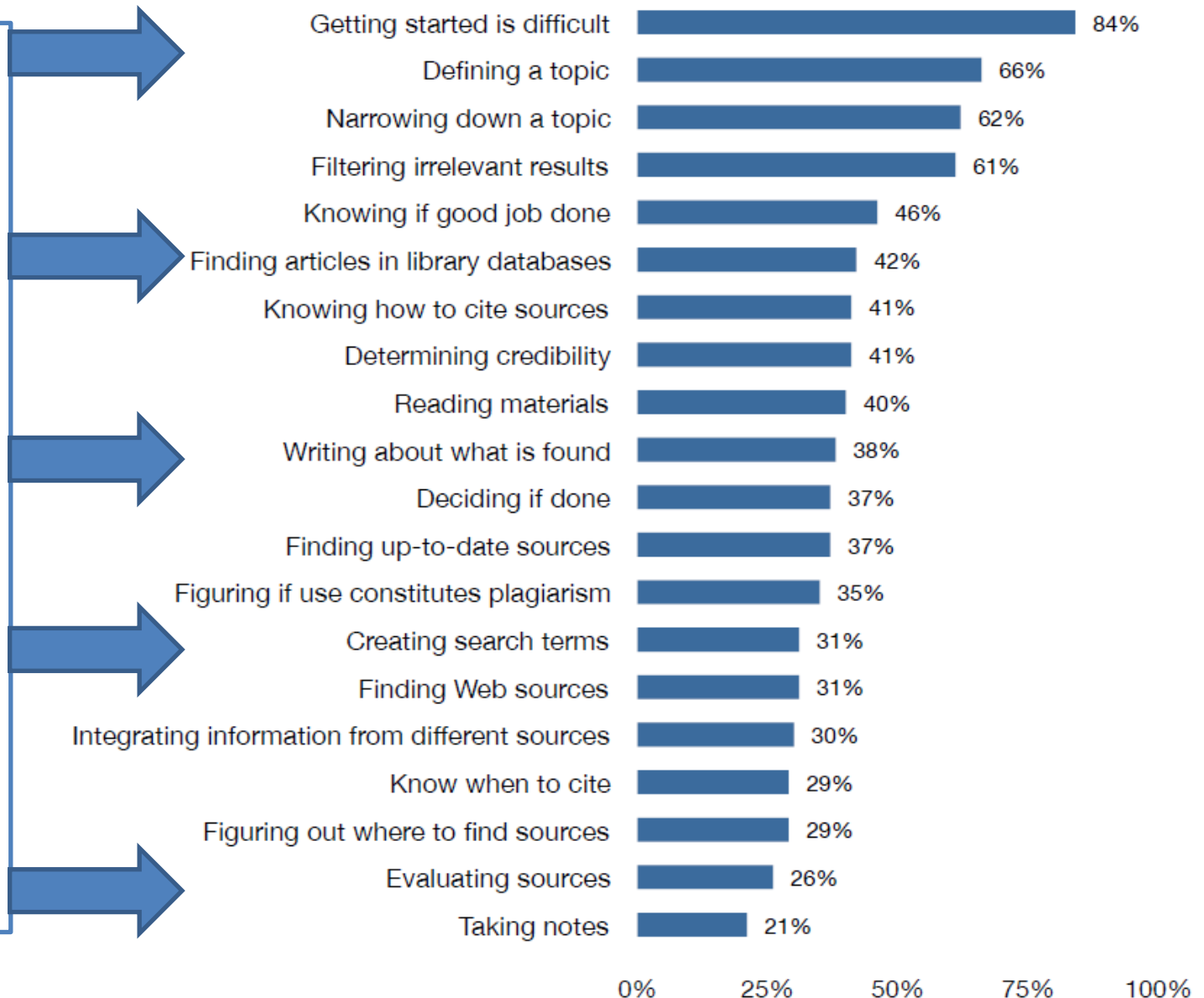


## Sources Used for Course-Related Research (2010 vs. 2009 Survey Data)



## Difficulties with Steps during the Course-Related Research Process

