

Faculty Showcase '07



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Goals

- To determine the level of knowledge about the importance of hand hygiene amongst the campus community.
- To elicit information on the barriers to good hand hygiene practices on campus.
- To better understand the impact of residential versus non-residential status on hand washing practices.
- To better understand how to create a relevant hand hygiene campaign for an undergraduate population.

Sponsored by Academic Technology at Simmons College



A survey of hand hygiene practices on the Simmons campus using Zoomerang

Project Overview

Upper respiratory tract infections and gastrointestinal tract infections are the cause of a significant level of illness on college campuses. However, preventative measures such as hand washing and hand sanitation are often not well supported or practiced on campus.

We developed a confidential, self-administered cross-sectional on-line survey tool, which was circulated during April-May 2006.

Results:

A total of 994 survey responses were received in a period of four weeks. The campus-wide e-mail was sent to 5506 recipients and

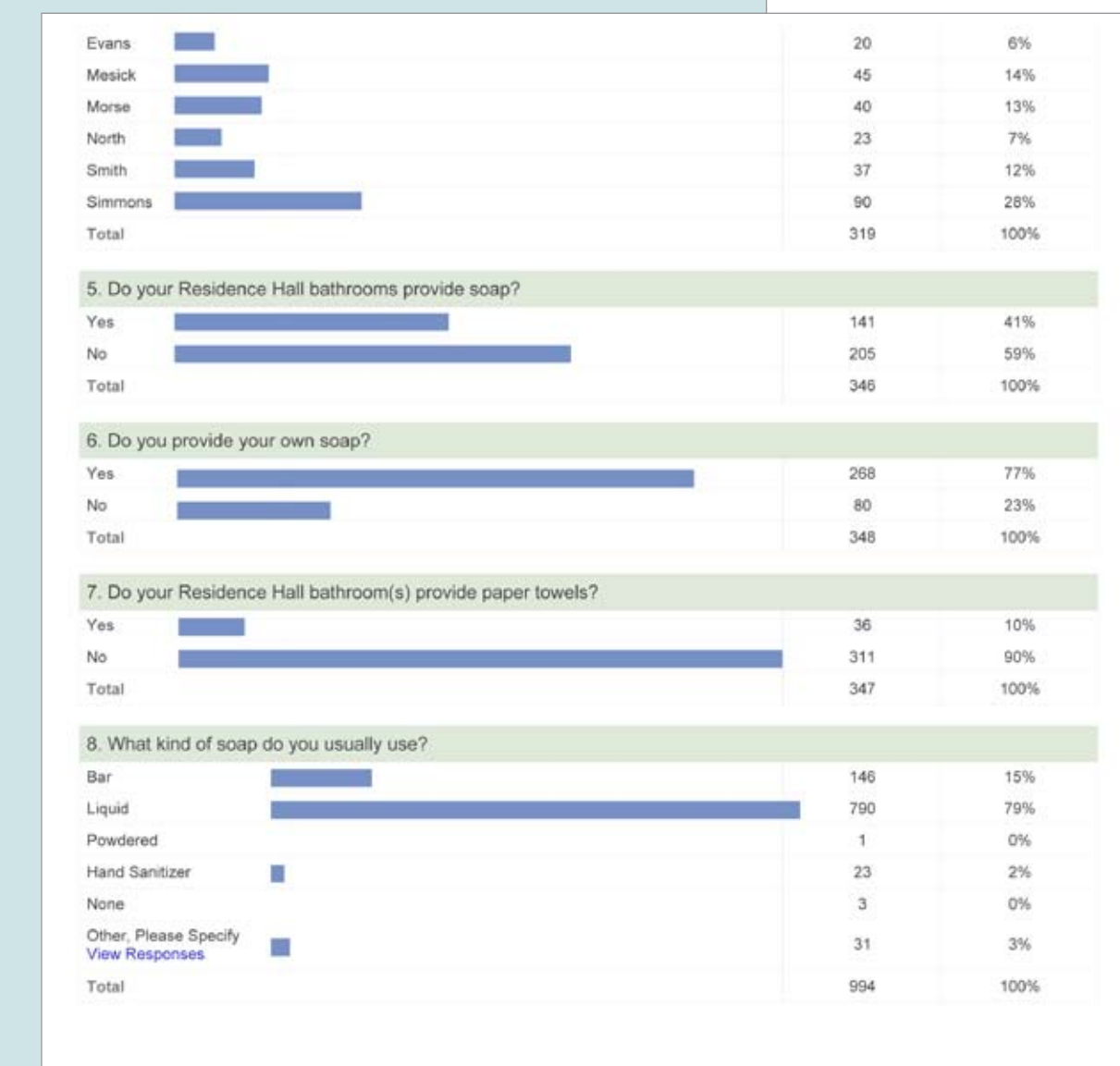
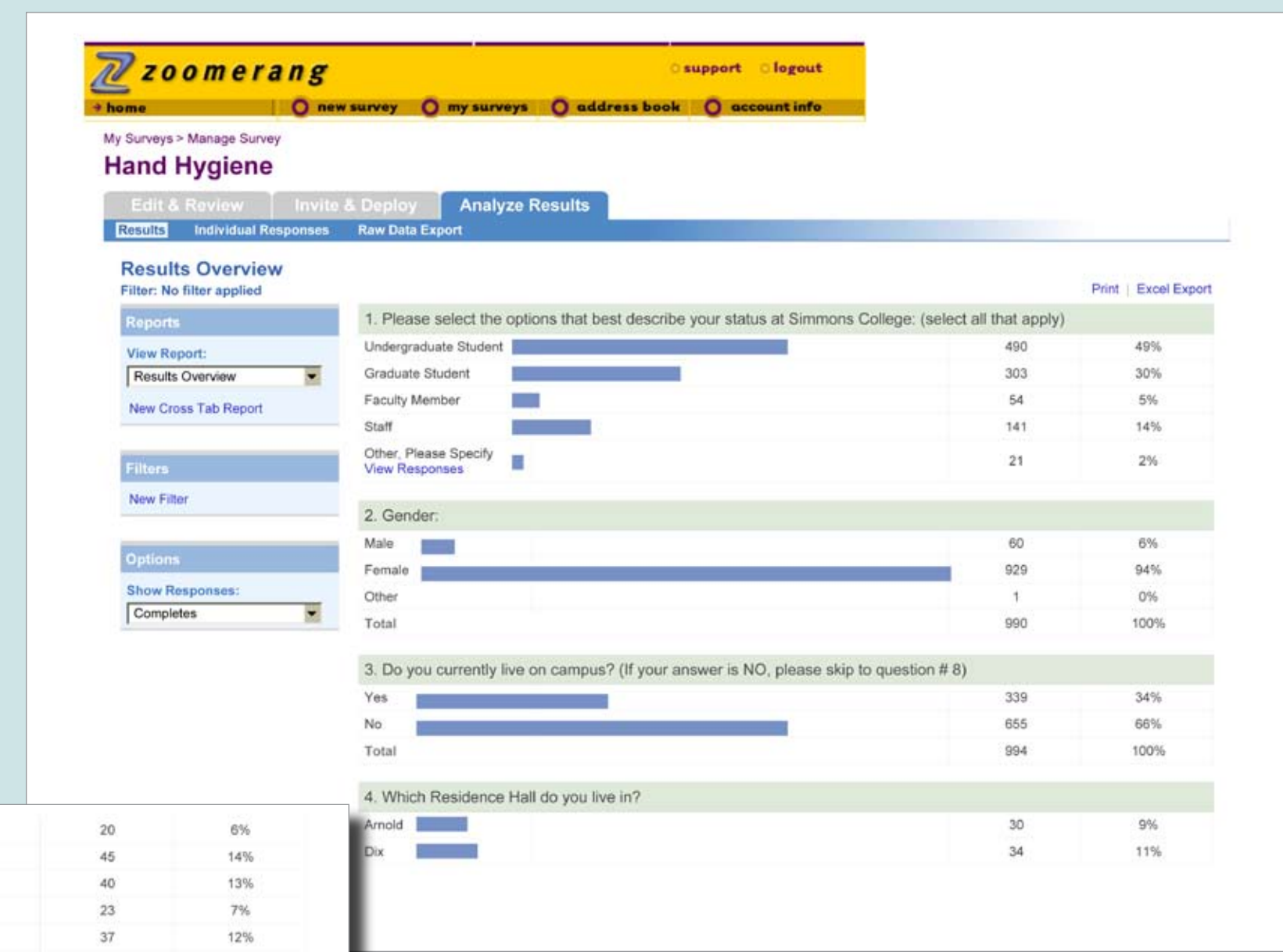
therefore the response rate was approximately 18%. 49% were undergraduates, 30% were graduates and 34% lived in residence halls on campus. 59% of residential students reported that their hall did not provide soap and 90% reported lack of paper towels. Residential students were significantly less likely to wash their hands following a range of activities than to non-residential students. Reported hand

