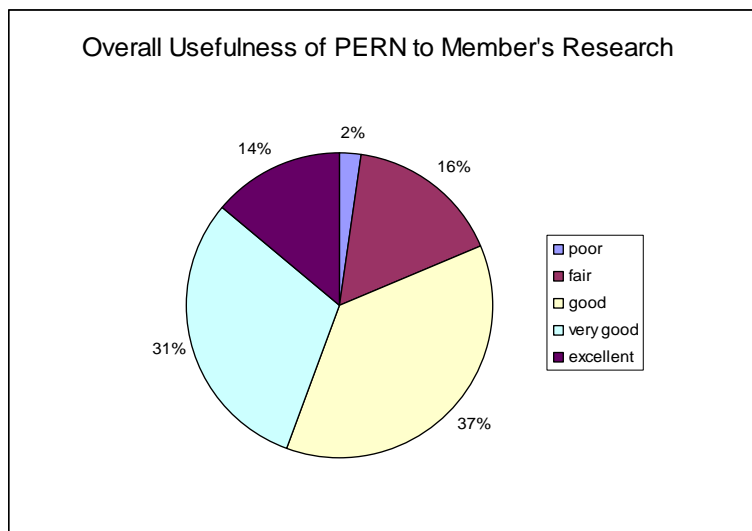


Results of a Membership Survey The Population-Environment Research Network (PERN) January 2007

The Population-Environment Research Network seeks to advance academic research on population and the environment by promoting online scientific exchange among researchers from social and natural science disciplines worldwide. From December 2006 through January 2007 a survey was conducted of PERN's membership. PERN currently has 1,290 members, and the survey had 303 responses, meaning that 23.5% of the PERN membership responded. No identifying information was included in the survey.

I. Overall Evaluation

There were 238 valid responses to the question: "Please rate PERN along the following lines: It's overall usefulness to my research"



In the following tables, we present the response to the above survey question by the characteristics of respondents. Values range from 1-5 (1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent). We highlight the respondent characteristics with top scores regardless of the number of respondents (hence top scoring categories may not be statistically robust). The survey suggests that Africans and Latin Americans find the service most useful; that social scientists, development practitioners, physical scientist and planners rate PERN highest; and that graduate students and researchers are the occupations that most appreciate PERN services.

Overall Usefulness of PERN by Duration of Membership

duration	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
<1 year	3.7568	37	1.01120
1-2 years	3.1429	70	.88932
> 2 years	3.3969	131	.99753
Total	3.3782	238	.98505

Overall Usefulness of PERN by Region

region	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Africa	3.8049	41	.90054
Asia	3.4667	75	.87508
Europe	2.8286	35	1.09774
Latin America & Caribbean	3.5806	31	.99244
North America	3.2157	51	.94475
Oceania	2.8000	5	.83666
Total	3.3782	238	.98505

Overall Usefulness of PERN by Discipline (Respondents could choose more than one)

discipline	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Social Science	3.4934	152	.98328
Earth or Environ'tal Science	3.4021	97	.95372
Physical Science	4.0000	5	1.00000
Health Science	3.3600	25	.99499
Planning and Architecture	4.0000	8	.53452
Agricultural Engineering	3.2727	11	.78625
Economic Dev Practitioner	3.7200	25	1.02144
Other	3.4565	46	1.04789
Total	3.3782	369	.98505

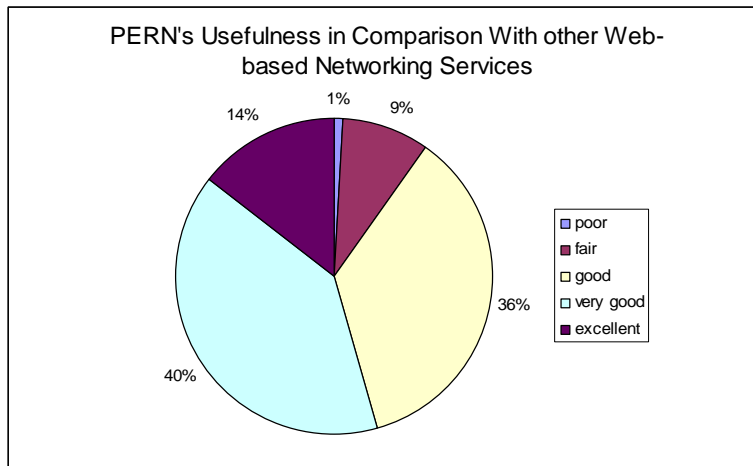
Overall Usefulness of PERN by Occupation

