

Building Better Discovery: Using Data to Optimize the User Experience with Mediated Search Results

Introduction

What are researchers looking for?

The SDSU Library homepage is the gateway to a variety of information types, such as books, articles, journals, databases, and archives, each residing in different applications. A single search box can't go everywhere so we need to direct our users; but SDSU researchers starting at the homepage selected an information type only 53% of the time in 2014. This dropped to 41% in 2019. Other libraries using a discovery layer have found users selected a limiting facet in as few as 3.4% of all searches¹, suggesting researchers aren't telling their libraries where they want to go and the type of information for which they are looking.

How can we get our searchers to tell us what they're looking for? Give them a bit of everything and force them to choose.

Bento Box: *A delicious sampling of sushi*



Bento Search: *A satisfying sampling of information*

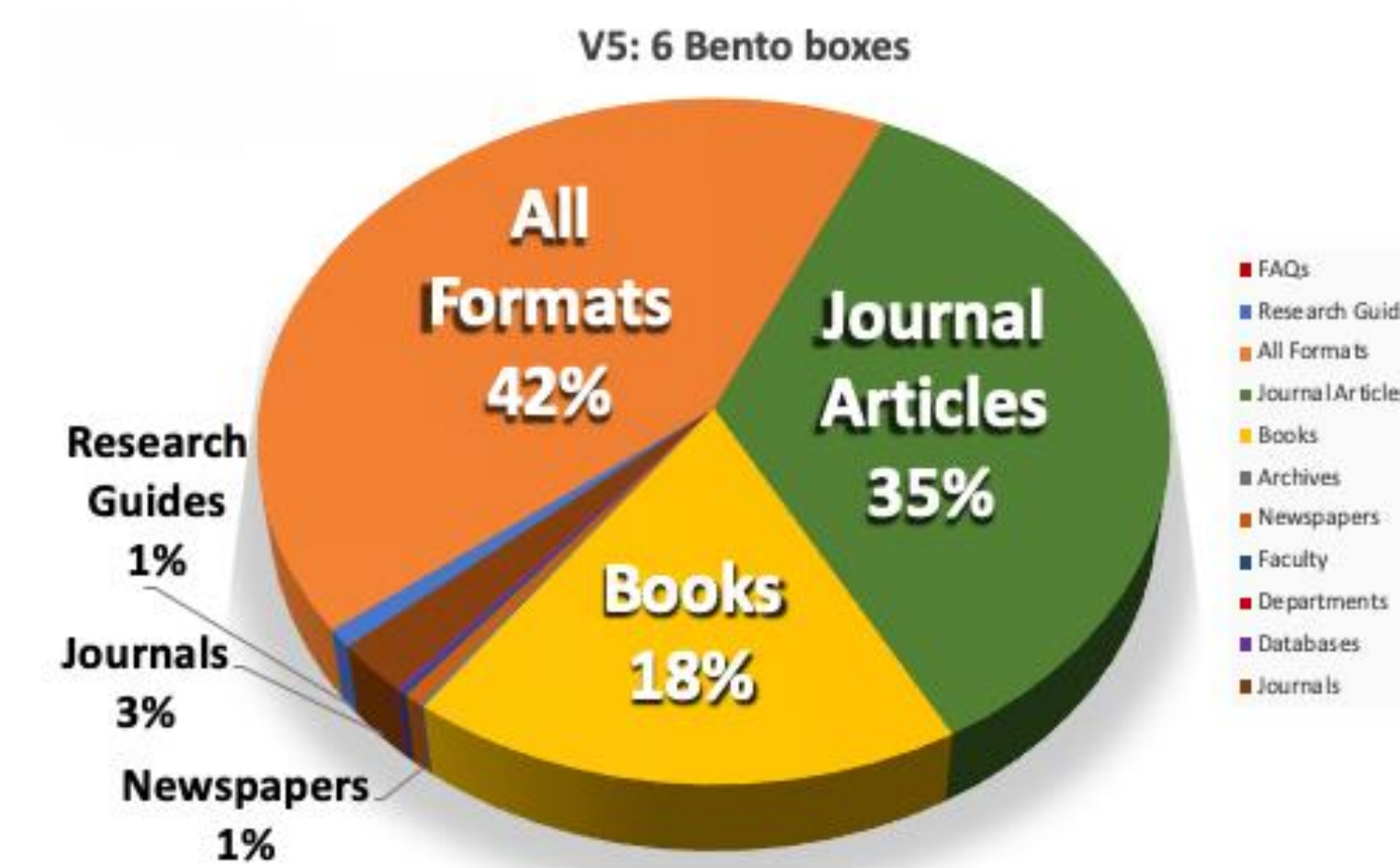
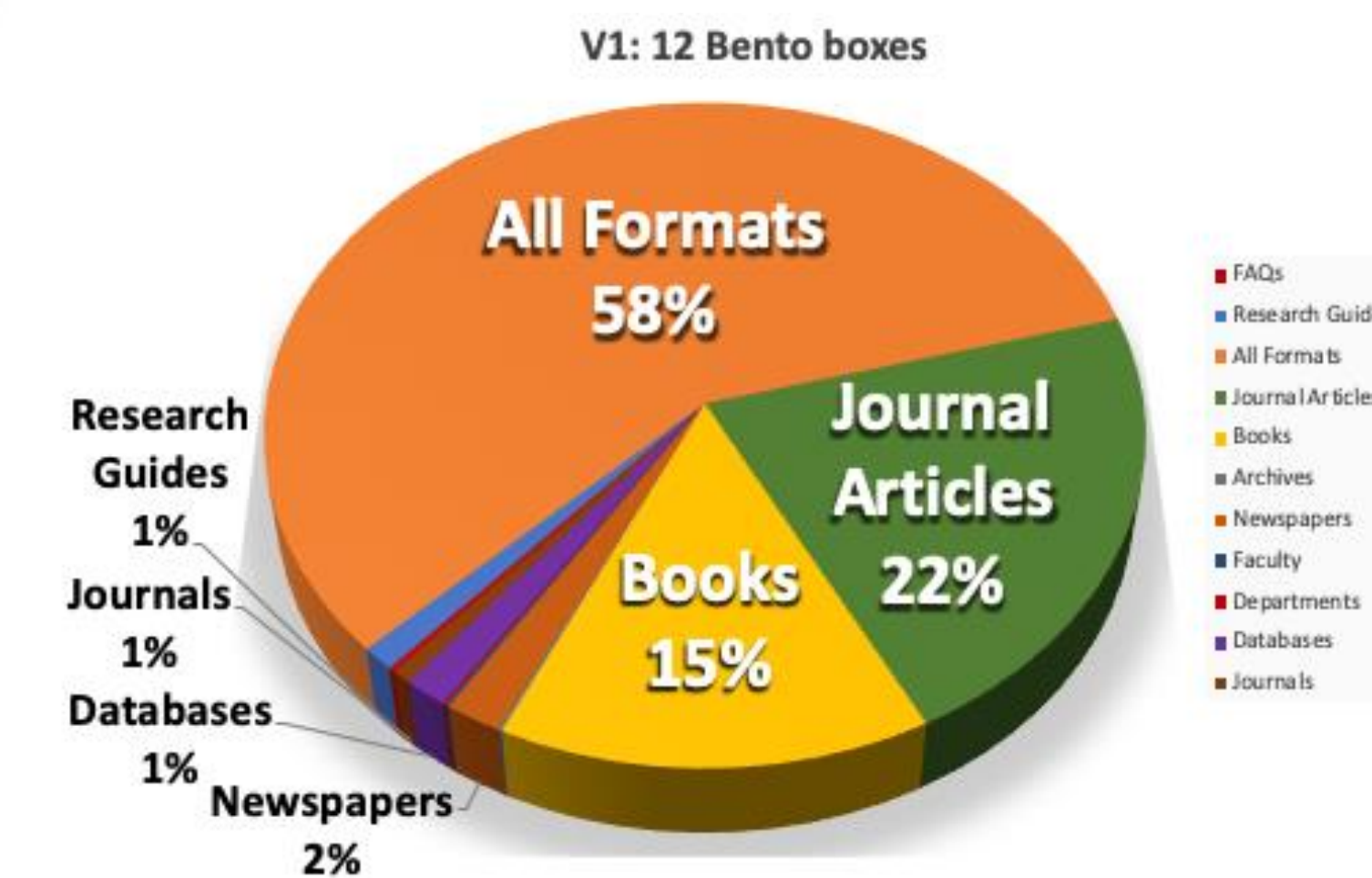
We sought to improve the use of the tabbed search box and bento results by reviewing searches periodically, making incremental changes, and then seeing if search behavior changed.

