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# Reflections on the Impact of a Library-based Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) Service

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# Reflections on the Impact of a Library-based Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) Service



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Rick Wallace, Nakia Cook, Travis Clamon

East Tennessee State University / Quillen College of Medicine Library



## Background

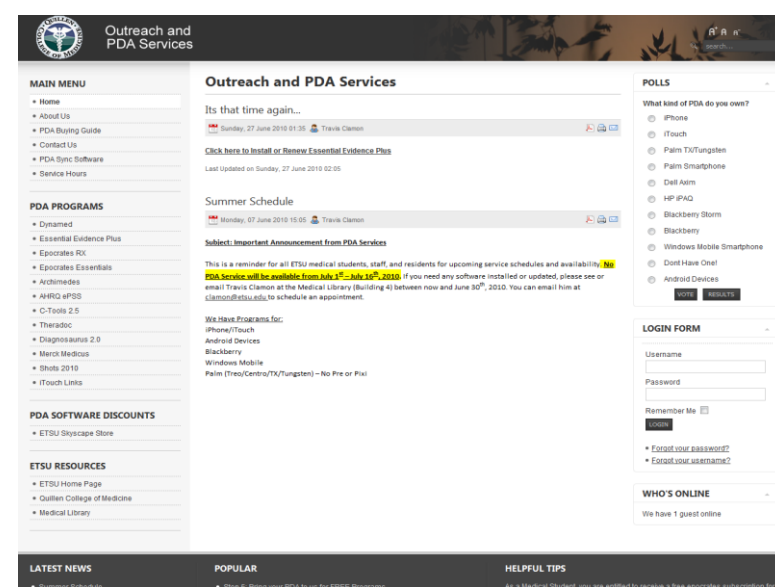
De Groot and Doranski (2004) noted, "All librarians in information services departments at health sciences libraries need to be able to provide consistent and knowledgeable PDA support" (p. 346).

Rios (2004) stated, "With the convergence between our profession and other information technology professions, librarians have a choice to be involved with PDAs or be bypassed" (p. 17).

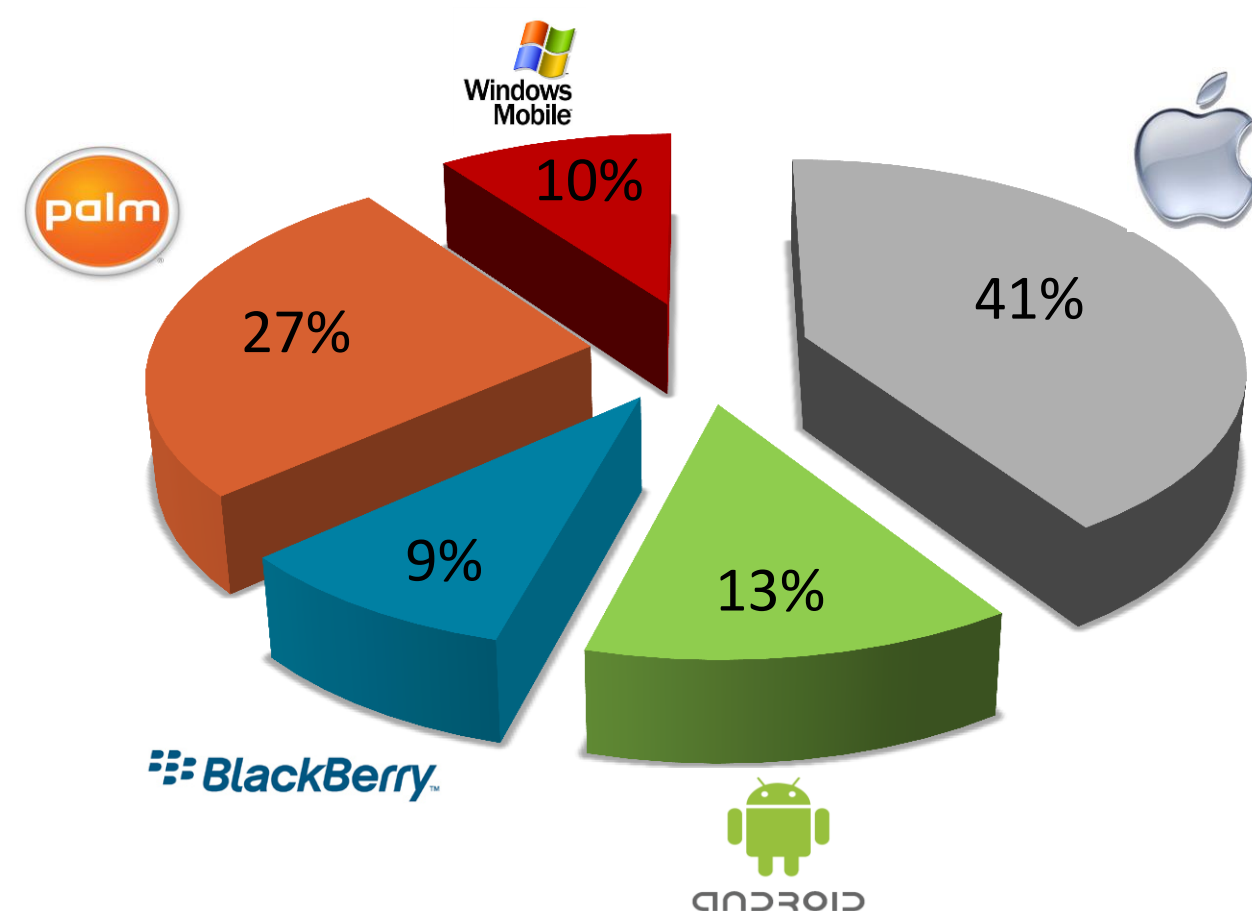
EBM experts, Shaughnessy and Slawson (n.d.), suggested that the PDA would become the stethoscope of the future.