occupation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Faculty member	3.5156	64	.97577
Researcher	3.5490	51	.90142
Graduate Student	3.5556	18	.85559
Undergraduate Student	2.8182	11	.98165
Staff Member of Int'l Agency	3.2609	23	1.05388
Staff Member of Govt Agency	3.5000	28	.83887
Staff Member of NGO	3.6000	5	.89443
Staff Member of Foundation	2.8889	9	1.16667
Retired or Other	2.9655	29	1.11748
Total	3.3782	238	.98505

Overall Usefulness of PERN by Interest Level

interest	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Principal research interest	3.9524	42	1.03482
One of principal interests	3.4667	120	.91609
Closely allied to principal interest	3.0233	43	.88609
A field to monitor	2.8125	32	.82060
Of limited interest	2.0000	1	.
Total	3.3782	238	.98505

There were 238 valid responses to the question: “Please rate PERN along the following lines: In comparison to other web-based networking or research resources.” The mean score was 3.58 (half way between good and very good), slightly higher than the overall score of 3.38.



In the following tables, we present the response to the above survey question by the characteristics of respondents. Values range from 1-5 (1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent).

PERN Compared to Other Networks

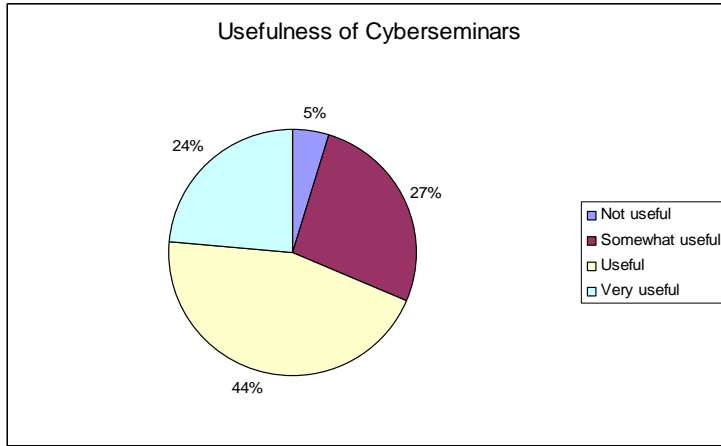
duration	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
<1 year	3.7250	40	.81610
1-2 years	3.4516	62	.86228
> 2 years	3.6032	126	.89514
Total	3.5833	228	.87404

PERN Compared to Other Networks by Region

region	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Africa	3.8293	41	.80319
Asia	3.6575	73	.88536
Europe	3.3750	32	.83280
Latin America & Caribbean	3.8387	31	.77875
North America	3.3043	46	.91578
Oceania	2.8000	5	.44721
Total	3.5833	228	.87404

II. Cyberseminars

Cyberseminars are periodic (once or twice a year) internet-based seminars on population-environment research topics. There were 211 valid responses to the question, “Please rate the usefulness of following PERN services to your work: Cyberseminars.” The median rating was 2.87, or “useful.”



In the tables below values range from 1-4 (1=not useful, 2=somewhat useful, 3=useful, 4=very useful). Participants from Latin America were most positive about the cyberseminars, followed by those from Asia and Europe. Graduate and undergraduate students appear to benefit most from cyberseminars, but almost all professions rate seminars as “useful” on average.

