

UKAT Evaluation questionnaire: analysis of responses

Summary

This paper analyses the responses which were received to UKAT's on-line evaluation questionnaire (http://www.ukat.org.uk/news/evaluation_questionnaire.php) between 23 March 2004 and 14 April 2004.

At the start of this period, notices publicising the questionnaire were posted to the mailing lists of the UKAT Advisory Panel and Users Group, and to a number of other mailing lists which were felt to be relevant to the project: archives-nra@jiscmail.ac.uk, records-management-uk@jiscmail.ac.uk, basa@jiscmail.ac.uk [Black and Asian Studies Association], caribbean-studies@jiscmail.ac.uk, vocab-he@jiscmail.ac.uk and fish@jiscmail.ac.uk [Forum for Information Standards in Heritage]. Follow-up notices were posted to the same lists about a week before the questionnaire was taken down. Links to the questionnaire were also put on the UKAT home page and on the 'News' section of the UKAT web site.

Although it is difficult to draw conclusions from some of the responses (particularly the open-ended responses), the following stand out:

- An overwhelming majority of respondents (74-84%) had used UKAT's three central interfaces (thesaurus searching, A-Z browsing and hierarchical browsing). However, a surprisingly high proportion (around 50%) had also used 'Candidate terms', 'Rejected terms' and 'Recent additions', suggesting that more emphasis should be given to these facilities.
- Large majorities of respondents found the thesaurus searching, A-Z browsing and hierarchical browsing to be very easy, easy or acceptable to use. No respondent reported finding these facilities to be "very difficult".
- Most respondents who had used the contributor registration, term submission and account management facilities found them to be very easy, easy or acceptable to use.
- Most respondents (59-78%) agreed with the proposed improvements to the interfaces for candidate terms, rejected terms, recent additions and the A-Z browsing.
- Most respondents indicated that they intended to use UKAT in some form in the future. Only 12% indicated that they did not intend to use UKAT.
- A majority of respondents who expressed an opinion felt that UKAT should include terms relating to document types, and Welsh terms.
- Respondents appeared to be using a wide range of software for cataloguing purposes, with Calm being the most used individual package (22%).

Although the majority of questions had 'Yes/No' answers or answers from a defined range of choices, some questions allowed respondents to provide an open-ended response. To protect the confidentiality of respondents and their repositories/projects, these verbatim responses are discussed in general terms in this report. The actual responses are not included.

1. The respondents

A total of 58 responses were received between 23 March and 14 April 2004. Although anonymized, the data included the respondent's IP address. Multiple responses were received from four IP addresses: these generated 11 responses in total. The largest number of responses received from a single IP address was 4. However, these could easily represent shared use of the same web connection, rather than any attempt to distort the survey. This is suggested by the fact that in some cases, respondents from the same IP address classified themselves differently under Question 1.

Question 1: Are you [single response permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
An archive professional (e.g. archivist, records manager, archive conservator, archive assistant)	43 (74%)
Other	9 (16%)
A researcher/user of archives	3 (5%)
Not answered	3 (5%)

Comments: the largest single category of respondents were archive professionals, probably reflecting the way in which the questionnaire was publicised (via archives-nra and other relevant mailing lists).

Question 2: How did you find out about UKAT? [multiple responses permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Article/email	30 (52%)
Involvement with Advisory Panel/User Group	15 (26%)
Talk/presentation	13 (22%)
Word of mouth	12 (21%)
Leaflet	5 (9%)
Search engine	2 (3%)
Other	1 (2%)

Comments: around a quarter of respondents indicated that were already connected with the project via the Advisory Panel or User Group.

2. UKAT's website: usage and effectiveness

Question 3: Which sections of UKAT's website have you visited or used?
[multiple responses permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Thesaurus searching	49 (84%)
A-Z browsing	46 (79%)
Hierarchical browsing	43 (74%)
Rejected terms	32 (55%)
About UKAT	30 (52%)
Candidate terms	29 (50%)
Recent additions	28 (48%)
Contributor registration	18 (31%)
Term submission	16 (28%)
News/events	12 (21%)
Help pages	9 (16%)
Contacting UKAT	7 (12%)
Downloads	4 (7%)

Comments: 'Recent additions', 'Candidate terms' and 'Rejected terms' were surprisingly popular, having been visited by around half of respondents. This underscored the point that improving the functionality of these pages to at least match the functionality of other parts of the thesaurus would be beneficial.

