

Federated searching and academic libraries: One size fits all?



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Federated Searching

■ Limitations:

- Less refined searching
- Lowest common denominator for databases
- Not for the advanced PhD student/faculty member

■ Benefits:

- Works well for novice users
- Serves as introduction to useful databases

Gateway to CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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Articles](#)
[Find
Databases](#)
[Find
e-Journals](#)
[ASK A LIBRARIAN](#)
[email](#) | [chat](#) | [phone](#)

Search for indexes and other reference resources in your subject area

[Library Gateway](#)
[Help](#)

Find Databases has replaced the e-Reference Collection

The e-Reference Collection has migrated to a new system, Find Articles/Find Databases. Find Databases (this page) functions in a similar fashion to the e-Reference Collection, while [Find Articles](#) incorporates new functionality.

 Keyword(s)

 Phrase

[Search Tips](#)

When searching on this page, use general rather than specific words (e.g., "philosophy" instead of "plato") in order to identify and connect to online reference resources and periodical indexes such as Agricola, Proquest, or the MLA Bibliography.

[Numbers](#) | [A-B](#) | [C-D](#) | [E-F](#) | [G-H](#) | [I-J](#) | [K-L](#) | [M-N](#) | [O-P](#) | [Q-R](#) | [S-T](#) | [U-V](#) | [W-X](#) | [Y-Z](#)

General Interest and Reference

[Almanacs, Dictionaries and](#)
[Encyclopedias](#)
[Biographies](#)
[Directories](#)
[Grants and Foundations](#)
[Greatest Hits](#)

Arts and Humanities

[Art and Architecture](#)
[History](#)
[Linguistics, Language and Literature](#)

Science and Technology

[Library Catalogs](#)
[Newspapers, Magazines and Current](#)
[Events](#)
[Publishers Catalogs](#)
[Statistical Information](#)
[Music](#)
[Philosophy and Religion](#)

Usability Tests

- Conducted fall semester 2002
- Student and faculty focus groups
- Paper (Oct. 2002), computer (Nov. 2002)

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Simultaneous searching for articles in selected databases

Library Gateway

Help

Keyword(s): [Search Tips](#)

Searches will return up to 50 hits from selected databases. For a more complete list and advanced search capabilities, start with [Find Databases](#).

General

- ArticleFirst (1990-) [[more info](#)]
- Encyclopaedia Britannica online [[more info](#)]
- OCLC electronic collections online [[more info](#)]
- ProQuest: ABI/Inform and Periodical Abstracts (1999-) [[more info](#)]

Arts & Humanities

- Art full text [[more info](#)]
- Art index retrospective [[more info](#)]
- ArticleFirst (1990-) [[more info](#)]
- Avery index to architectural periodicals (1930-) [[more info](#)]
- Dissertation abstracts online (1861-) [[more info](#)]
- Linguistics and language behavior abstracts : LLBA (1973-) [[more info](#)]
- MLA bibliography (1963-) [[more info](#)]
- Philosopher's index (1940-) [[more info](#)]
- ProQuest: ABI/Inform and Periodical Abstracts (1999-) [[more info](#)]

Usage Log Analysis

- Questions we had:
 - *Who* is using the Find Databases/Find Articles system?
 - *How* are they using the system?
 - Will people only go to Find Articles?