# Librarians

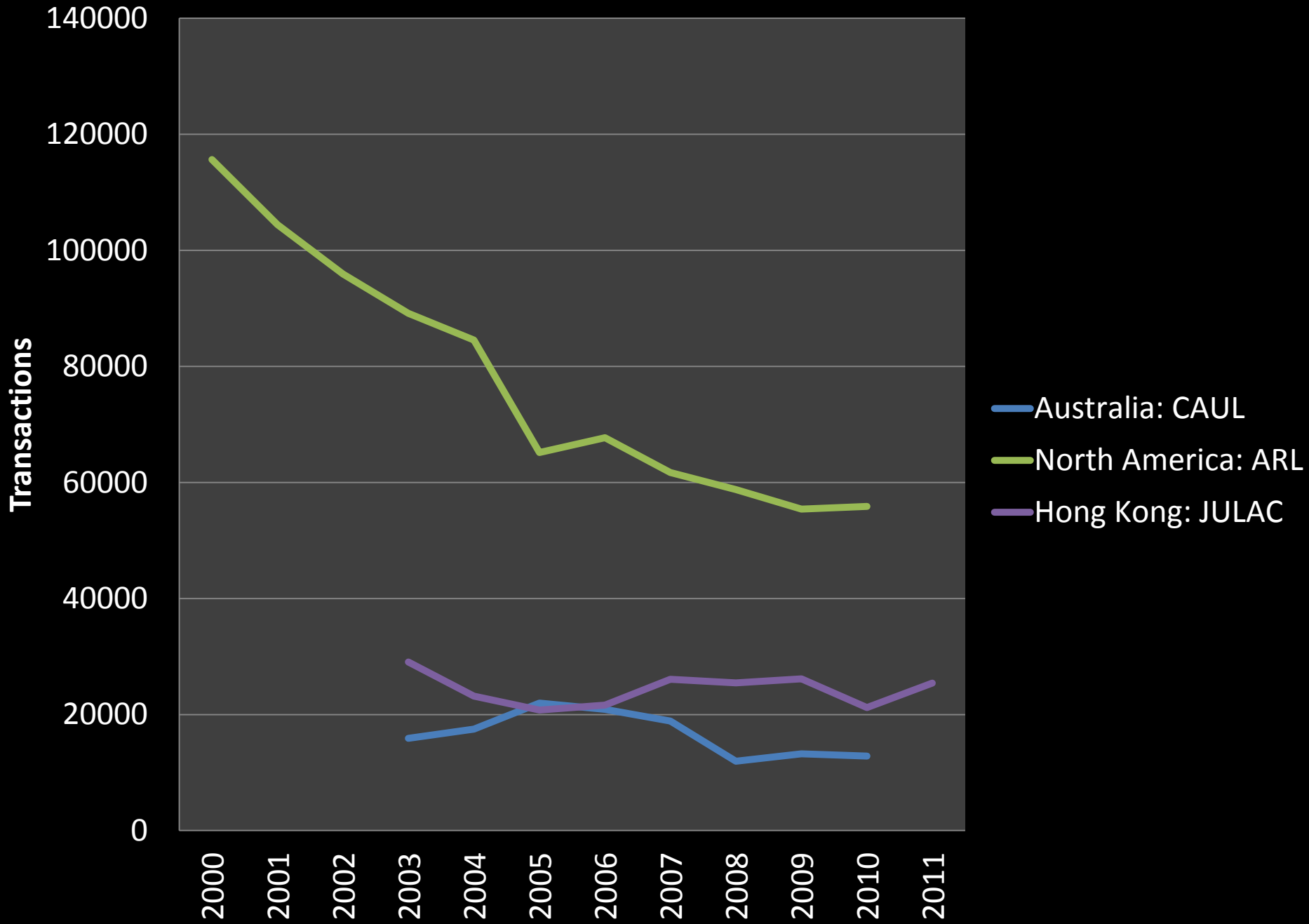


# Librarians

## Behind the Curve?

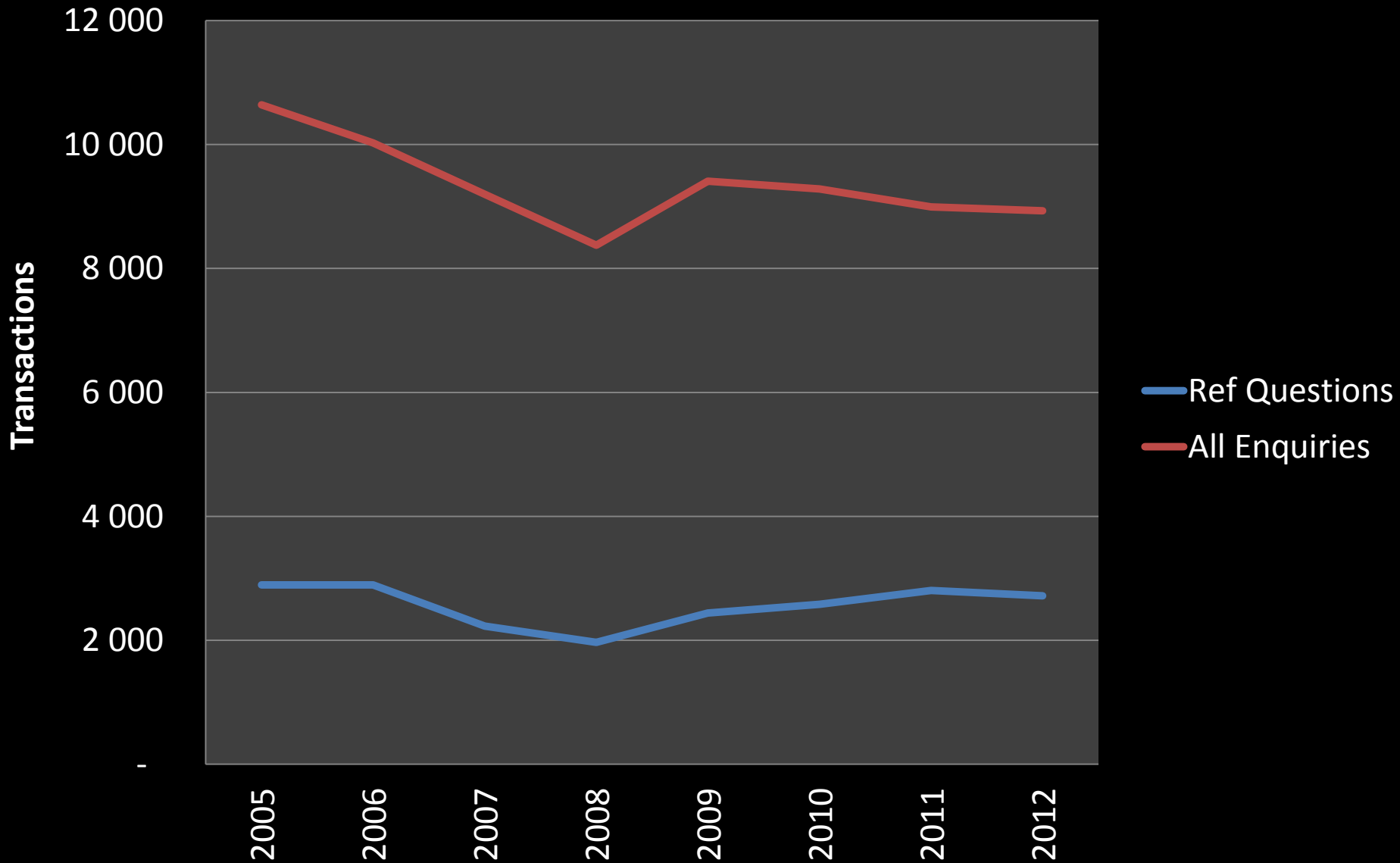
- Are we still teaching students the basics of searching, when they can actually do this on their own quite well?
- Do we need a shift towards sense-making, evaluation and use of information?
- Do our users know we can help in these areas?

