

EMSL User Survey Summary

EMSL is committed to continually improving the users' experience. Although change cannot always be implemented overnight, we rely strongly on the input received from our user community and encourage you to continue providing feedback to our technical staff, our [User Support Office](#), and through the bi-annual survey. Users can also provide comments and feedback to the [User Executive Committee](#) and should feel free to contact anyone on the committee at any time.

Currently, user surveys are administered biannually for experimental users and are sent only to those individuals who have accessed our resources during the prior six months or annually for computational-only users and are sent only to those individuals who have accessed computing resources during the prior year. The results of the most recent survey are posted here with management responses to concerns or issues identified by our user community.

April 2012 Survey

Surveys Submitted Between April 11, 2012, and May 2, 2012.

Survey Satisfaction: 92.7 %

Survey Responses: 142

Surveys Sent: 602

Survey Response Rate: 23.6%

1. How satisfied were you with the availability of facilities and equipment?

- 77 Very Satisfied
- 58 Satisfied
- 4 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 1 Dissatisfied
- 0 Very Dissatisfied
- 2 Not Applicable

2. How satisfied were you with performance of facilities and equipment (e.g., were they maintained to specifications for your intended use, ready when scheduled, etc.)?

- 73 Very Satisfied
- 59 Satisfied
- 5 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 1 Dissatisfied
- 0 Very Dissatisfied

- 3 Not Applicable

3. List additional capabilities that you think EMSL should have.

User comments to this and other survey questions are below.

4. With the new knowledge gained at EMSL, I expect to (check all that apply):

- 129 Disseminate new knowledge via publication in peer-reviewed open literature
- 101 Disseminate new knowledge via presentations at professional society meetings
- 11 Acquire a patent
- 57 Further Department of Energy mission(s)
- 83 Facilitate collaborative interactions (e.g., stimulated new ideas for future experiment; increased work; etc.)
- 57 Train students (undergraduate, graduate or postdoctoral associate)
- 79 Use data for a future proposal
- 50 Establish or grow network and/or further collaboration
- 3 Other

5. How satisfied were you with the assistance provided by the EMSL technical staff?

- 92 Very Satisfied
- 42 Satisfied
- 3 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 0 Dissatisfied
- 0 Very Dissatisfied
- 4 Not Applicable

6. How satisfied were you with the assistance provided by the EMSL administrative staff?

- 86 Very Satisfied
- 43 Satisfied
- 3 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 2 Dissatisfied
- 0 Very Dissatisfied
- 8 Not Applicable

7. How appropriate and user friendly were the training and safety procedures?

- 51 Very Satisfied
- 57 Satisfied
- 13 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 2 Dissatisfied

- 0 Very Dissatisfied
- 17 Not Applicable

8. How satisfied were you with the proposal process (e.g. submission & review)?

- 50 Very Satisfied
- 49 Satisfied
- 19 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 4 Dissatisfied
- 1 Very Dissatisfied
- 17 Not Applicable

9. How did you learn about EMSL?

- 23 Scientific meeting/conference
- 10 Internet search
- 6 Journal publication
- 40 Previous EMSL use
- 46 Colleague
- 88 PNNL staff member
- 3 Other

USER ENDORSEMENTS AND COMMENTS

Although not all comments are shown, below is a representative sampling of the positive user comments received.

- Staff has been very helpful, even during peak busy hours. Their willingness to coordinate with me has really helped me keep to project deadlines.
- Very helpful [staff], very proficient and very professional!!!
- User office was friendly and helpful in adding room/equipment to my proposal to facilitate access request.
- All the resources and technical support were ideally available for the successful completion of the proposed experiments. The data was of high quality.

EMSL's Response

The expertise and dedication of our scientific and support staff are invaluable to our user program. We especially want to call out Andy Lipton, Jesse Sears, Mark Engelhard, Eric Walter, Nancy Washton, Galya Orr and Ashley Gilbert who received special recognition for their knowledge, commitment, and outstanding help to our users.

User Concerns and Suggestions

While user satisfaction rates very highly, we carefully review any comments in which users expressed concerns or suggestions for improvement. These have been compiled into several topical areas and representative comments are provided below, along with EMSL's response.