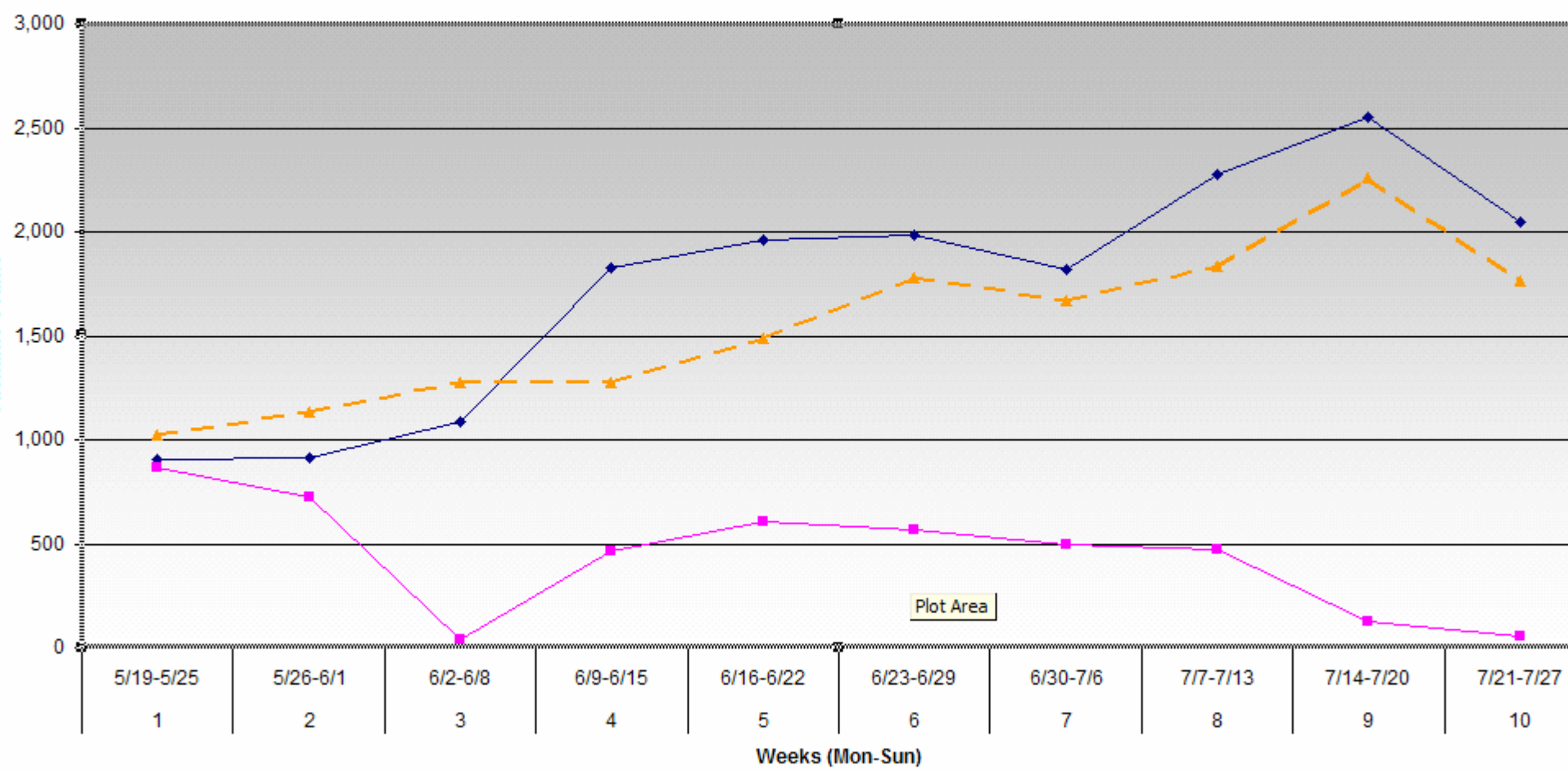
Methodology

- ENCompass Oracle usage log MS Access queries
- Apache log MS Access queries
- Perl script combining the two
- Exported to Excel for statistical analysis