## Orgins

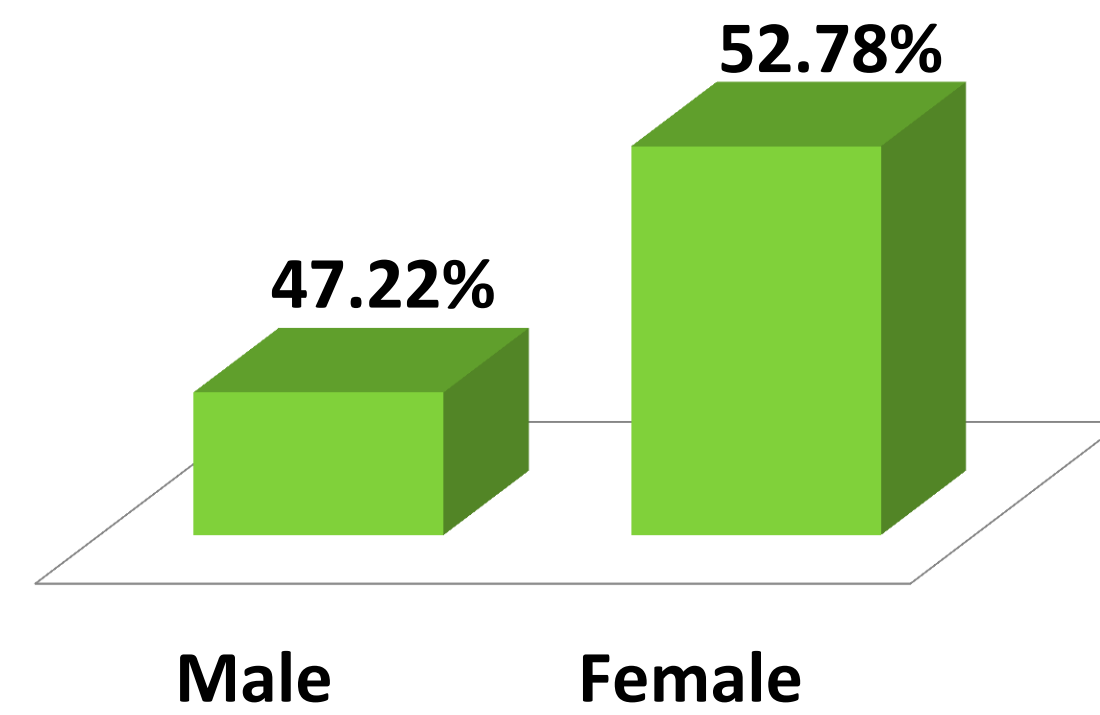
ETSU QCOM Library received a grant to encourage use of PDAs to attending physicians. The goal was to eliminate barriers to technology use. Gradually, the service has grown and been promoted mostly by word of mouth.