Usefulness of Cyberseminars by Region

Region	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Africa	2.7805	41	.88069
Asia	2.8919	74	.73219
Europe	2.8400	25	.94340
Latin America & Caribbean	3.2273	22	.86914
North America	2.8085	47	.82458
Oceania	2.5000	2	.70711
Total	2.8768	211	.82461

Usefulness of Cyberseminars by Profession

Occupation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Faculty member	2.9531	64	.74386
Researcher	3.0455	44	.64536
Graduate Student	3.1176	17	.85749
Undergraduate Student	3.1111	9	.92796
Staff Member of Int'l Agency	2.5500	20	.82558
Staff Member of Govt Agency	2.6818	22	.83873
Staff Member of NGO	3.0000	2	1.41421
Staff Member of Foundation	2.5000	10	1.26930
Retired or Other	2.6957	23	.92612
Total	2.8768	211	.82461

There was not much variation in the overall appreciation for individual cyberseminars, with most of them scoring in the “good” to “very good” range. The following table was in response to the question, “Please rate the following cyberseminars in terms of their intellectual content and utility to you.” Values range from 1-5 (1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent).

Mean and Standard Deviation of Scores by Cyberseminar Topic

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Household Microdemographics	3.2889	135	.90493
Pop & MDG7	3.4014	142	.92299
Urban Expansion	3.5492	122	.89167
Consumption	3.4180	122	.94336
Air Pollution	3.2396	96	.94863
Deforestation	3.3300	100	.99549
International Migration	3.2500	96	.96245
GSP seminar 2	3.3444	90	1.01849
GSP seminar 1	3.4186	86	1.04561
Valid N (listwise)		63	

III. Miscellaneous PERN Services

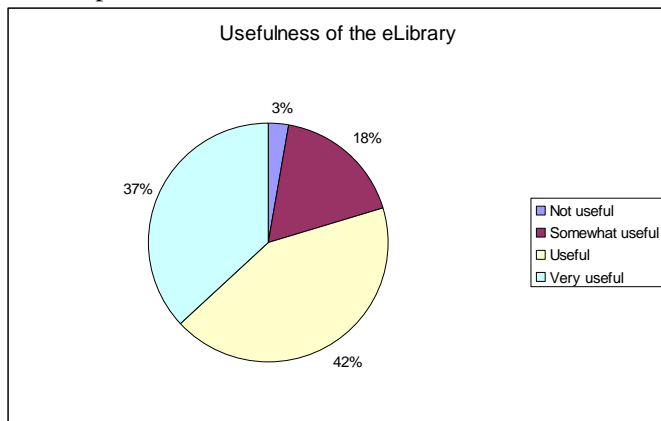
The following was in response to the question, “Please rate the usefulness of following PERN services to your work.” In the chart and tables below values range from 1-4 (1=not useful, 2=somewhat useful, 3=useful, 4=very useful). The What’s New bulletins and the eLibrary topped the list in terms of usefulness.

Usefulness of Various PERN services

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Usefulness of Discussion List	2.8782	238	.75043
Usefulness of eLibrary	3.1410	227	.79681
Usefulness of Jobs/Funding Page	3.0873	229	.87923
Usefulness of Membership Database	2.7766	188	.84213
Usefulness of What’s New Bulletins	3.2586	263	.70553
Valid N (listwise)		153	

A. eLibrary

The eLibrary is a bibliographic database of citations to recent peer-reviewed articles, gray literature, websites, curricula, and other materials. The utility of the eLibrary was evaluated by 227 respondents, with responses broken down as follows. Over one-third of respondents found the eLibrary “very useful.”



In the tables below values range from 1-4 (1=not useful, 2=somewhat useful, 3=useful, 4=very useful). On average users find the eLibrary useful, with two regions, Latin America and Asia, slightly higher on the scale. Graduate students and researchers also appear to be particularly appreciative of the resource.