Plot Area

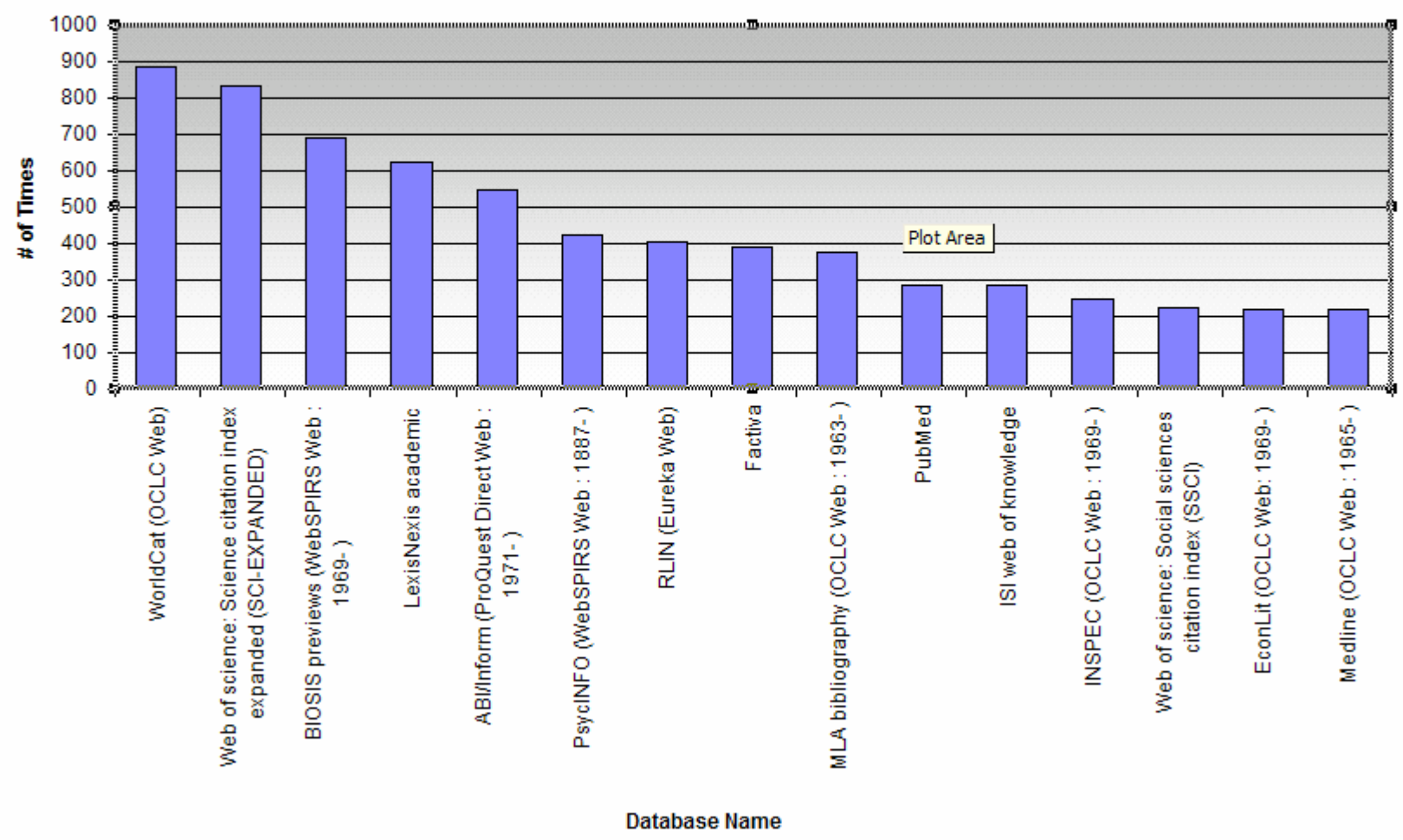
Plot Area

Weekly Totals By Filename



◆ index.html (FD Search)
■ quicksearch.html (FA Search)
▲ showtopics.html (FD Browse)