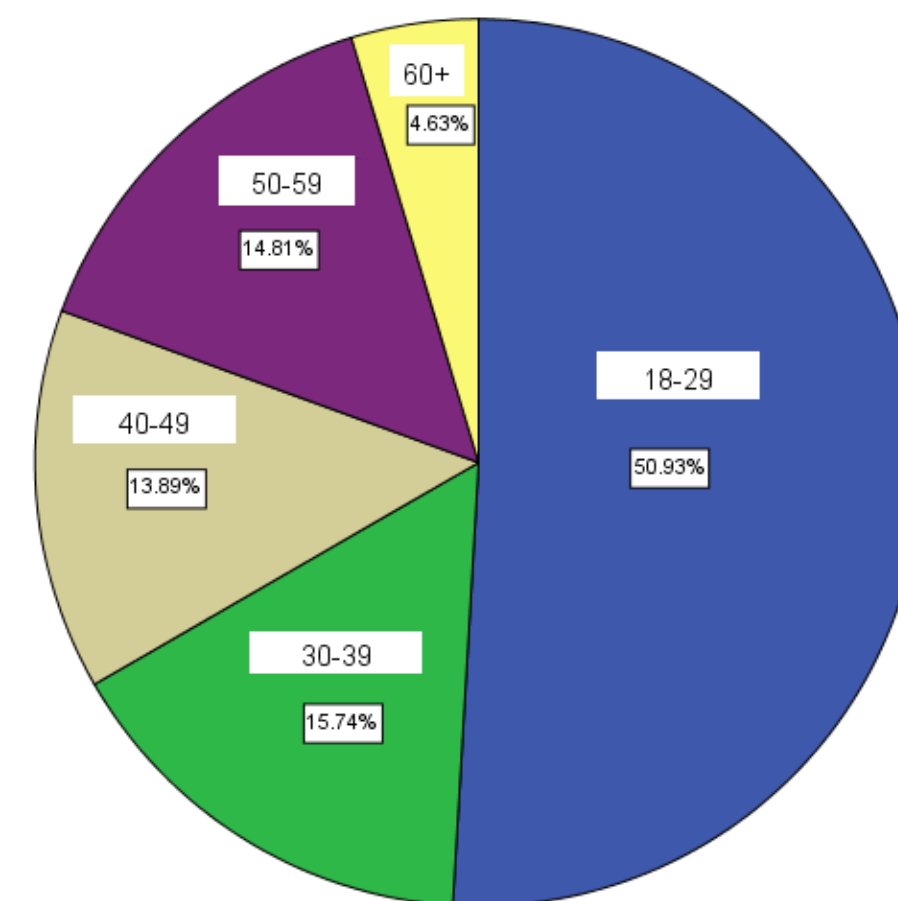
## PDA Platform Breakdown



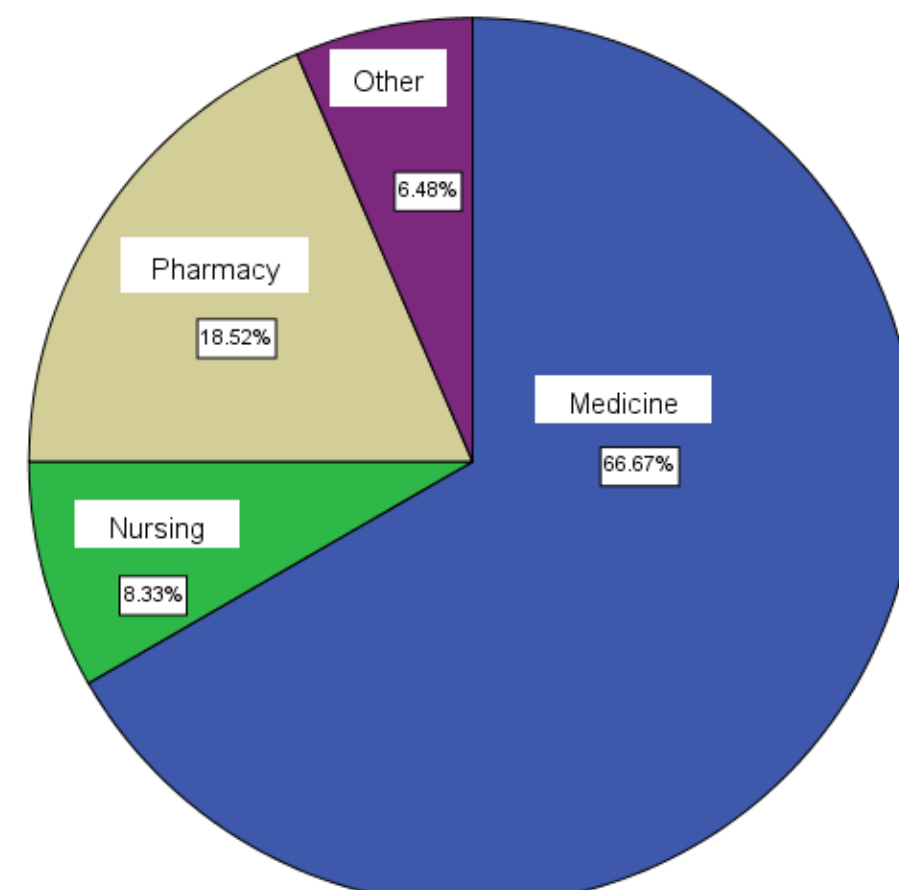
## Gender Breakdown



## Age Breakdown

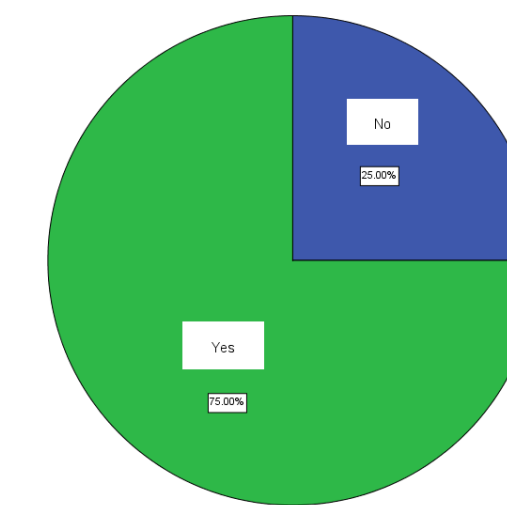


## Occupation Breakdown

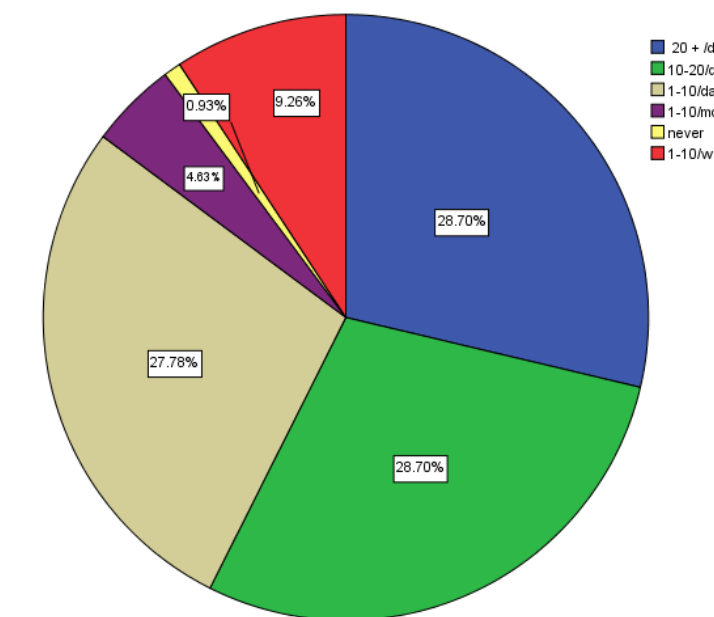


## Survey Results

Q.1 If the ETSU Quillen College of Medicine Library did not assist/promote the use of PDAs, would you be a PDA user?



Q.2 How often do you use your PDA??



Q.3 Do you find the ETSU Quillen College of Medicine Library's PDA Service Useful?