We sought to:

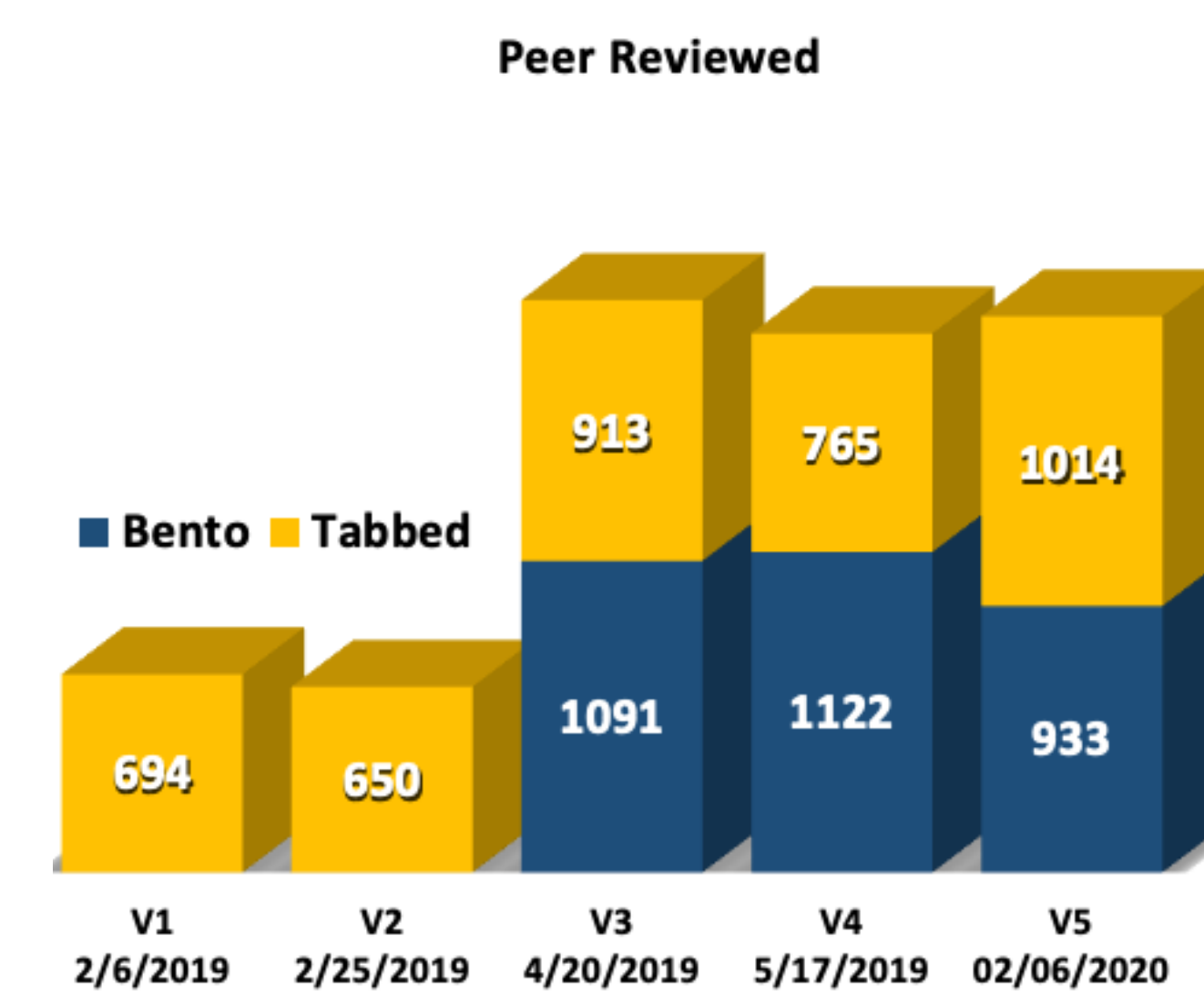
- increase the use of library research guides and expert help.
- increase the number of people selecting an information type, like books & articles.
- improve browsing the ProQuest Primo discovery layer with facets.
- improve access to popular limits, like peer-reviewed articles.
- increase the use of EBSCO results (not included in Primo).

