

# CATI survey results

## Part 1. CATI Quarterly and CATI website

By Naomi A. Kleid, Ph.D.



**D**uring September, 2003, e-mail invitations were sent to all CATI members asking them to participate in an online satisfaction survey for the *CATI Quarterly*, the CATI website, the CATI Annual Conference, and CATI organization. Out of 190 members contacted, 93 responded to the survey.

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### Background

This article analyzes some of the data obtained from this survey. (See the members-only pages of the CATI website for the data.) However, before presenting the results, it is necessary to describe the survey itself. The survey was conducted at zero cost to CATI; the survey development and analysis efforts were donated by InfoExact, Inc., and the survey hosting was free from SurveyMonkey.com. However, to qualify for SurveyMonkey's free online survey service, the survey had to be designed to ask no more than 10 questions. To

meet this requirement and get data on the wide range of topics, we chose to ask many fill-in-the-blank questions that permitted CATI members to express their thoughts as freely as possible. We asked two questions that required members to select from among a set of satisfaction ratings. Our one remaining question asked members to choose a variety of responses that described their experience – that background and demographic question, which became Question 1, was extremely atypical of most survey questions.

Usually, a single survey question will address a single topic, and usually either a survey question will offer a comprehensive, yet mutually exclusive set of answer options or it will permit write-in answers. Consequently, respondents only need to think about one subject at a time and, in the case of selected answers that include an "other" category, the results can be expected to sum to 100% of the respondents answering that question.

However, Question 1 on the CATI

survey did not follow one of the standard approaches because, basically, it was trying to combine four questions into one. Question 1 was complicated and some of its answer options overlapped. Consequently, the data for related parts of Question 1 rarely tallied to 100%. In an ideal world, where we were not trying to save money, we would have asked several separate questions, rather than combining them into one question. Nevertheless, the data for Question 1 suggest some important trends describing CATI members.

### Demographics

As can be seen in Table 1, 89 people answered the part of Question 1 that asked about the number of years they had been a member of CATI. More than 60% of the total respondent (93 people) said they had been a member of CATI for more than 3 years; the largest group within that segment said they had been a member of CATI for 6 to 10 years. While the percentage of continuing, long-term members is high, the percentage of relatively new members, those who help the society to grow, is also noteworthy. More than 20% of the respondents said they joined CATI within the past 12 months.

Answers to the background question also show that a high proportion (68%) of CATI members are members of other professional organizations. Many (60%) are ATA members. Quite a few (27%) CATI members belong to several professional organizations. Apparently CATI members value professional associations and the opportunity to network.

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**Table 1. Duration on membership in CATI**

Duration of membership in CATI	Number (out of 93)	Percent
I have been a member of CATI less than 6 months	13	14.0
I have been a member of CATI more than 6 months but less than 1 full year	7	7.5
I have been a member of CATI 1-2 years	12	12.9
I have been a member of CATI 3-5 years	14	15.1
I have been a member of CATI 6-10 years	28	30.1
I have been a member of CATI more than 10 years	15	16.1
Overall	89	95.7

**CATI Quarterly**

Table 2 presents some of the findings for the *CATI Quarterly* newsletter. It shows that while more than 50% of the members say they read every issue of the CATI newsletter, a sizable percentage (40.8%) skipped an issue or two during the 2003 calendar year. It would be interesting to know why these members missed an issue, especially since back issues are available on the website for viewing at the reader's convenience. Is there a lack of interest in the CQ, a problem of finding back issues on the website, a lack of time to read everything that is available, a reluctance to use the website, or some other problem? These are potential topics for discussion among the members or for a follow-on survey.

Almost 10% of the respondents either have never read an issue of the newsletter or have not read an issue this year. This may be due to the finding that 14% of the respondents have been CATI members for less than 6 months. Perhaps the newest members are still learning about the CATI benefits and are in the process of starting to read the

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newsletter. Certainly the longer-term members should have read at least one newsletter this year, if they wanted to, because, according to David Heath, everyone who was a member in March of 2003 would have received a paper newsletter that was mailed that month. Electronic distribution did not start until the beginning of June.