Usefulness of eLibrary by Region

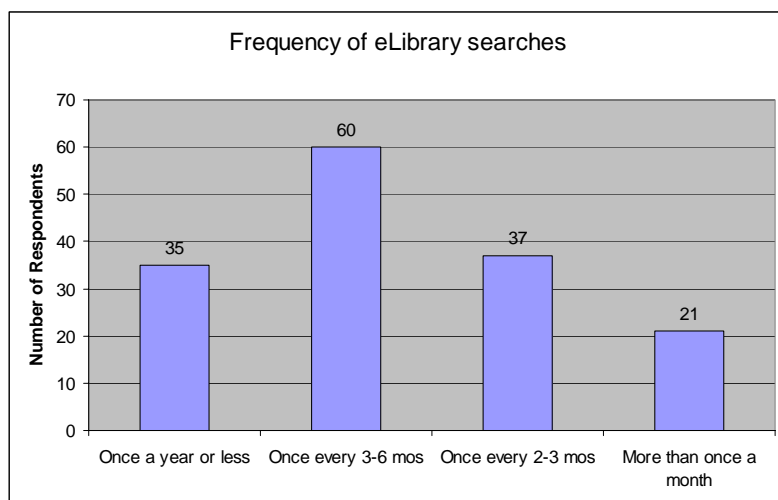
Region	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Africa	3.1042	48	.77842
Asia	3.2237	76	.80992
Europe	3.1613	31	.82044
Latin America & Caribbean	3.4167	24	.65386
North America	2.9111	45	.82082
Oceania	2.6667	3	.57735
Total	3.1410	227	.79681

Researchers and graduate students find the eLibrary particularly useful.

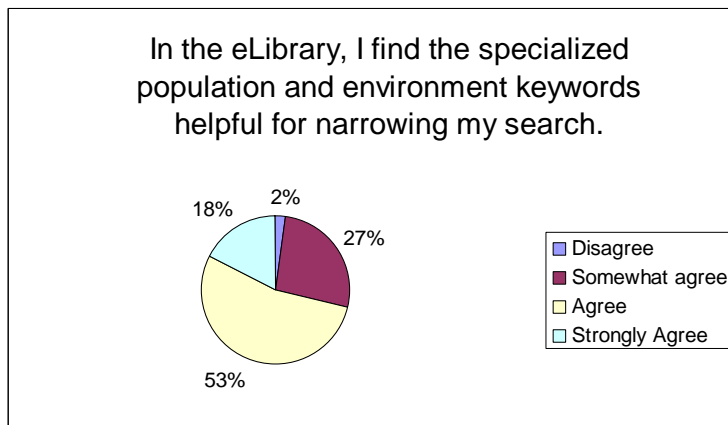
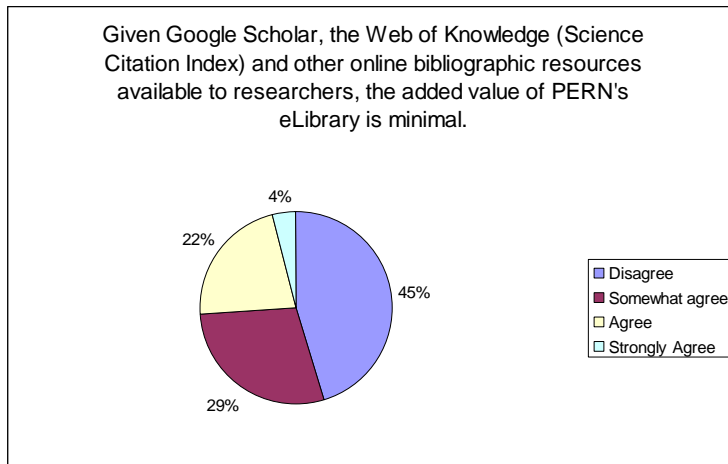
Usefulness of eLibrary by Occupation

Occupation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Faculty member	3.1639	61	.85985
Researcher	3.3469	49	.72316
Graduate Student	3.1667	18	.70711
Undergraduate Student	2.9000	10	.87560
Staff Member of Int'l Agency	3.1923	26	.80096
Staff Member of Govt Agency	2.8966	29	.77205
Staff Member of NGO	3.0000	4	.81650
Staff Member of Foundation	2.2000	5	.83666
Retired or Other	3.2000	25	.70711
Total	3.1410	227	.79681

Among 153 respondents who said that they have used the eLibrary, they use it with the following regularity.