1. Resau, K. (2019). The Use of Filters in Library Discovery. Computers in Libraries, 39(8), 20–24.

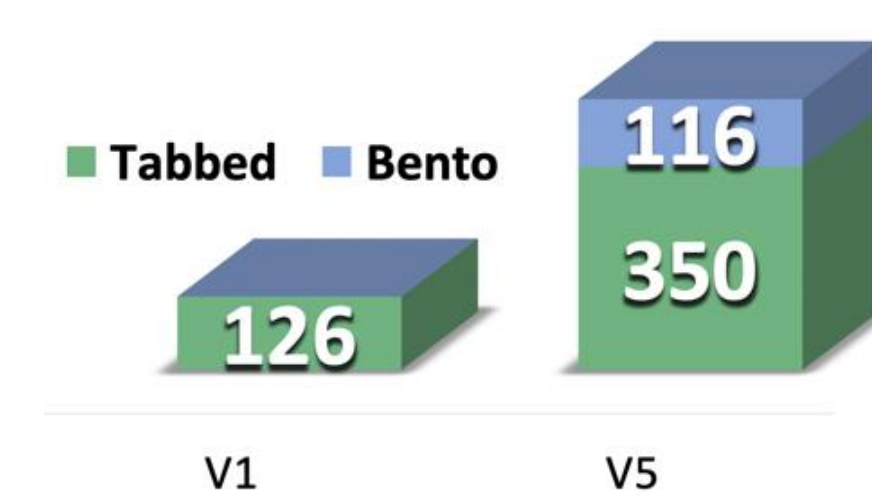
Observations



*Pie charts include all bento options.. Only the bento boxes and options that received >1% are labeled.