97.22% - Yes  
2.78% - No

Q. 4 Do you feel confident you could install the PDA software without the Library's help?

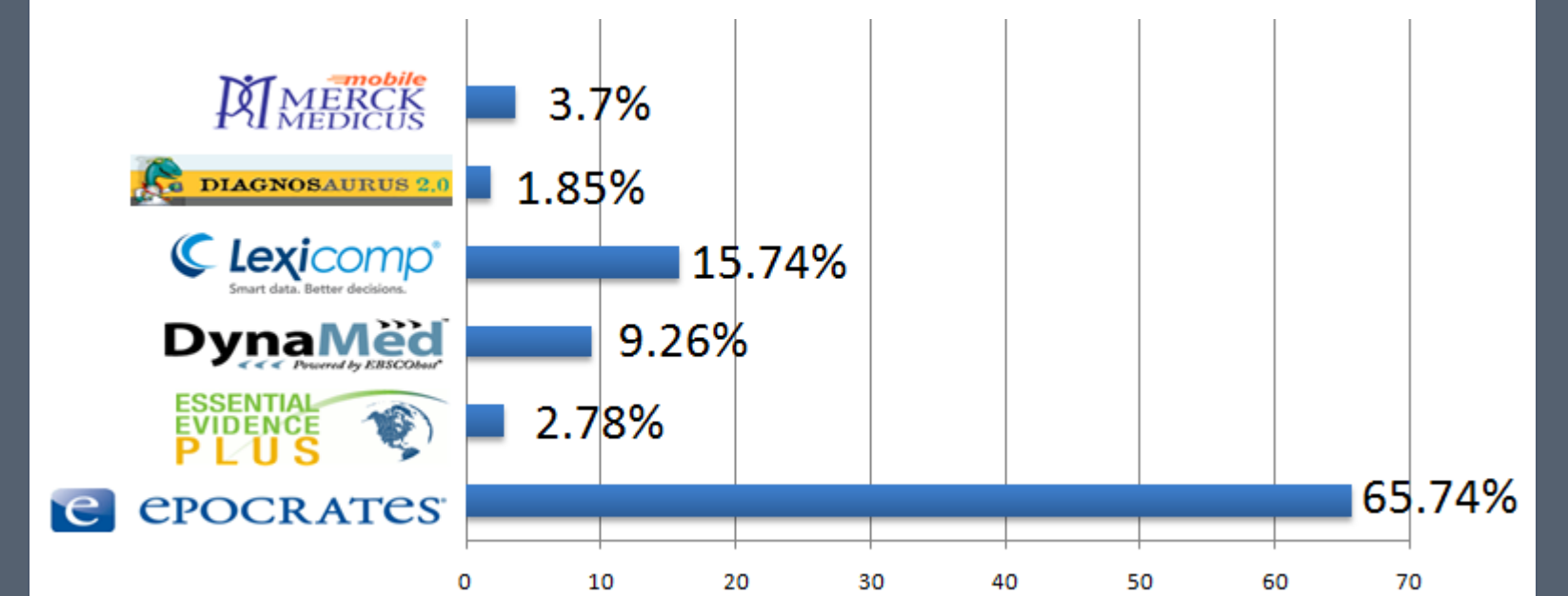
25.93% - Yes  
74.07% - No

Q. 5 Do you feel the programs the Library install on your PDA are useful?

97.22% - Yes  
2.78% - No

## Survey Results (cont.)

Q. 6 What is your favorite database on your PDA?



## Conclusion

- Since the inception of the PDA services, the library has serviced over 2,000 PDA devices.
- The survey results can serve as a basis for collection development
- The results appear to dispel stereotypes of technology specifically gender and age
- Provides data showing the need for a library based PDA service especially with issues related to support and installation of databases
- The PDA Platform breakdown gives us an idea of possible PDA purchasing trends
- This service has increased the perception of the library's value significantly across our university.

## References

- De Groot, S.L., & Doranski, M. (2004). The use of personal digital assistants in the health sciences: Results of a survey. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, 92, 341-348.
- Rios, G.R. (2004). Technology and e-health advancements: PDA librarian. *Reference Services Review*, 32, 16-20.
- Shaughnessy, A.F., & Slawson, D. C. (n.d.). Teaching family physicians to be information masters. Retrieved April 3, 2005 from <http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/cme/slides/InfoMast/Introduction-to-Information-Mastery--comprehensive-.ppt#421,51>, The Clinician of the Future.

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