Question 4a: If you've used the Thesaurus pages, please tell us whether you found it easy or difficult to use the following: Thesaurus searching [single response permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Very easy	12 (21%)
Easy	26 (45%)
Acceptable	12 (21%)
Difficult	1 (2%)
Very difficult	0 (0%)
Not applicable (have not used)	2 (3%)
Did not answer	5 (9%)

Question 4b: If you've used the Thesaurus pages, please tell us whether you found it easy or difficult to use the following: A-Z browsing [single response permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Very easy	10 (17%)
Easy	18 (31%)
Acceptable	15 (26%)
Difficult	4 (7%)
Very difficult	0 (0%)
Not applicable (have not used)	2 (3%)
Did not answer	9 (16%)

Question 4c: If you've used the Thesaurus pages, please tell us whether you found it easy or difficult to use the following: Hierarchical browsing [single response permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Very easy	9 (16%)
Easy	24 (41%)
Acceptable	11 (19%)
Difficult	3 (5%)
Very difficult	0 (0%)
Not applicable (have not used)	4 (7%)
Did not answer	7 (12%)

Comments: an overwhelming majority of respondents found the three main thesaurus interfaces (searching, alphabetical browsing, hierarchical browsing) to be very easy, easy or acceptable to use. No respondent reported that these interfaces were "very difficult". In retrospect, given the unexpectedly high proportion of respondents who had visited the 'Candidate terms', 'Recent additions' and 'Rejected terms' pages, it might have been beneficial to ask similar questions about these facilities.

Question 5: Have you used the website to register as a contributor to UKAT? [single response permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Yes	20 (34%)
No	38 (66%)

Question 6a: If you answered 'Yes' to question 5, please tell us whether you found it easy or difficult to use the following: Contributor registration [single response permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Very easy	10 (17%)
Easy	8 (14%)
Acceptable	1 (2%)
Difficult	1 (2%)
Very difficult	0 (0%)
Not applicable (have not used)	0 (0%)
Did not answer	38 (66%)

Comments: all of those respondents who answered 'Yes' at Question 5 provided a response within the defined range. The 38 respondents who did not answer were those who answered 'No' at Question 5.

Question 6b: If you answered 'Yes' to question 5, please tell us whether you found it easy or difficult to use the following: Term submission [single response permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Very easy	3 (5%)
Easy	6 (10%)
Acceptable	4 (7%)
Difficult	0 (0%)
Very difficult	0 (0%)
Not applicable (have not used)	6 (10%)
Did not answer	39 (67%)

Comments: one respondent who answered 'Yes' at Question 5 did not answer this question. The remaining responses within the defined range were all from respondents who has answered 'Yes' at 5.

Question 6c: If you answered 'Yes' to question 5, please tell us whether you found it easy or difficult to use the following: Account management [single response permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Very easy	3 (5%)

Option	Number/percentage
Easy	2 (3%)
Acceptable	1 (2%)
Difficult	0 (0%)
Very difficult	0 (0%)
Not applicable (have not used)	12 (21%)
Did not answer	40 (69%)

Comments: two respondents who answered 'Yes' at Question 5 did not answer this question. The remaining responses within the defined range were all from respondents who has answered 'Yes' at 5.

Virtually all of the respondents who indicated that they had used the contributor registration, term submission and account management facilities found those facilities to be very easy, easy or acceptable to use. About 30% of those who had registered as contributors indicated that they had not used the term submission facilities. 60% of registered contributors had not used the account management facility, though this is not surprising as normally this facility would not be used unless contributors needed to change their settings.

3. UKAT's website: improvements

This section of the questionnaire asked respondents to express whether they agreed or disagreed with various suggested improvements with the website. It also provided a data field which respondents could use to suggest other improvements.

Question 7a: Allow searching of candidate and rejected terms [single response permitted]

"Background: candidate terms are terms which have been submitted to UKAT but which have not yet been edited; rejected terms are terms which were submitted to UKAT, but a decision has been made not to include them in the Thesaurus. Currently, these terms cannot be searched using UKAT's search utilities".