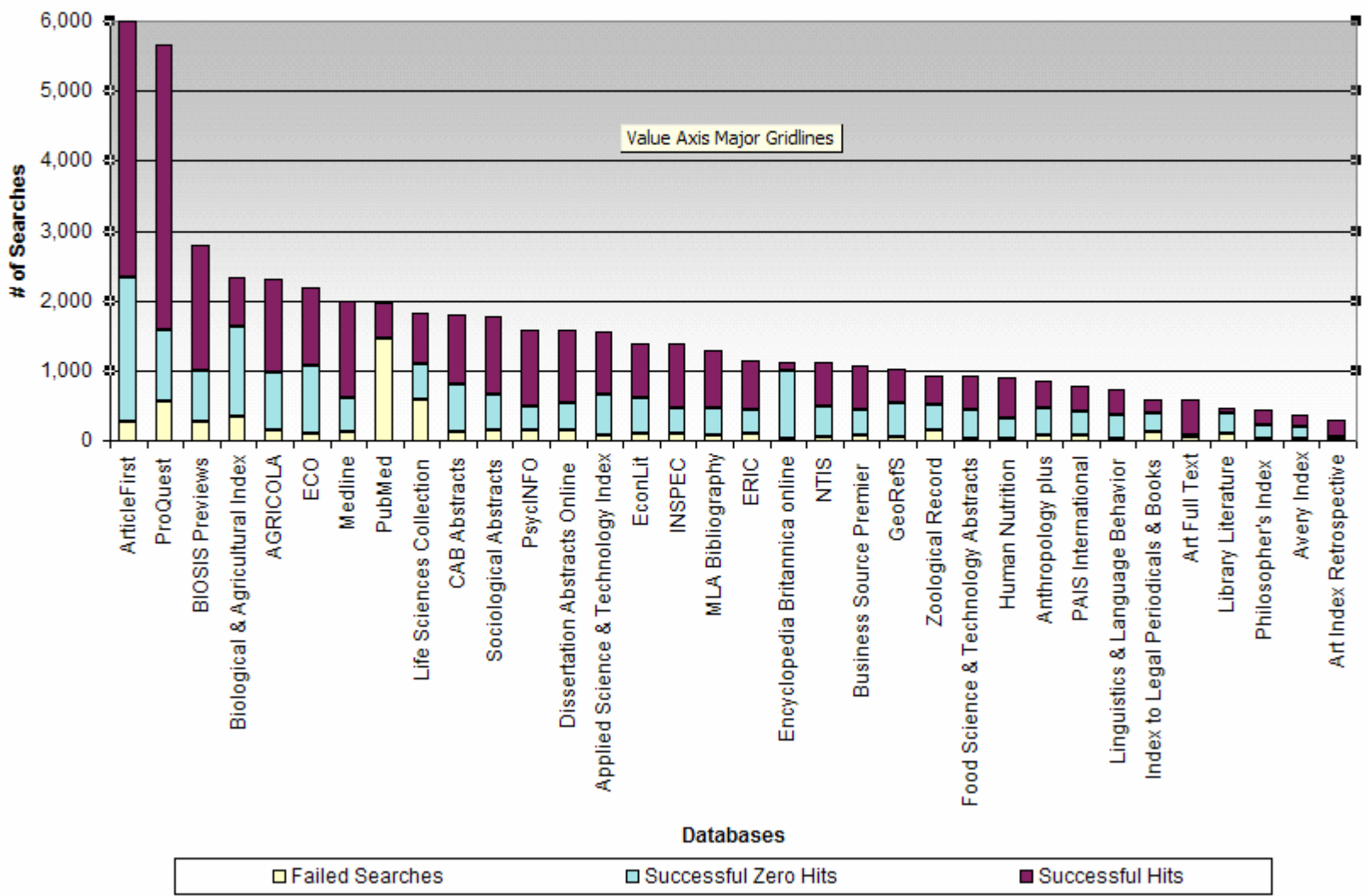
Find Databases - Top Accessed Resources



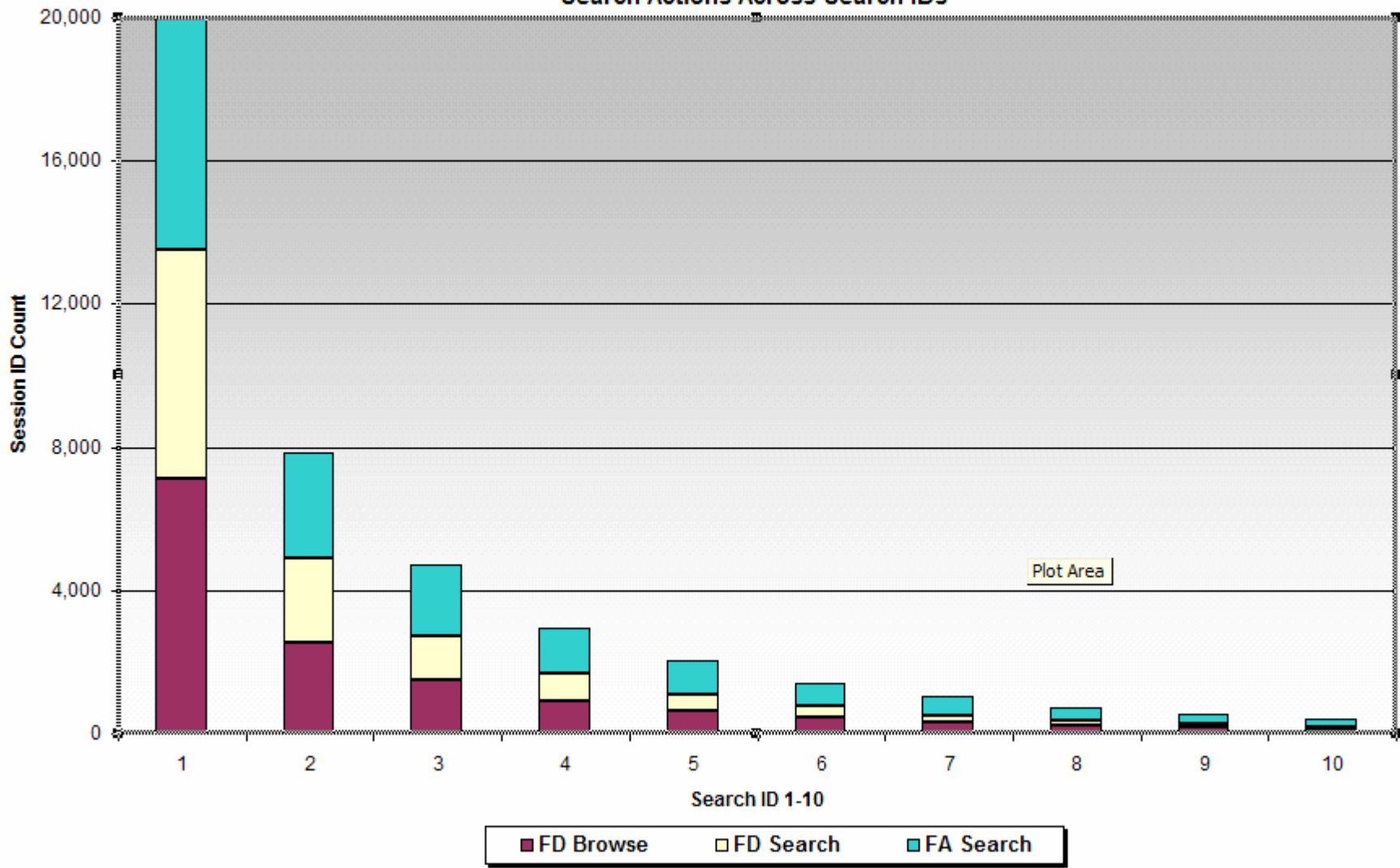
Value Axis Major Gridline

Axis M... =

Find Articles - Database Searches



Comparing User Activities
Search Actions Across Search IDs



Findings

- Top three databases in each module
- Percentage split of modules
- Limitations to analysis
- Implications for future usability tests

Conclusion

- More experienced users go to Find Databases
- Less experienced users go to Find Articles
- Neither module is used exclusively
- Determining *how* the system is used requires more qualitative analysis, such as usability testing.

What now?

- Refine stats collections and queries
- Set up methodology for library system to follow
- Suggest new usability tests



Questions?

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