washing for all respondents was poor following a range of activities that are known to cause hand contamination, especially coughing and sneezing (see Table). Also many hand contact surfaces such keyboards, computer mouse and phone handsets, that are known to be involved in cross-contamination of infections, were rarely cleaned.

As a result of this study, we would recommend the importance of creating an awareness of proper hand hygiene practices as they relate to the everyday context of a college campus. Finally, we would strongly recommend that college authorities provide soap and paper towels, or other hand sanitizing products as appropriate, in all residential bathrooms.

Table 2. Percentage of respondents who were aware of the importance of hand washing practice following particular activities versus the percentage of respondents who claimed to always wash their hands following these activities (n=994)

Activity	Hand washing is "very/extremely important" (ranked by importance)	Always wash hands
After handling raw meat & poultry	95	88
After going to the bathroom	94	90
After touching infected skin	87	60
After coughing/sneezing	79	19
After working out at gym	77	71
After playing/working outside	71	62
After playing with pets	64	40
After handling dirty laundry	49	25



Applications Beyond

This survey tool is valuable for getting a large response in a very short period of time. In addition, the software analyzed the data in real time and provided statistical analysis. The data was provided in a format that is easy to manipulate. It was easy to build the questionnaire online. All of which makes this a tool that is easy for students to use and provides them with encouraging feedback.