

Use of the MIT Libraries Discovery Environment

December 30, 2012 – May 23, 2013

The Simplifying the Discovery Environment team implemented an analytics strategy in January to monitor use of the tabbed search interface on the Libraries homepage. This strategy collected data throughout the January IAP period and spring semester, and will act as a baseline against which the impact of future changes can be measured.

Several different data points were collected during this period, using the Google Analytics framework. The primary focus was on how often each search tab was used. Individual searches were also collected, as well as the use of links in the gray sidebar on each tab. Additional approaches were implemented during the semester, but as those have not yet been in place for sufficient time they are not summarized here.

Over the testing period, the Books + Media tab was the most popular, generating more than half of all searches (more than 49,000 between December 30 and May 23). The E-journals + Databases tab generated 31% of all searches (almost 30,000). The Articles and E-books tabs each generated 7% of the total traffic (roughly 6,500 searches each). The DSpace@MIT and Course Reserves generated significantly smaller amounts, each producing 1% of the total volume.

Over the duration of the testing period the volume of searches reflected the cycles of the Institute and local events. Activity during the January IAP period was significantly below that of the academic calendar: there were less than 4,000 searches per week for the last three weeks of January, while the average during the semester was about 5,000 per week. The week of spring break (March 24-30) saw a significant drop in activity, as well as the week following the Patriots Day holiday (April 14 – 20).

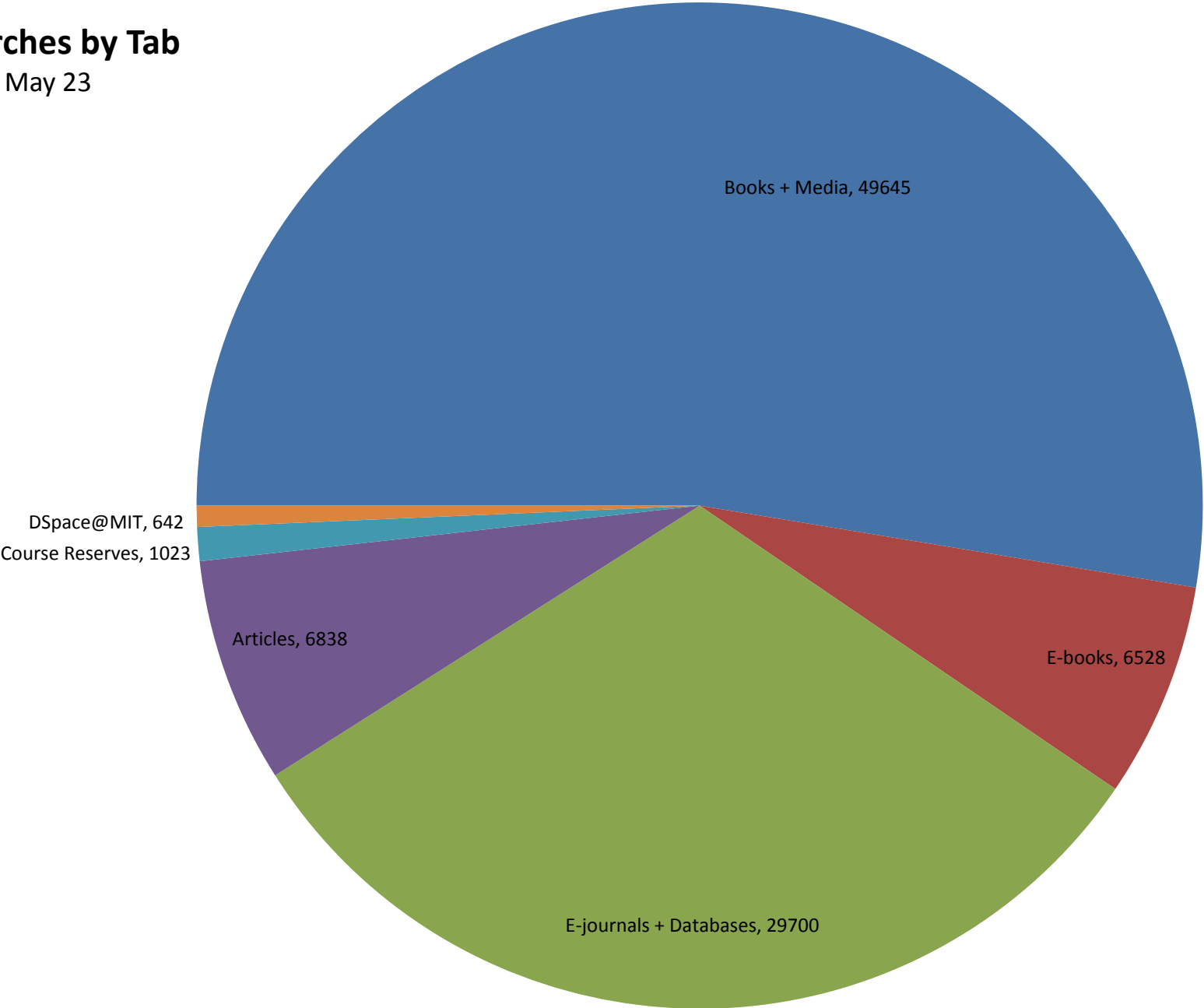
The relative use of each tab remained generally consistent through these fluctuations, with only minor variations in the utilization of each tab. The Course Reserves tab experienced an increase in use during the first few weeks of the semester, with the first week's activity roughly matching the use of the Articles tab. After three weeks, however, searches from the Course Reserves tab dropped back to previous levels. The beginning of the semester also saw an increase in use of the Books + Media tab, which similarly tailed off fairly quickly. Activity from the other tabs remained highly consistent from week to week.

For technical information about the details of how Google Analytics is being used to track events in the discovery environment, please visit the SDA wiki at:

<https://wikis.mit.edu/confluence/display/LIBRD/Event+Tracking+implementation+in+Google+Analytics>

Total Library Searches by Tab

December 30 - May 23



Weekly Library Searches By Tab

December 30 - May 23