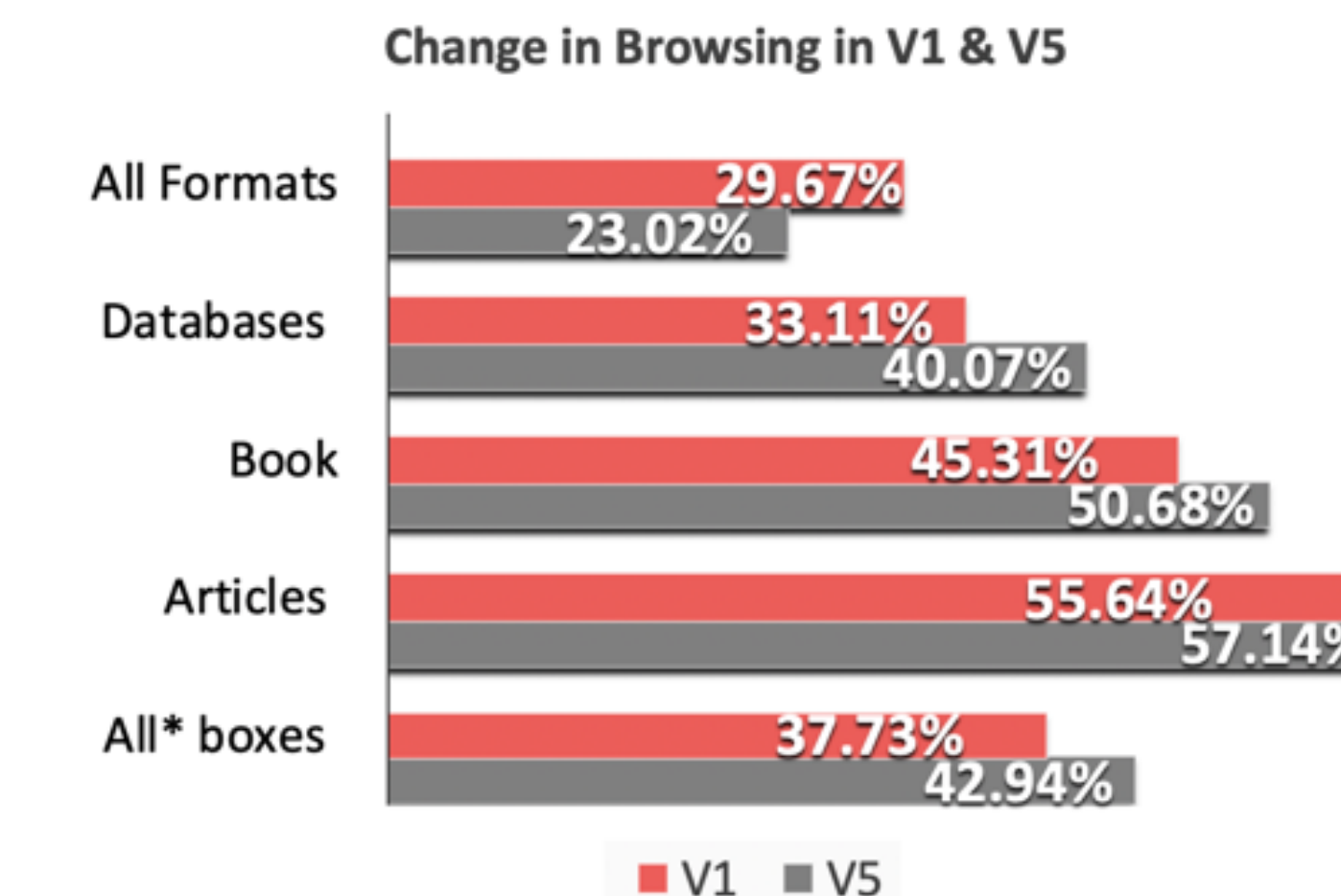
Users Selecting EBSCO



*For all charts in Observations, V1 indicates Version 1. V1 ran from: 2/6/2019-2/25/2019 . V5 data indicates Version 5. V5 data collected 2/6/2020 -2/25/2020 . Both datasets are 18,000 searches.

Number of Choices

- We grouped information into fewer Bento boxes which streamlined choices while still offering direction. (pie charts)
- Attempting to drive researchers to browsing options, we reduced the number of results displayed from 5 to 3, which increased the usage of Browse, sending searchers to Primo with facets engaged. (bar chart)



* includes data only from the bento boxes that shared by both versions

Peer Reviewed

- The peer-review limit on the tabbed homepage search box was made more prominent in V3, increasing the number of users choosing to pre-filter for peer-reviewed content.
- "Peer Review" was also added as an option to the Journal Articles bento as a browsing link.
- Peer-reviewed searches jumped significantly in V3-V5 from V1-V2, with more than 1000 searches sent to Primo in each version with the peer-reviewed facet engaged.

EBSCO

- We wanted to direct researchers to EBSCO, so we added multiple avenues. Visits tripled but the result was disappointing as usage was minimal overall.

