

EDITORIAL BOARD REPORT: January 2016
Prepared by Stephen McGlinchey

Note, this is a private document - only to be read by E-IR editors. Please do not disseminate.

In our last survey (early 2015) our team members asked for us to produce an annual report of important activity so all editors had more of an insight into how E-IR works. So, here's the report that I presented to the board and was agreed at the end of 2015. Following that is feedback on our surveys.

OUR MAIN 'NEW' GROWTH PRIORITIES FOR 2016

Establish our **textbooks** – which will be a series of books called 'E-IR Foundations'
<http://www.e-ir.info/e-ir-foundations-open-access-books-for-international-relations-beginners/>

Build a new **student portal** to house the textbooks, offer a 'one stop stop' for students offering the world's most awesome virtual learning environment in international relations and in doing so give the essays section/essay award a new lease of life as part of that portal.

Recruit **new editors** to expand our scope in at least 3 areas. This will start with a Middle East team (already recruiting) with more to follow. Each will be tasked with developing an edited collection.

Build a new **footer** for the website to display at the bottom of each page. Something better looking.

MONEY

In 2015 we made a slight operating loss due to the way our advert payments come in. But nothing to worry about. We're in the same financial shape we have been in for recent years. Operating well within our means with a small reserve fund in case we need it. Our finances are all publicly listed by the UK government and available on the Companies House website as should anyone want to check them, they always can - a good thing for our curious authors / editors / audience who might want to see we are as genuine (and broke!) as we state. As a registered non-profit all our income remains in the company to be spent on our operations. No dividends/profits are ever withdrawn.

ADVERTISING

We have already sold about 50% of our full 2016 advertising inventory. It will cover our costs but we need to sell more to raise the money we need to build our new students portal, as we have just about covered our existing 2016 operating costs (bandwidth, technical, services etc.) with that income. Fingers crossed more advertisers emerge through the year (I'm sure they will) - but this is a solid start to the 2016 advertising season for us. We encourage all editors to raise the opportunities of advertising in their departments with their programme leaders / influential staff. It all counts.

BOOKS

ISBN	Title	Format	2015 sales (CS)	2015 sales (IS)	2015 downloads	notes
2015 Publications			301	18	88,058	
978-1-910814-00-0	Ukraine and Russia	paperback	170	n/a	17916	
978-1-910814-01-7	Caliphates and Islamic Global Politics	deleted version	7			
978-1-910814-10-9	Caliphates and Islamic Global Politics	new version	n/a	6	7223	arabic translation, 2017
978-1-910814-02-4	Popular Culture and World Politics	paperback	67	n/a	6866	
978-1-910814-03-1	Restoring Self Determination	paperback	13	5	1004	
978-1-910814-07-9	Restoring Self Determination	ebook				
978-1-910814-04-8	Nations Under God	paperback	23	7	4128	
978-1-910814-06-2	Nations Under God	ebook				
978-1-910814-05-5	English School	paperback	23		1472	
978-1-910814-08-6	English School	ebook				

*Note IS (Ingram Spark) and CS (Createspace) are our two different print partners – they get books into stores for us.

** The Arabic translation is not being done by us, but by an Arabic publisher (Obeikan) who has licensed the book and will keep it under creative commons when published in Arabic.

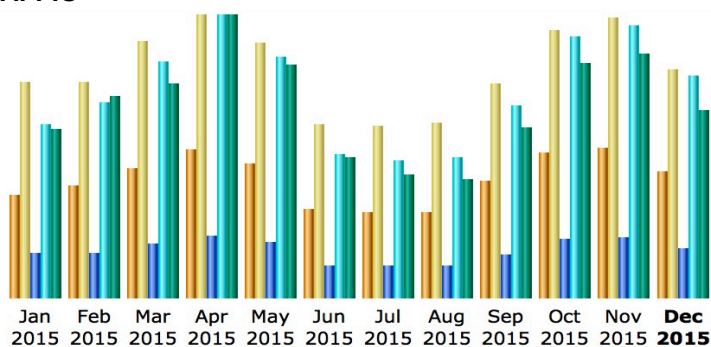
Overall almost 90,000 downloads of our full inventory of ebooks in 2015. Incredible! And, we sold 319 books in hard copy.

It takes 6 months to get a reliable sales figure for books due to how slow the sales are reported to us. So I think only the Pop Culture and Ukraine books (both out in first half of 2015, the rest have only been on sale for a few months at most) are valid to base analysis on for now. And, those two both look healthy for sales. We need to sell about 80-100 of each book to break even - both are establishing a positive trend with *Pop Culture* nearly there and *Ukraine* at over double that. Though, we are not selling books to make money - a cost covering model to fund the distribution of the bandwidth the ebooks require is our aim. It looks like its working.