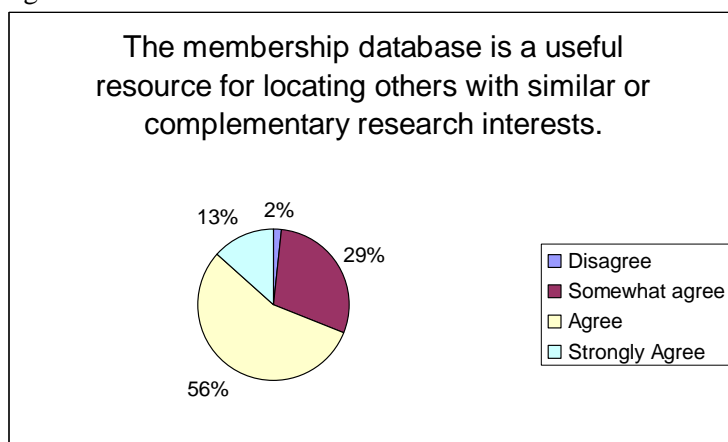


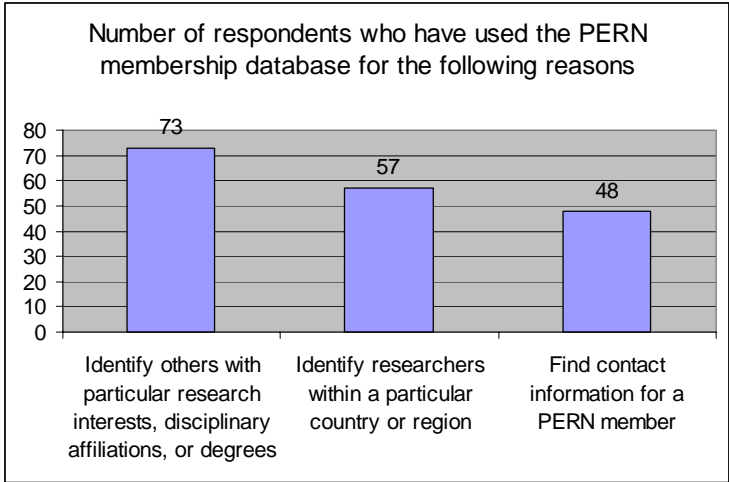
The following charts depict responses to the statements in the titles. Respondents find that there is a place for the eLibrary despite the proliferation of other web-based bibliographic databases, and that the specialized population-environment key words are helpful.



B. Membership Database

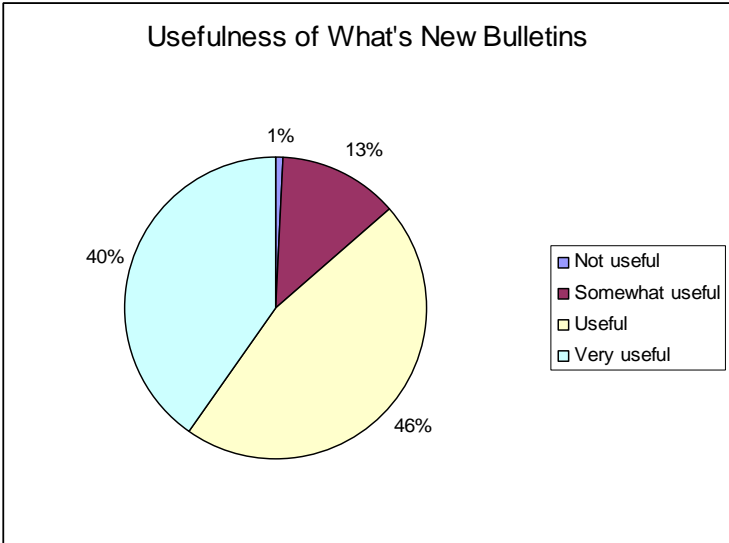
The following charts depict responses to the statements in the titles. A total of 178 respondents indicate that they have used the membership database to locate others with similar research interests in given regions.