Option	Number/percentage
Yes	37 (64%)
No	10 (17%)
No opinion	10 (17%)
Did not answer	1 (2%)

Question 7b: Break the lists of candidate and rejected terms into alphabetical groups, similar to the A-Z browsing of the main Thesaurus [single response permitted]

"Background: currently the lists of candidate and rejected terms are structured alphabetically, but do not indicate where each alphabetical group begins".

Option	Number/percentage
Yes	43 (74%)
No	2 (3%)
No opinion	11 (19%)
Did not answer	2 (3%)

Question 7c: Break the list of recent additions into date groups and then alphabetically within each group [single response permitted]

"Background: currently the recent additions list is organised by the date when a term was added to UKAT, but it is not clear where each date group begins and ends".

Option	Number/percentage
Yes	34 (59%)
No	6 (10%)
No opinion	16 (28%)
Did not answer	2 (3%)

Question 7d: A-Z browsing: within each alphabetical group, replace the numerical list of pages with a list that indicates the start term and end term on each page [single response permitted]

"Background: currently, within each alphabetical group, the pages of terms are presented as a numerical list beginning at 1. It might be more useful if this was replaced by a list indicating the range of terms covered by each page".

Option	Number/percentage
Yes	45 (78%)
No	1 (2%)
No opinion	10 (17%)
Did not answer	2 (3%)

Comments: large majorities of those respondents who expressed an opinion agreed with the suggested improvements to the interfaces for candidate terms, rejected terms, recent additions, and the A-Z browsing.

Question 8: Please tell us about any other improvements which you think we should make to the website [open ended]

18 respondents answered this question. A number of comments related more to the content of the thesaurus or to the project in general rather than to the website. Some comments also suggested that users had failed to read the relevant help pages. The following points stand out:

- A need for more context sensitive help in the term submission and advanced searching screens.
- Field of knowledge 8 (Events) and its MTs had been left out of the drop down lists of MTs in the term submission pages and in the Advanced search form.
- Advanced search function - filtering by microthesaurus. If the user filtered by MT and then attempted to refine the search, it was not possible to select a different MT within the same field of knowledge (the drop down list of MTs appeared to be disabled).
- In the A-Z listings, links to previous and subsequent pages should be displayed at the top as well as at the bottom of the screen to assist navigation.
- Increase the size of the search box in the UKAT main menu.
- Improve the design and visibility of links in the home page. The home page should provide a clearer differentiation between information and functions.
- Add a facility to the term submission pages to allow users to select existing UKAT terms from a defined list ("possibly using predictive text of some kind").
- Rejected terms: add more information about reasons for rejection and suggested alternatives.
- One user expressed surprise that submitted terms did not appear immediately in the Candidate terms listings.
- Endorsement of dividing Candidate terms into A-Z groups.
- Endorsement of the proposal at Question 7d for improvements to A-Z browsing.
- One respondent commented in detail about problems in UKAT's treatment of terms relating to textiles and design.

4. The Thesaurus

Question 9: We will be making UKAT available to the manufacturers of archive cataloguing software. By this, we mean software which is specifically designed for cataloguing (not general purpose packages such as word processors or spreadsheets). If you are an archive professional (see question 1), please tell us whether you use the following for cataloguing: [single response permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Calm	13 (22%)
Do not use cataloguing software	13 (22%)
In-house software/bespoke applications	11 (19%)

Option	Number/percentage
Other cataloguing software (please specify below)	9 (16%)
Adlib	3 (5%)
Did not answer	9 (16%)

Comments: all but one of the respondents who classed themselves as 'archive professionals' at Question 1 provided answers within the defined range. Several responses were also provided by respondents who either did not answer Q1 or classed themselves as 'Other' at Q1.

Although Calm was the most used individual package, the relatively high proportion of respondents using in-house/bespoke software and packages other than Calm or Adlib suggests that phase 2 of Studio 24's work should include the development of a UKAT format which is not tied to any proprietary package, to allow maximum portability.