It seems we sell about 1 - 1.5% of the copies that people freely download. This is interesting and something to keep an eye on. And importantly, the economics are working:

We spent nearly £2700 in total producing our books and getting the section rolling in 2015 (mainly contractor/production and licensing costs) and we made back exactly £2451 in royalties. considering a lot of the cost is front loaded and we don't make back our money on titles for 6 months+ this is really encouraging! In 2016 these books will continue to sell and make us income at no further cost to us (as we have already made them). So they are a great asset for E-IR, and I'm relieved we have established proof of concept that we *can* do books! Phew and congratulations to all involved. It was a mammoth task this year getting those books out.

WEBSITE TRAFFIC



Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2015	193,863	404,535	2,603,724	10,034,488	341.11 GB
Feb 2015	211,868	404,657	2,553,185	11,282,398	409.02 GB
Mar 2015	242,691	480,183	3,117,491	13,660,449	434.74 GB
Apr 2015	279,364	529,791	3,611,834	16,325,258	572.75 GB
May 2015	251,219	478,866	3,185,216	13,962,687	472.33 GB
Jun 2015	165,557	326,520	1,893,856	8,254,277	283.26 GB
Jul 2015	161,868	323,303	1,862,677	7,910,783	250.00 GB
Aug 2015	161,181	329,188	1,881,561	8,082,633	239.20 GB
Sep 2015	220,397	402,375	2,510,662	11,077,365	345.01 GB
Oct 2015	272,596	501,928	3,420,818	15,133,302	475.46 GB
Nov 2015	280,342	526,655	3,503,634	15,750,392	493.61 GB
Dec 2015	238,405	427,024	2,867,956	12,861,862	380.11 GB
Total	2,679,351	5,135,025	33,012,614	144,335,894	4696.61 GB

Up around 20% on 2014 - excellent!! 2.7 million unique readers.

here's the key though, the nature of the traffic has changed. The fact that we now have images loading at the top of most posts, and the fact that we had 88k pdfs downloaded (more intensive on bandwidth than normal website text based traffic) means we have used nearly 3 times more *bandwidth* than 2014 ... which unfortunately means that even though our traffic is only up by 20% in *human* terms the costs we have to pay to host the site have *trebled*.

Bottom line stats for 2015,

- 2.7 million unique readers (those who visited the website at least once)
- 33 million page views (number of times all our posts were read in total)
- 4700 gigabits of traffic (there's where the bulk of our income goes – bandwidth is expensive!)

Everybody loves stats, so I'm happy to report that we will be displaying page views on all posts soon, and we have got our developer working on it this week. Our readers and authors will benefit from this useful measure of dissemination. A mock up of how we hope it will look is below. Discreet & tasteful.



TECHNICAL

Wordpress (our publishing platform) and Slack (our e-office) continue to develop and improve and change their functions - sometimes rapidly. This can be a little hard to keep up with, but our editors seem to be nimble enough to stay apprised. We can't update our materials and guidance every time there's an update to these two core platforms, but we do so when possible.

The Wordpress guidance will be updated soon on the publishing editors glossary. NB, only editors with publishing access who are logged in can access this link: <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/12/14/e-ir-publishing-editors-glossary/>

The Slack guidance is updated on the 2016 version of the Welcome to E-IR handbook (please read): <http://www.e-ir.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Getting-Started-2016.pdf>

Of note there is a new section at the end about the editorial structure as we know it helps to know where you fit, and more importantly where you can advance to. Please take a look at the document for more information on this. A preview is below. No position is closed-ended. Remember, *all* these roles are voluntary – no one takes payment for any editorial role on E-IR. All those currently at the right side of the box below started on the left, and they now run the website! So, we hope that you will take the opportunity and invest in E-IR to gain the rewards it can bring for yourself, and us.

Start >	6-12 months >	12-18 months >		
Commissioning Editor	Senior Commissioning Editor	Editor-at-large		
	Associate / Deputy Articles Editor	Articles Editor*		
Associate Students Editor	Deputy Students Editor	Students Editor*		
Associate Features Editor	Deputy Features Editor	Features Editor*		
Associate Blogs Editor	Deputy Blogs Editor	Blogs Editor*		
	Social Media Editor			
Editorial Assistant	After 6 months you can join one of the teams above at the start position.			
			By appointment >	By appointment.
			Member of Editorial Board	Director of Editorial Board
		Deputy Managing Editor	Managing Editor*	Editor-in-Chief*

* These roles are only available when vacant. All others are always open to advancement.