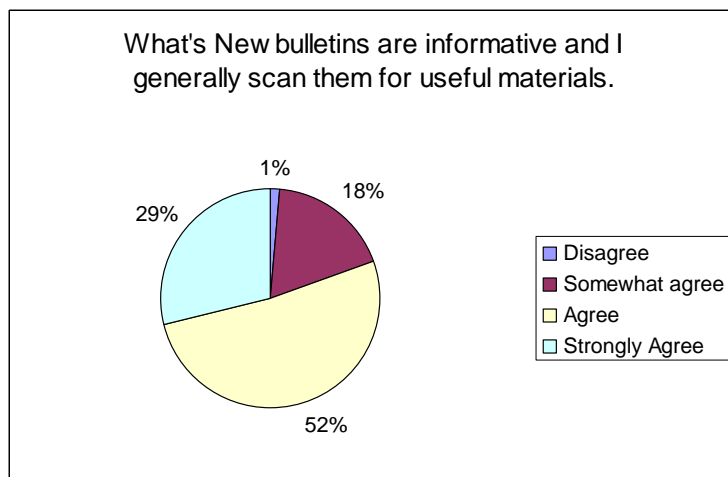


C. What’s New Bulletins, Conference Calendar, and Jobs & Funding Page

The What’s New are periodic (every 2-3 month) email bulletins that announce conferences and workshops, job and funding opportunities, and new eLibrary citations. The What’s New bulletin is PERN’s most highly rated service, with fully 40 percent of respondents finding it “very useful” and another 46 percent finding it “useful.”



Eighty-one percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the bulletins are informative, indicating that they scan them for useful materials.



In the tables below values range from 1-4 (1=not useful, 2=somewhat useful, 3=useful, 4=very useful). In general Africans and Latin Americans get the most out of What's New bulletins. They are also particularly useful to researchers and the staff of international agencies.

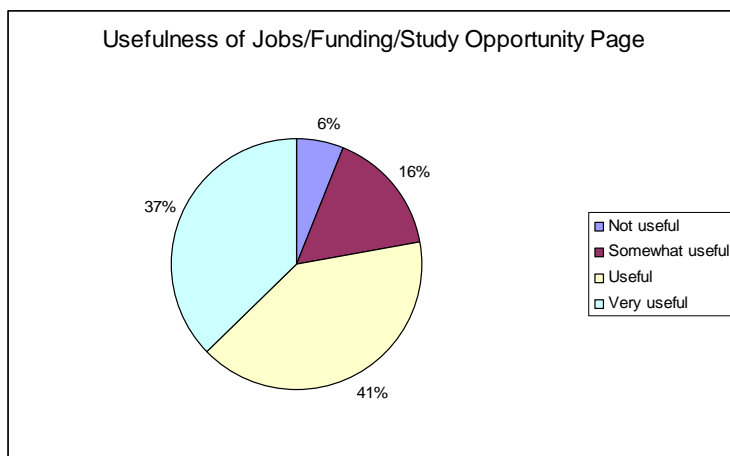
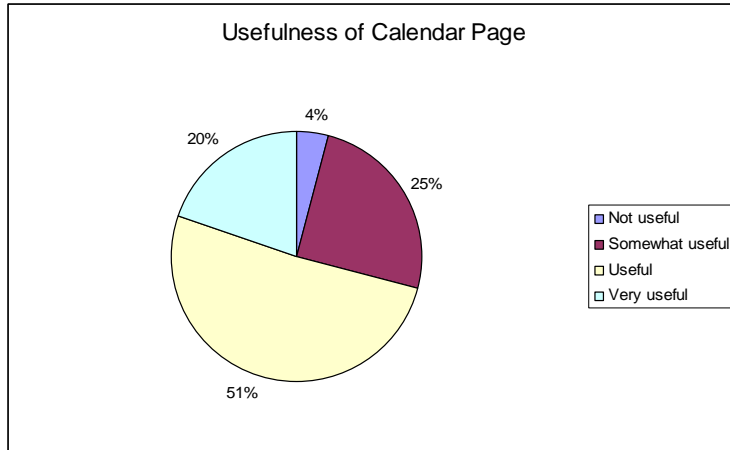
Usefulness of Whats New Bulletins by Region

region	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Africa	3.3673	49	.63554
Asia	3.2637	91	.72778
Europe	3.1714	35	.82197
Latin America & Caribbean	3.4688	32	.67127
North America	3.0980	51	.64047
Oceania	3.0000	5	.70711
Total	3.2586	263	.70553

Usefulness of Whats New Bulletins by Occupation

occupation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Faculty member	3.2394	71	.72634
Researcher	3.4000	55	.62657
Graduate Student	3.3500	20	.67082
Undergraduate Student	3.0714	14	.73005
Staff Member of Int'l Agency	3.3846	26	.69725
Staff Member of Govt Agency	3.3000	30	.59596
Staff Member of NGO	3.2000	5	.83666
Staff Member of Foundation	2.6667	9	.86603
Retired or Other	3.1212	33	.78093
Total	3.2586	263	.70553

The Calendar Page and the Jobs/Funding/Study Opportunities Page are both extracted from items carried in the What's New bulletins, but organized in such a way that the information is easier to find and use. Thirty-seven percent of respondents found the Jobs Page to be "very useful."