Respondents who indicated that they used 'Other cataloguing software' were invited to identify the software in a separate input field. This field was also completed by some respondents who had selected other options. The packages identified were:

- HDMS (1)
- DBTextworks, TRIM, MUSE (1)
- Aleph (Ex Libris) (1)
- Gallery Systems TMS (1)
- CAIRS (1)
- PROCAT (1)
- EAD (1)
- EzyFILE (1)
- "bespoke database using MySQL" (1)
- XMetal (2)
- MODES plus (2)

Question 10: Have you used UKAT, or terms which have now been incorporated into UKAT (including UNESCO Thesaurus terms), for any of the following?
[multiple responses permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Have not used UKAT	23 (40%)
In-house indexing	17 (29%)
Indexing in connection with external projects (e.g. A2A)	12 (21%)

Option	Number/percentage
As a source of terms when searching for resources	10 (17%)
Other uses (please specify below)	3 (5%)

Comments: respondents who indicated that they had used UKAT or terms which had been incorporated into UKAT for 'other uses' were invited to identify these uses in an input field. Four respondents (one of whom had not ticked 'other uses') completed this field, mainly using it to make general comments.

Question 11: In the future, do you intend to use UKAT or envisage using UKAT for any of the following? [multiple responses permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
In-house indexing	31 (53%)
Indexing in connection with external projects (e.g. A2A)	20 (34%)
As a source of terms when searching for resources	17 (29%)
Will not use UKAT	7 (12%)
Other uses (please specify below)	1 (2%)

Comments: a majority of respondents indicated that they intended to use UKAT in some form. Perhaps surprisingly, the number who intended to use UKAT for in-house indexing was greater than those who envisaged using it with external projects (15 respondents indicated that they intended to use UKAT for both). Respondents who indicated that they intended to use UKAT for 'other uses' were asked to specify these uses in a separate input field. Four respondents completed this field, mainly using it as a way of making general comments.

Question 12: If you are an archive professional (see question 1) and you will not use UKAT in the future, please tell us why [single response permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
We use a different subject terminology for indexing	6 (10%)
We do not have a subject index	2 (3%)
UKAT is too general/does not include the terms that we need	0 (0%)
Other reasons (please specify)	2 (3%)

Comments: this question was answered by four respondents who had indicated at Q11 that they did not intend to use UKAT, and by one respondent who did not answer Q11. The remaining responses were from respondents who had indicated that they intended to use UKAT in some form, suggesting there was some confusion over the questions. Respondents who selected 'other reasons' were asked to specify them in a separate input field. Five respondents completed this field (three of whom had answered Q12); again, it was mainly used for general comments.

Question 13: It has been suggested that UKAT should not attempt to include terms relating to document types. These could be general terms (e.g. 'Deeds', 'Parish registers') and specific terms (e.g. terms for specific types of deeds). Do you think that UKAT should include these terms? [single response permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Yes	27 (47%)
No	22 (38%)
No opinion	8 (14%)
Did not answer	1 (2%)

Comments: a majority of respondents who expressed an opinion favoured the inclusion of terms relating to document types, though there was no strong consensus on the issue.

Question 14: Do you think that UKAT should be provided in Welsh as well as in English? [single response permitted]

Option	Number/percentage
Yes	24 (41%)
No	10 (17%)
No opinion	23 (40%)
Did not answer	1 (2%)

Comments: a large majority of those respondents who expressed an opinion favoured the inclusion of Welsh terms in UKAT.

Question 15: Please tell us about any subject areas, currently included in UKAT, which you think should be covered in greater detail [open ended]

Twelve respondents answered this open-ended question. Areas which were highlighted as requiring greater coverage included:

- Medicine and hospital administration (1)
- Religion - terms for Christian denominations (1)
- Mining, minerals (1)

- Photographs (1)
- Film/cinema (1)
- Textiles (1)
- Land management, manors, courts (1)
- Document types (1)
- Historical periods, time spans (1)
- Historical events (2)

Question 16: Please tell us about any subject areas, not currently included in UKAT, which you think should be included: [open ended]

Nine respondents answered this open-ended question (some using it to make general comments). The following areas were suggested as requiring inclusion:

- Electronic visual materials (1)
- Design (1)
- Industry/metal industry (1)
- Built and historic environment (1)
- "Less tangible concepts and experiences" (1)
- Geographical areas (2)

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29 April 2004