Most CATI members who evaluated their overall satisfaction with the *CATI Quarterly* said they were Extremely Satisfied (21 respondents, 25% of those responding) or Satisfied (49 respondents, 61% of those responding). Only one person said that overall he or she was Dissatisfied, and 11 said that overall they were Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied. (Four people did not provide an overall satisfaction rating and 8 people skipped this question, perhaps because they did not read a newsletter.)

Some comments reflecting the general positive evaluation of the *CATI Quarterly* include:

- "The *CATI Quarterly* makes me feel connected to my colleagues and my profession. It is a well done publication, reflecting our professionalism."

- "I like and enjoy the newsletter. The articles are insightful and useful."

Respondents were also asked to rate their satisfaction with specific aspects of the newsletter. Most respondents were either Extremely Satisfied or Satisfied. (Note that a score of 1 meant extremely satisfied, 2 meant satisfied, 3 meant neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, etc.)

- Usefulness of information (overall score 1.95)
- Timeliness of information (overall score 2.03)
- Quality of content (overall score 1.95)
- Length (overall score 1.96)
- Design and layout (overall score 1.83)
- Support of professional development (overall score 2.08)
- Current frequency of distribution (overall score 2.04)
- Current distribution method (overall score 1.92)

While few people said they were dissatisfied or neutral about any of these factors, satisfaction was slightly weaker for:

- Support of professional development (26% were either neutral or dissatisfied)
- Current frequency of distribution (4 times / year) (20% were either neutral or dissatisfied)
- Timeliness of the information (19% were either neutral or dissatisfied)

Write-in comments help explain these points:

- Regarding ways to support pro-

**Table 2. Frequency of reading CATI Quarterly**

Frequency of reading the CATI Quarterly	Number (out of 93)	Percent
In 2003, I read every CATI Quarterly newsletter published so far (3 of them)	51	54.8
In 2003, I read 2 CATI Quarterly newsletters	19	20.4
In 2003, I read 1 CATI Quarterly newsletter	19	20.4
In 2003, I did not read any CATI Quarterly newsletters	6	6.5
I have never read a CATI Quarterly newsletter	2	2.2
<b>Overall</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>104.3</b>

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fessional development, the respondents offered many ideas for feature articles and ongoing columns, which David Heath, the CQ Editor, will consider.

- Regarding the frequency of distribution, one respondent said "It would be great if the publication could be available at least 6 times a year."

- Regarding the timeliness of the information, one respondent said: "I have seen the newsletter go through several forms over the many years I have been a member, and the now-outmoded print version was excellent. Perhaps now, on the web, it can be

more frequent — I see no reason why a web journal with no print version needs to be a quarterly, or indeed a periodical of any frequency. New material can be posted when it becomes available."

The *CATI Quarterly* received its best score for design and layout. Some comments include:

- "The *Quarterly* is beautifully presented/formatted, better than many other chapter newsletters if not better than all the ones I have seen. As is the website, it's one of the best!"

- "David does an extremely professional layout of the *CATI Quarterly*. He deserves highest recommendations."

About the current distribution method (an HTML-coded e-mail with links to printer-friendly files and a downloadable PDF file available from the website), one member said he or she was extremely dissatisfied, six said they were dissatisfied, and seven said they were neutral. When asked "How would you prefer to receive the *CATI Quarterly* newsletter?" 30 members selected the choice that said "as a printed and mailed publication, with simultane-

ous posting on the web." On the other hand, a total of 54 people selected one of the three electronic distribution methods offered as options. While electronic distribution is acceptable to a majority of the members who responded to the survey, a significant number clearly want a printed and mailed publication.