IV. Open-ended Comments on PERN's Services

The following comments were provided by respondents at the end of the survey. We have edited the comments lightly for spelling and grammar, removed any identifying information, and grouped them according to positive feedback (section A), mixed feedback (section B), and suggestions (section C). Otherwise they are copied verbatim from the responses received.

A. Positive Feedback

- I find the discussion on PERN useful to my interests but do not use it for any other purpose.
- PERN allows us to access at many useful document through internet. And PERN helps Third World country researchers notify others about their research and publications. My congratulation to PERN.
- It is very useful service. Some of the things are not known to members, so the questionnaire was useful.
- Generally I am happy with the information I get from you.

- I like this network.
- You have provided good environment for learning especially for those in the sub-Saharan Africa region where information about current issues are scare to come by.
- At this moment its facilities are excellent. I do not have any recommendation now. I am using this site just for six months. I think it is providing very good services for the new researcher like me. I wish more success of this society.
- PERN Services are excellent. I have no more comments.
- I think in my opinion the PERN is an important source of information especially for developing country's scholars in relation to population and environmental issues. Therefore, I encourage you to give others the chance to have membership in PERN. [*editor's note: PERN is open to all researchers from every country free-of-charge.*]
- I appreciate all the effort and work invested in the site. It has been very useful to my research. The population-environmental agenda is so complex and huge that maintaining track of different perspectives and recent discussions is difficult; the web page and cyberseminars make it more easy. Thank you very much.
- The information is very useful to me and my students. Thank you very much.
- PERN is a useful source of relevant and up-to-date materials on population-environment related issues.
- I have not used the data base so far and therefore I am not in position to rate/grade/rank the facility on my own. Some times I go through the discussions sent by PERN and find them really good, but I have not participated so far.
- I wasn't aware of e-library. I would like to make use of this. E-library is a valuable source of knowledge for scientists, particularly from developing countries. So it's a great resource provided by PERN. Thank you
- Its really very very helpful. I've gained a lot from this particular site.
- Thank you very much for the service. I find it useful as it is. No suggestions as of now.
- I appreciate my PERN membership because it links me to practitioners, who are hard to stay in touch with within academia.
- I am not currently doing research, unfortunately, but remain interested in the field and hope to focus more on it in a near future, so it is important for me to stay up to date, the list serve is a good help for that. PE is a small area, and seems only limited to academics at times, as very little funding is available for applied work in the area.
- Well done! Keep it up!
- Keep up the good work.
- I do not use it very often but I think it is very important that it exists and I am grateful to those who run it.
- I actively use it in my research, by drawing on readings from the cyberseminar for my students, and by directing them to the cyberseminars for additional information.
- I have not used the PERN extensively but whatever I'm receiving in the e-mail is quite useful. I would like it to grow further.
- Thank you for the survey. Now I know it better and I can benefit of the other parts of it more and more. Again thank you very much.
- I enjoy using this site very much.
- I think PERN allows anyone the possibility of interesting communications in many fields, particularly to meet interesting researchers at low cost and to make the others benefit

from your own experiences. Traveling is becoming more and more problematic, especially if you are in retirement.