# Reference Transactions





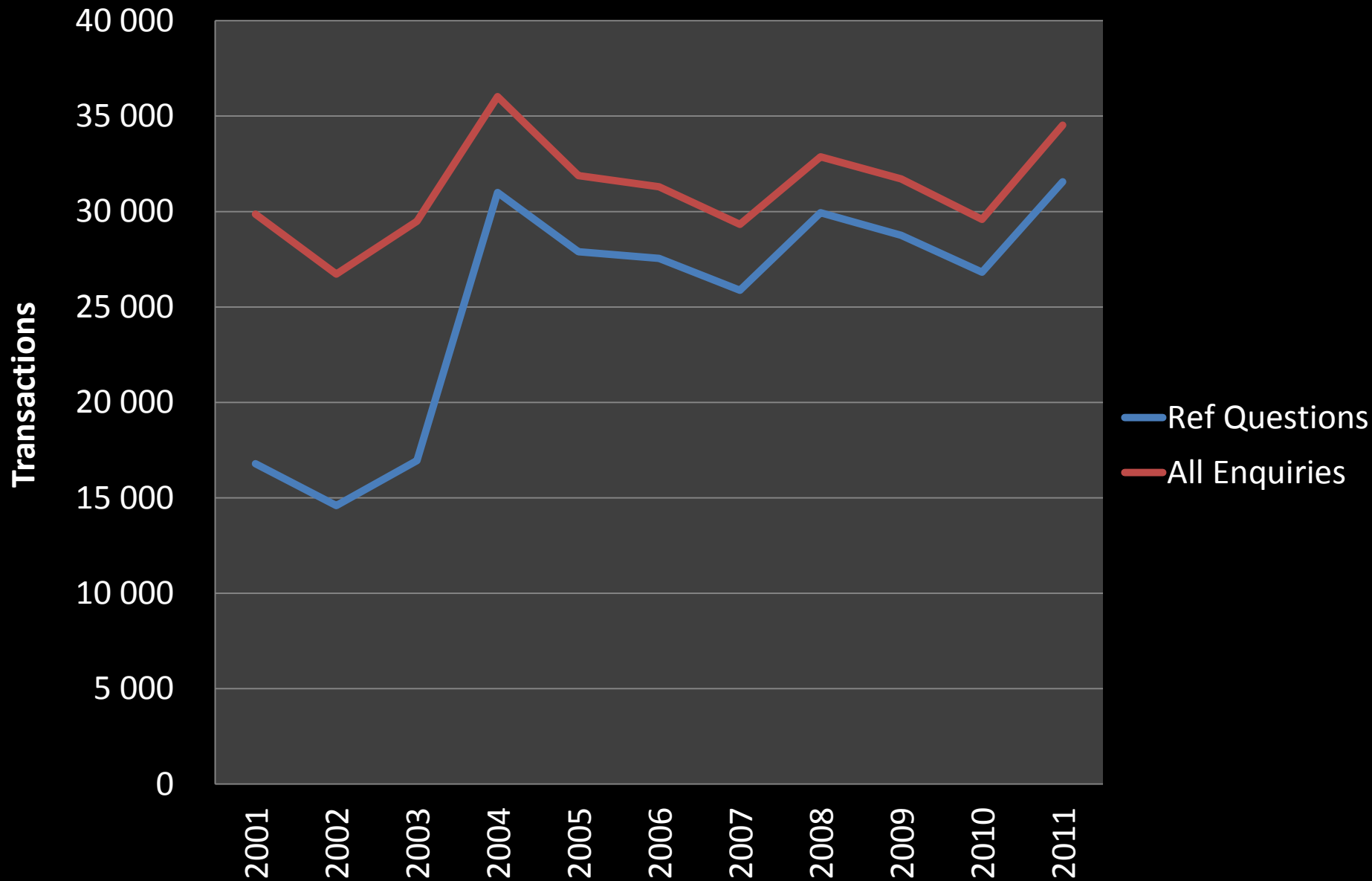
# HKBU Main Library Reference Transactions