The following comments represent the opinions in favor of a printed newsletter:

- "I don't use it now. When it was mailed out I took it with me on as-

**"Meeting deadlines is part of our culture and having timely information more so nowadays. You don't have to wait for your snail mail to arrive."**

signments and read it during lulls and while waiting for clients to arrive. I referred to it also to keep up with upcoming events, and between times until the next newsletter arrived. I kept the newsletters filed and referred to them from time to time. It is a very useful tool for references, interesting articles and getting to know the members."

- "I really prefer the paper print. I used to read it every time when I got it and looking forward receiving it soon."

- "I am probably one of the few individuals who would much prefer the newsletter by mail. I'm much more likely to read it."

- "The web-based newsletter is great for reducing those piles of papers assigned to the 'I'll read it later' category. However, by not having a paper copy I miss the opportunity of reading a little here and there such as in the doctor's waiting room, the school car pool line (yes, I'm serious!), the hairdresser's or anywhere else where I would not normally bring my computer. I have to admit that receiving it by mail would be my preference as it helps to personalize an otherwise very isolating occupation."

On the other hand, some people liked the web version because:

- "The HTML coded e-mail with links to printer-friendly files is very useful because it enables me to print just the articles that interest me without having to print the entire PDF newsletter."

- "I read it, print it and save it in a file for future use."

- "Some of the benefits of having the *CATI Quarterly* accessible through the website are:

### **"1. Easy access 24 by 7 by 365**

No more misplaced *Quarterlys* when you need it to refer to a good article or source for information.

### **"2. On-time information**

Meeting deadlines is part of our culture and having timely information more so nowadays. You don't have to wait for your snail mail to arrive. On top of it, if you are on a trip and forget to bring a sample of the *Quarterly* or an article for reference, you don't need to panic just access the website and there you have it.

### **"3. Cost savings**

The cost of paper and stamps can be used for other needs in the organization. Those 'return to sender' *Quarterlys* that got return because someone moved will no longer go to waste. Some of our members would find this benefit very useful particularly if you move or travel frequently. E-mail addresses do not change as often as your physical address but if you move, you have the confidence that you will receive your *Quarterly* by e-mail no matter where you are.

### **"4. Reduced administration tasks**

Remember those 'return to sender' *Quarterlys*? Well it's much easier to contact someone by e-mail and update their personal information. What about if you changed your e-mail address? Then you will be missing that good reliable informa-

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tion. In that case it will be up to the member to send a note to the administrative manager with a profile update."

Some members may not be comfortable printing articles from the newsletter; one clearly is having problems displaying the file. One person said: "I am unable to read the newsletter or print it because it

contains large blocks of solid black and some parts are missing..." CATI needs to learn more

about the printing facilities, browsers, and computing equipment the members are using, so we can solve these problems.

### CATI website

As can be seen in Table 3, 14% of the survey respondents said that either they have never visited the CATI website or they have not visited during the past 6 months. We can assume that all of the respondents have computer access, because they responded to an e-mail

invitation to take the online survey. However, it might be helpful to know more about what CATI members use their computers for – other than e-mail – and whether they go to websites other than the CATI site. Perhaps the members who have not visited the CATI site are not in the habit of visiting websites;

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perhaps they prefer to use their computers primarily for e-mail.

We did not ask respondents to provide formal

satisfaction ratings on the website (which is something we should do next time); however we did ask for statements about what information the members used on the website and their comments or suggestions regarding the site.

The following are representative comments:

- "It is very well organized. It looks good. It is easy to use." "Nice design, easy navigation."

- "The searchable database is very useful for the general public. I would like to see more information/services being provided to members only."

- "I look for interpreters and have been satisfied with that info; It is good to have the info by zip code and by languages and alphabetically. I don't find it necessary to have headings where the interpreter/translator has no answer so you only see the heading and an empty space. I have liked the links. I could use dictionaries of all kinds in all fields!"