Conclusions

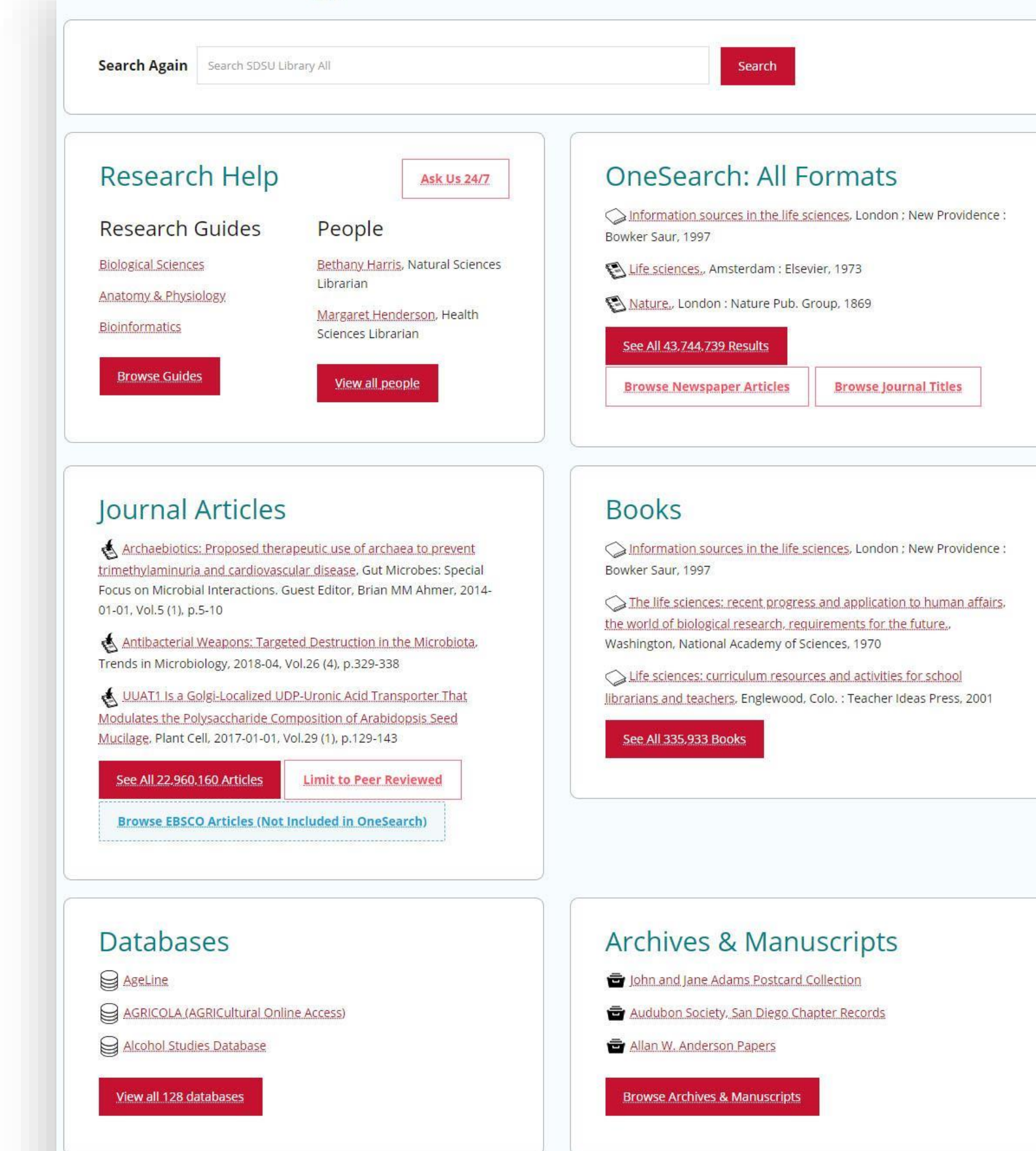
- 100% of users were guided to a choice of information type, like books & articles, or all types.
- Bento forces the use of Primo discovery layer facets. Approximately 95% of searchers entered Primo from the homepage with a facet pre-applied.
- Location, location, location. The higher the results, the more traffic.
- We couldn't make EBSCO a destination. What does this mean for the future of EBSCO in our ProQuest environment?
- No matter where we moved the Librarians and Archives options, their usage remained the same.