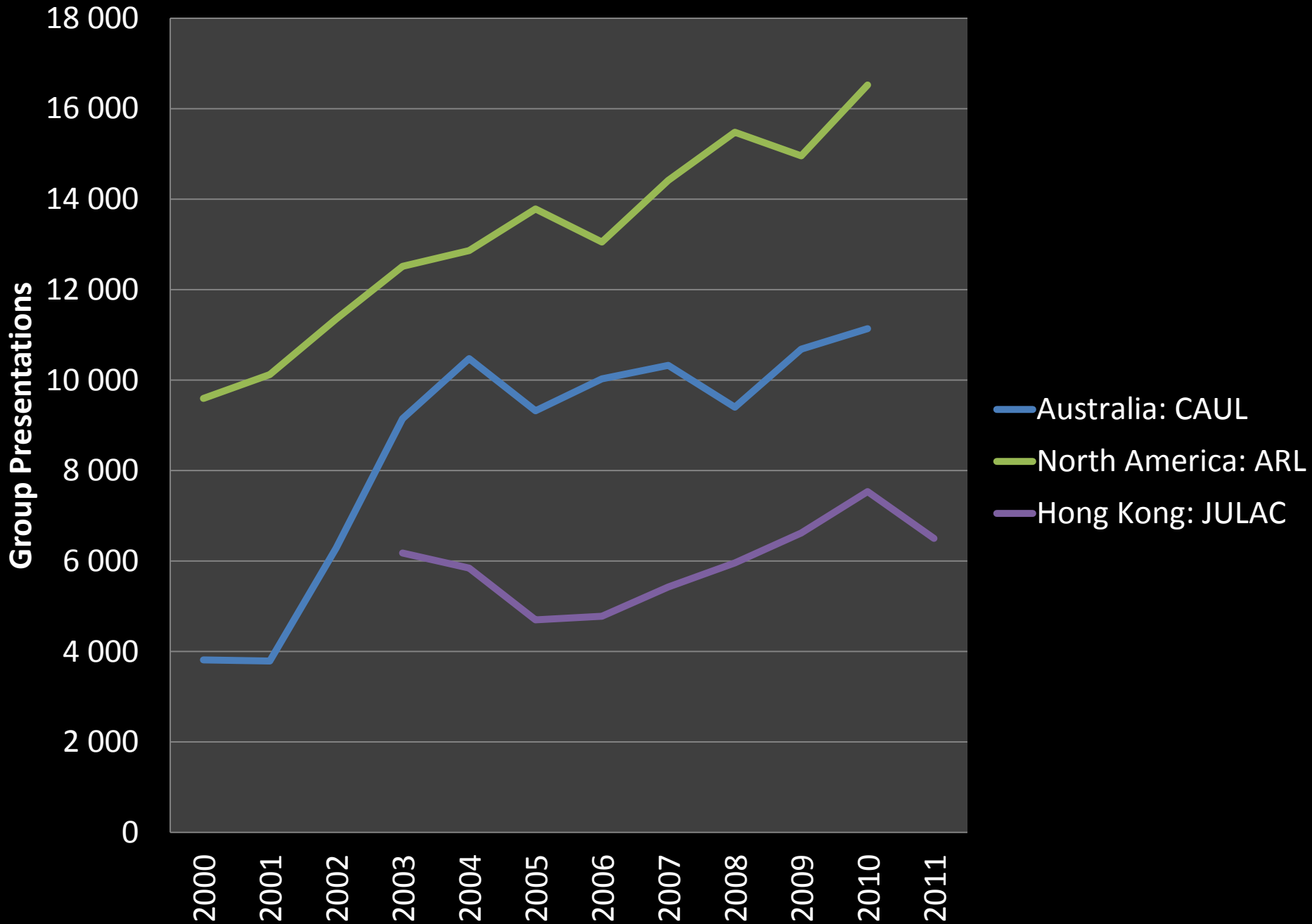




# HKU Main Library Reference Transactions

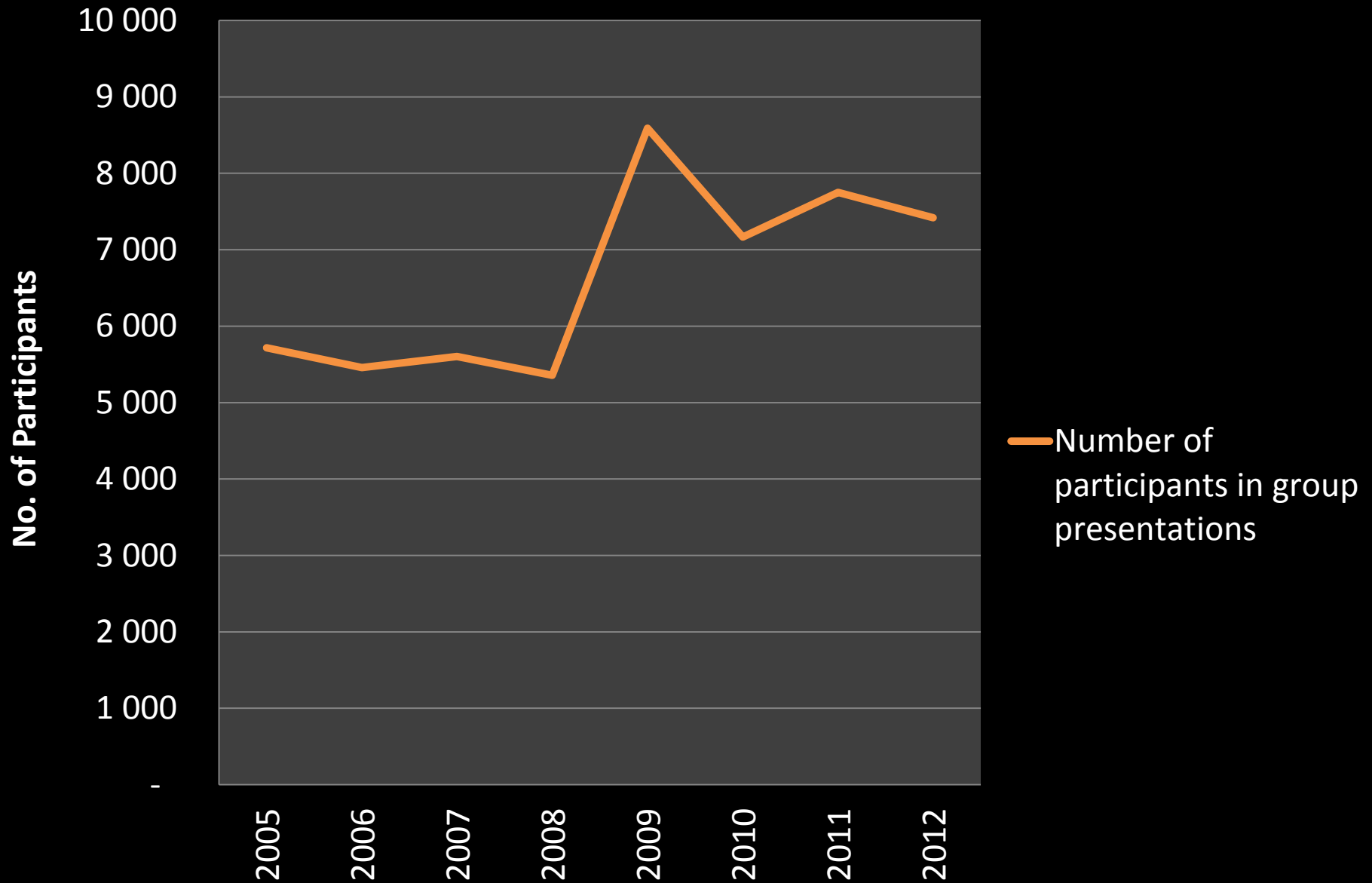


# Participants in Group Presentations



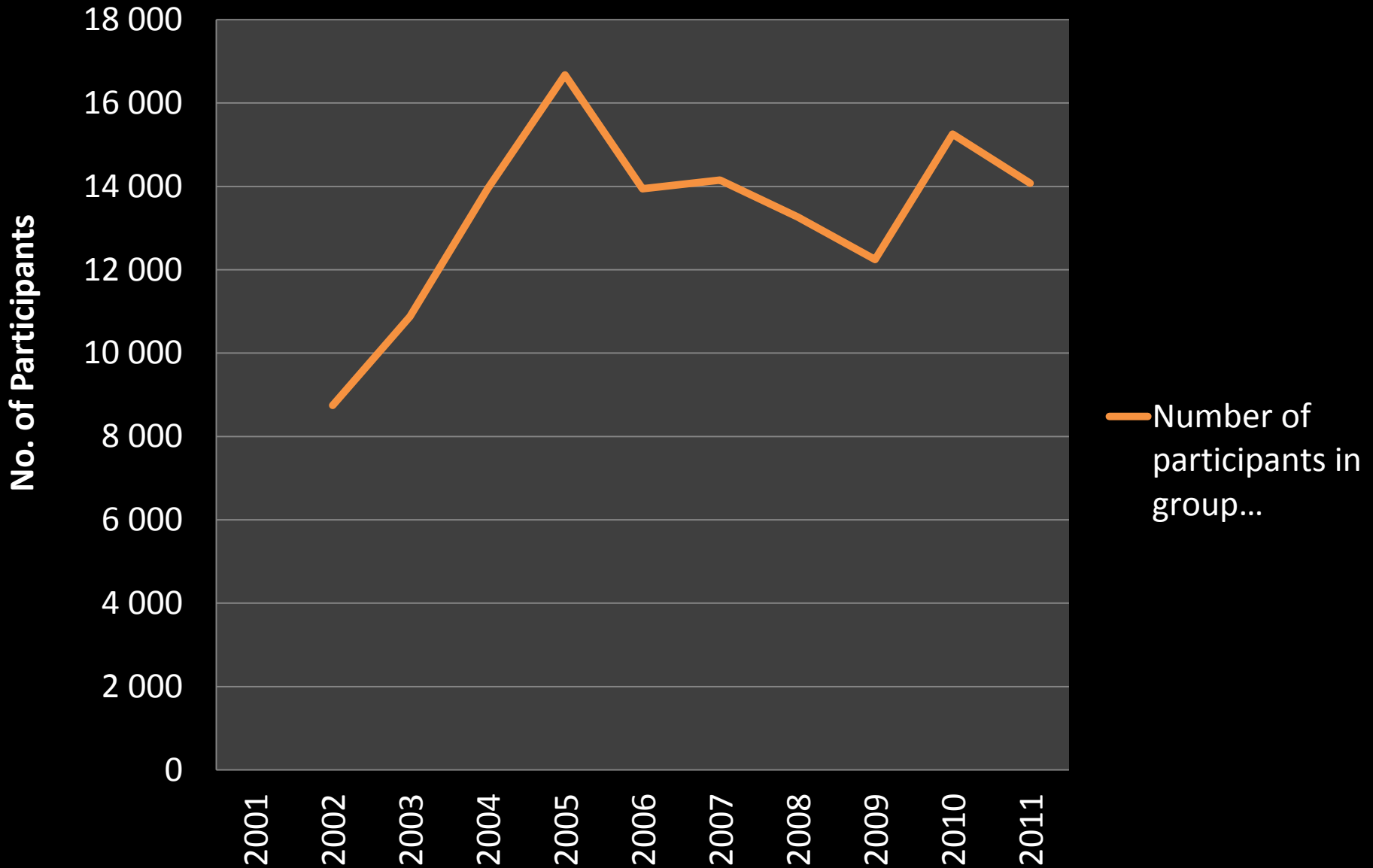


# HKBU Participants in Group Presentations

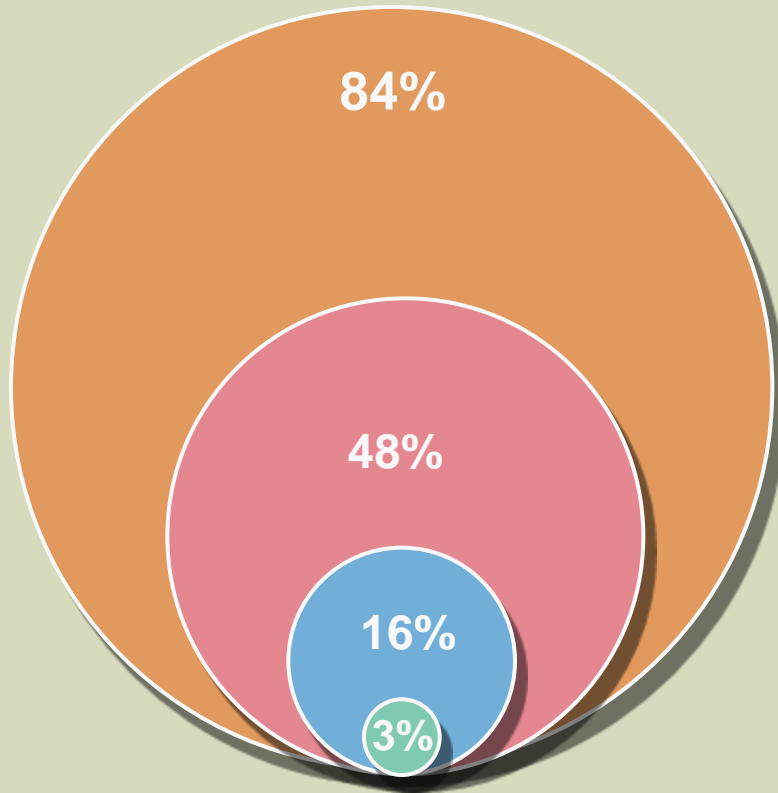




# HKU Participants in Group Presentations



# HKBU RRSA Brief Results Incoming Students - August 2011



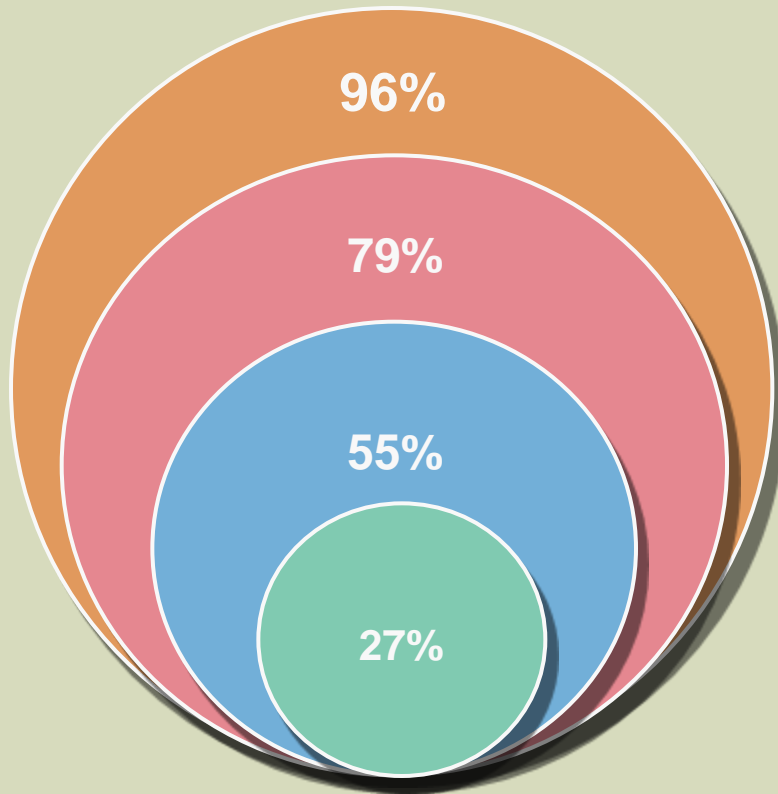
• 84% students achieved 50%

• 48% students achieved 60%