- "I look for information immediately relevant to my work such as job offers, links to language sites and most recently added information such as seminars."

- "I look for translators to help with various projects. Since they are listed by language, location, and area of expertise, it is very useful."

- "I usually go there for links to sites on translation issues, but I think the list could be more exhaustive. I also look for articles about topics I'm interested, but, once again, it could be more complete (and this could be solved by providing a variety of links and web resources.)"

- "As before, the website presentation is one of the best of all ATA chapters. I mostly look for new info, do not use it to find t/i as I have the directory and it's easier to look up there."

- "I go only when I receive an e-mail pointing out something new available there. I rarely use the electronic directory. When I do, it's usually to find a current e-mail address when an e-mail to the address in the printed directory bounces back."

- "I think a survey such as this is a really excellent idea. Would a members' forum be an option or something along those lines?"

**Table 3. Frequency of visiting the CATI website**

Frequency of visiting the CATI website	Number (out of 93)	Percent
In the past 6 months, I visited the CATI website more than once a week	5	5.4
In the past 6 months, I visited the CATI website about once a week	11	11.8
In the past 6 months, I visited the CATI website more often than once a month but less often than once a week	16	17.2
In the past 6 months, I visited the CATI website about once a month	19	20.4
In the past 6 months, I visited the CATI website every few months	27	29.0
In the past 6 months, I have not visited the CATI website	9	9.7
I have never visited the CATI website	4	4.3
<b>Overall</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>97.8</b>

## Observations and recommendations

Several things about these findings surprised me: While 14% of the respondents say that either they have never visited the website or they have not visited the website in the past 6 months, almost twice that percent (26.9%) say they have not read more than one issue of the

*CATI Quarterly* this year. Why not? In order to read more than one issue in 2003, people would have had to get newsletter articles

electronically. However, they would not necessarily have to go to the website. They could click on the links to printable versions of the articles provided in the e-mail that announces the availability of each newsletter, and then they could read the articles that they print on their printer.

It would be good to know more about how CATI members use the website and the newsletter. Do some people go to the website but not read or print the Quarterly? Do some people read or print parts of the Quarterly without going to the website (by printing key articles from links in the announcement e-mail)?

Both the website and the newsletter provide valuable information to the CATI membership, but most of the membership seems to use (and perhaps, to think of) the newsletter and the website in different ways. Although newsletters and websites have traditionally served different purposes, there is no reason why they can't be better tied together. At least one of the write-in comments

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talked about this synergy, and many of the comments mentioned more services for members only.

As one response to both these lines of thought, I would like to propose what I believe is a novel use of a website, one that would move the CATI organization to the forefront of professional communication. I would like to propose that CATI make some of the key articles into vehicles for discussion. Instead of having articles and a newsletter that were simply read, CATI could have some articles become news-discussion vehicles. David Heath could provide a link from one or two of the articles on the website version of the newsletter to a discussion forum for that article. This would help CATI members participate as a vibrant online community, and some of the online newsletter

articles would serve as catalysts for that discussion.

One final comment on the survey, specifically on the response rate: In the past 18 months, we've created, administered, and analyzed surveys for three professional organizations – the Society for Technical Communication (STC) Carolina Chapter, the STC Special Interest Group for Usability, and now CATI. Of all the organizations, the CATI membership was by far the most enthusiastic: the CATI response rate was more than twice that for the other organizations and the number and thoroughness of the write-in comments were impressive. Each person who answered the survey had so much good information to share, and the tone of the comments was so positive and thoughtful. You are a great organization to work with.

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**"CATI survey results Part 2: CATI Conference and organization" will appear in the next edition of *CATI Quarterly*.**

## We would like to hear from you!

If you would like to comment on any of the articles in this newsletter, please write the editor, G. David Heath, at

[infoexact@mindspring.com](mailto:infoexact@mindspring.com)

A selection of letters to the editor will be published in future issues of *CATI Quarterly*.