Questions or comments?

Contact eresources@sdsu.libanswers.com.

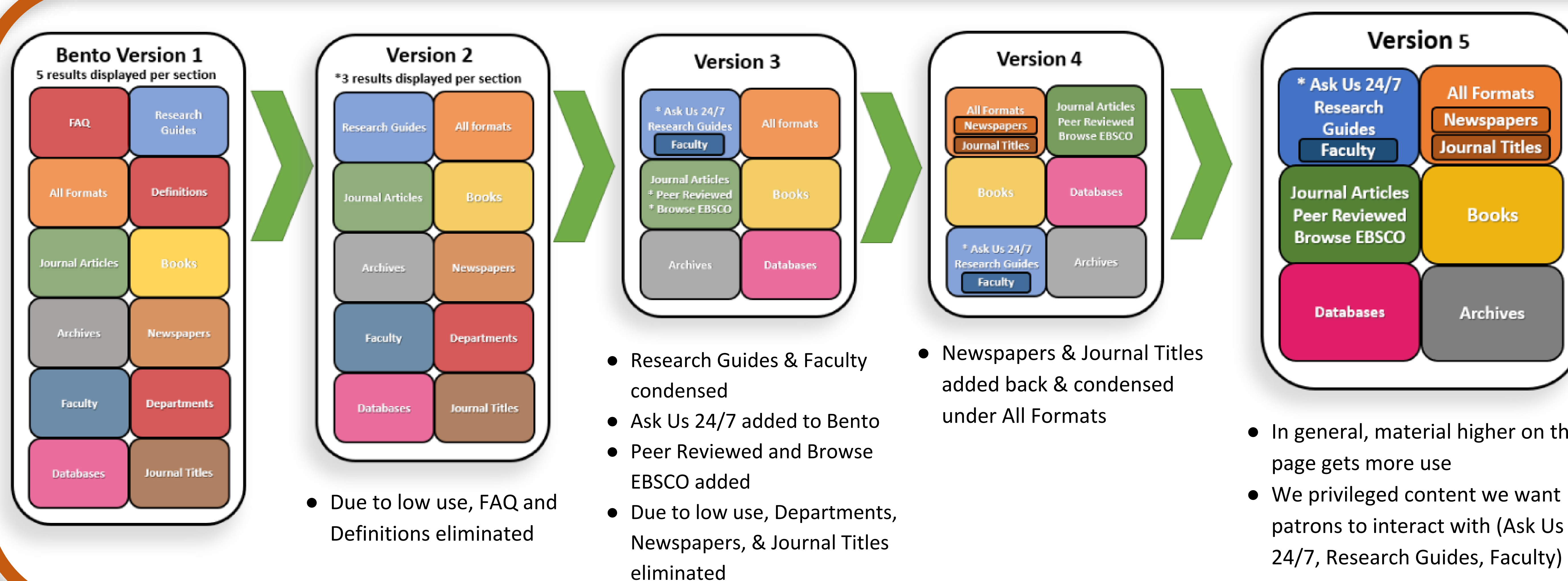
SDSU Bento Version 5 (current version):

Your Search: Biology OR "life sciences" OR Nature



Methodology

- Version 1 was the baseline Bento arrangement
- 18,000 searches collected per version
- Examined the data, made adjustments to encourage users to make a faceted choice
- Changed option location based on user choice AND to privilege librarian research help
- Eliminated most very low use options
- Kept low use unique information such as Archives



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