B. Mixed Feedback

- The relatively low rating [I gave] for cyberseminars is due to misuse of the cyberseminars by a few polemic writers but who bombard the seminar with emails. Otherwise the contributions are good and are of interest.
- Recently the cyberseminar organizers have taken it upon themselves to screen out postings that they believe represent advocacy positions -- this autocratic behavior weakens the cyberseminar process!
- Sorry, I can't recall many details from the older cyberseminars.
- Maybe not open enough to other languages (especially to French speakers, including those in Africa).
- Actually I have not used eLibrary in a year or two. So I cannot give very useful feedback on it now. Before I found it hard to use, at least, one could not cross classify topics and by region, year of publication, etc., which hopefully is possible now. [*editor's note: It is possible to select multiple keywords so that your result matches all criteria.*]
- I fear my response to the survey suggests I'm not much interested but I do very much appreciate the regular email list-serve of news and information in population & environment and hope to continue receiving those.
- Sorry, but it is of marginal value to me. For two related reasons (a) my personal views are far more Malthusian than average; (b) I find much of the discussion either too basic or too detailed and insufficiently relevant to repay the effort. Sorry.

C. Suggestions

Topical focus (of Cybersminars, etc.)

- It should cover more topics of population vis-à-vis environment like the ecology of longevity.
- It could be interesting to discuss more topics about environment-behavior transactions (risk perception, risk communication. Pro-environmental behavior, ...).
- Looking forward to read on topics related to environmental health.
- I would like to see more info on the social issues regarding waste management.
- You can post issues related to specialized problems in research & research methodology
- I would welcome more attention paid to the role that annual land value tax may play in helping us improve the environment and share natural wealth.
- PERN should think of organizing a seminar or two in Africa on critical issues affecting the continent. Such could be done in conjunction with a continental organization and in one of the Universities in Nigeria.

Timeliness and structure of information dissemination

- I would like to have the e-mails more structured.
- Some announcements that are time bound at times get to me late
- If news updates could be provided with more time at hand prior to deadlines, it would be more helpful - though I understand that this must be very difficult to implement.
- Please send information about international seminar, conference, workshop by email at the earliest possible.
- Some PERN adverts come later than their deadlines. Should consider before time adverts to enable respondents have enough time to prepare their submissions.
- Coming from a developing economy country, I will suggest that information on seminars and job opportunities as well as other relevant services be provided to us early and not near the submission date because of the poor postal and communication problem in Africa. This will allow us in Africa to participate more in the opportunities offered by PERN. [*editor's note: this is a clear concern of the membership in developing countries and we are doing our best to address this by sending announcements of grant or study opportunities via the PERN discussion list as soon as we receive them. Members should not wait for the periodic What's New bulletins to look for such announcements, since as has been pointed out, these announcements often come to late to be useful.*]
- I don't know that there is an eLibrary in PERN's data base. I will start looking into it. I am also not aware of membership data base. It would be nice if the membership data base is available according to research areas. Cyberseminar dates and themes should be announced sufficiently in advance, at least two or three months before the date of beginning. [*editor's note: the membership database does allow members to search by research area.*]
- It would be good to have a monthly email reminder to check out new information on the website, mentioning one newsworthy article, course, etc. with the link. We need to be reminded of this excellent resource on a monthly basis.
- Need to be organized/systematic mailing (e.g. once a week or so) with information accumulated and organized.
- Events could be given slightly earlier with longer timelines at hand - if possible.
- Please send me the information of new openings on regular basis.

Other

- More information is needed on whether the participation in any seminar (international) could be partly or completely sponsored so that it will be easy to know if we could afford to prepare and go for a seminar or not.
- Please keep some key statistics in the services
- Increase outreach to students & recent PhDs to build the network. Help facilitate linkages by contacting established researchers and students to co-host online discussions.
- Add more downloadable articles.
- Content is thin. What about a blog?
- Too bad PERN can't sponsor some face-to-face conferences.

- Please inform us more often about the e-library, membership lists, and new bulletins. I was not aware of them.
- Please provide complete data related to e-library and jobs information.
- Dear PERN, Thanks a lot for reaching out worldwide. You have been doing a splendid work. Let us have more organized network in each region with you as the umbrella.
- It may be worth while to edit and bind major issues in PERN Seminars for documentation and referral. [*editor's note: all postings to cyberseminars since 2006 can be found at <http://listserver.ciesin.columbia.edu/pernseminars.html>. Complete archives in PDF format of cyberseminars held from 2001-2005 are available from the cyberseminars page at <http://listserver.ciesin.columbia.edu/pernseminars.html>.*]