• 16% students achieved 70%

• 3% students achieved 80%

# HKBU RRSA Brief Results of Final Year Students Sample – May 2012



• 96% students achieved 50%

• 79% students achieved 60%

• 55% students achieved 70%

• 27% students achieved 80%

# HKBU Increase in Reference Questions??

- After 31% decrease 2004-2007...
- 42% increase 2007-2011
- Why?
- Instruction almost doubled & new emphasis on relationship building
- Many returning users with increasingly higher level questions



# Two Driving Questions



- What do they need?
- How can we best meet those needs?
- Shifting needs, need shifting service strategies



Would you expect regional or cultural differences?



# Understanding Our Students: Ethnographic Study of UGC Students' Research Behaviours

- What are the information-seeking behaviors of UGC undergraduate and graduate students?
- Do they (i) **think they know** how to and, (ii) **demonstrate they can** :
  - access information efficiently/effectively;
  - critically evaluate and apply information;
  - access and use information ethically and legally?

# Understanding Our Students: Ethnographic Study of UGC Students' Research Behaviours

- Perception vs demonstrated ability?
- Information literacy and perceived expertise in technology?
- Research ability and social/economic background?
- Research ability across jurisdictions
- What behaviors, if any, distinguishes Hong Kong students from others in the world?

Stay tuned for  
the results!!

Thank you