User Comments

Oversubscribed Instrumentation or Staffing

- The research should not be limited within some scheduled research area, especially when new phenomena and interesting things are found in the experiment. Some research plan should be adjustable for new ideas within the proposed period.
- Most recently, I submitted a general user proposal requesting various resources. The proposal was summarily rejected because the resources were unavailable through the rest of the year. I don't think the proposal should have been unilaterally rejected. It was frustrating to have to resubmit the proposal requesting one less resource.....

EMSL's Response

Current projects and submitted proposals are supported and evaluated based on the availability of both resources and staff to manage the scope of work. If resources are available but staffing is not, or vice versa, it can affect our decisions to adjust or accept proposals. Our usual approach, however, is to work with researchers to determine if revised approaches are possible—both during the life of the project or during the initial evaluation. We apologize that this did not happen in both of these cases. We encourage researchers to contact the User Support Office when encountering these types of roadblocks so we can determine the underlying reasons and whether an alternative approach can be taken.

User Comments

Training

- Much of the safety training was repetitive. Some modules repeated almost verbatim the exact same information presented in other modules. This sort of overlap should be eliminated.
- The on-line safety training was very long and not user friendly.
- Very time consuming, a tad too extensive, but this is a Nat Lab, so I expect a lot of red tape.

EMSL's Response

PNNL has undertaken an extensive redesign of both content and delivery for safety training, including user-focused modules. The first course to be rolled out is a new PNNL Orientation, which is expected to reduce reading time by several hours. Other redesigned modules are

expected to roll out over the course of the next few years and should result in a more streamlined training experience.

User Comments

Transparent Processes and Communication

- It is still a rough process. For example, there should be a mechanism for proposers to update their applications before the deadline.
- It took a really long time to hear the results on an open call proposal.
- The proposal process took way too long and updates to the proposal status were rare and difficult to obtain.

EMSL's Response

EMSL's goal for General proposals is a 6-8 week turnaround, unless the user has been notified of expected delays, and a 2-week turnaround for Rapid Access proposals. Peer reviewer availability can still create unavoidable delays, but we are working to minimize these as much as possible. In addition, the User Support Office has modified internal processes to prompt earlier management decisions, and we hope to see improved turnaround this coming year.

We're working with our developers to revise the submittal process to allow authors to edit the proposals up until the deadline or, for proposals with special requests, until the proposal is screened and assigned to peer review. Due to the number of modifications in our queue, we expect this to roll out in FY2013.

User Comments

Operational Delays or Downtime

- The instrument was not ready when scheduled, so I had to wait for a day or so.
- 750 MHz instrument – serious hardware faults and lacks probes. Limited my experiments.
- I arrived on a Saturday hoping to get some preliminary sample prep done on Sunday before meeting with my staff contact on Monday. Not being able to enter the building on Sunday made this impossible....

EMSL's Response

Your feedback regarding instruments operation—both readiness and capability developmental—is crucial for our continued improvement. We are developing new probes to respond to project needs and have made organization changes to ensure instruments are ready when scheduled. Building access, however, must follow PNNL protocols for badging and training, and badging is not available on the weekends. To eliminate potential confusion in the future, the User Support Office now provides users with a specific appointment time for badging and onsite orientation.

User Comments

Additional Capabilities Requested by the Users

In addition to requests for new or upgraded instruments, users responded with suggestions for additional lab space, improved internet access, and additional software modifications.

- An Image stream X cytometer, CyTOF and an Accuri cytometer.
- Multiple NMRs and probes, such as solid state probes operating at 350-140K range; more solids NMRs, a 1.2GHz ultra-high magnetic field NMR.
- XPS and HR-TEM
- PPMS.

EMSL's Response

Many of the instruments listed are available at EMSL, such as the Physical Property Measurement System (PPMS), XPS, and HR-TEM. A CyTOF is planned for FY13. Additional NMRs and probes are limited by funding constraints but are planned. If you do not see something on the website that you are interested in, or want to pursue specifics related to the experiments you have in mind, we encourage you to ask the Capability Lead (<http://www.emsl.pnl.gov/contacts/>) or your host.

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