EDITORS SURVEY FEEDBACK (73 respondents)

The team survey we carried out was very helpful. Thanks everyone. No problems to report and the feedback was encouraging. It's great to see that you all get so much out of volunteering with us and we will work hard to keep that spirit open and build on it further so we can keep attracting great people to widen and deepen our team.

Basic stats:

Age: Youngest editor is 19, oldest is 41
Our average age is 25.64 years

Gender: 43% Female and 57% Male
Sexuality: 9.5% LGBTQ and 90.5% heterosexual

So we're younger, quite a bit more female, and slightly more LGBTQ than our readers on average (see comparable audience stats on pages below). I think that looks good to me! ☺

Regarding your qualitative comments, here's some feedback on just the general issues you raised. The specific points you raised will already have been (or will be soon) discussed in the slack channel for your team as they don't always concern everyone else. I tried to make the responses below as fully formed as possible, but hopefully you will understand that we can't do everything people want us to.

1. The idea of content beyond text/images – like video content, podcasts and 'infographics'.

Agreed, this would be great. But the costs (time and money) and the technical hurdles of producing all of those are beyond us right now. The question has to be asked – who is going to make infographics (if we use those as an example)? If they do so, can they do it for 20+ posts per week? So, it would need a whole team behind it with a working practice / methodology and systems embedded so it had logic. Same goes for videos and podcasts etc..

We aren't closing these doors, and we will certainly do some work with A/V content when we build our new students portal this year. Though, at first we will be testing out how we can integrate what's already out there on YouTube and so on before deciding whether we need to produce anything of our own. We certainly can with all the above caveats, though it will not happen quickly.

There's a reason we have invested our time in text based content. Because it's achievable with our means and resources. If we find a way to grow beyond our current means, then more is possible. It's possible we will experiment with infographics for the textbook – but if so we are going to need someone to volunteer to make them. If you can, let me know please!

2. More comments on posts and more audience engagement on facebook / twitter. On the comments – we already upgraded the comment system last year to the Disqus platform (used by most major websites) which makes it easier than ever to comment. On social media – we actually are getting much more traffic than before from social sources and while the bulk of our presence there is the automated posting of our content (and ad hoc posts when other matters arise) I agree there is scope to do more. Again, it comes down to resources / rationale for doing so. So far, our audience use Soc M mainly to keep up to date with publications (confirmed in survey). So, it seems our use of it reflects the desires of readers. We can look into appointing a couple of editors to work on social media in the coming week to try to engage our readers further along these lines.
3. Having content in other languages, or other language editions of E-IR. This is also a great idea but not one we will be doing. For better or worse, we are an English language publication and one with very limited resources. So, we need to make sure we invest fully in **one** great product rather than scatter our attention, focus, and resources.

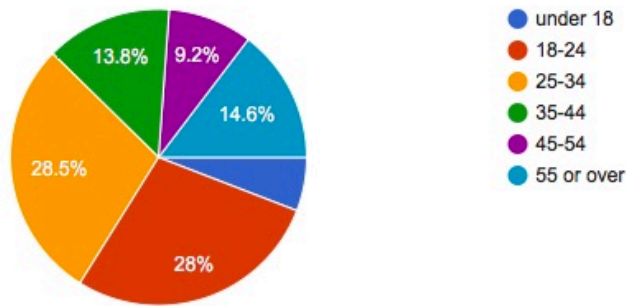
4. Various comments about having students write shorter pieces / contribute bespoke content. This is contrary to our editorial policy. All purpose written content must be from an author with expertise of some kind so it conforms to scholarly norms. We will always keep a home for students in the essays section, as these are useful to our readers, and popular. We already have problems with readers not always being able to distinguish between our expert and student content (despite us now marking essays with a prominent disclaimer), so allowing amateur commentary would only make that worse – which harms our reputability academically as a trusted source. See the audience charts on pages below for more on that which do show that 6% of our readers – 6% of 2.7 million is quite a lot of people – would *not* recommend us to students. This is probably why as lecturers like myself sometimes see students referencing E-IR essays as ‘credible’ sources in their essays, when of course, they are not. I understand the desire – but we are not a student newspaper. This goes to the core of our editorial mission to be a resource for students and scholars. Not one at the expense of the other. It’s a hard line to walk, but we hold that line for very good reasons.
5. On links/partnerships: As an independent publisher we don’t seek formal links with any other websites and always reject these offers. Not that there are any in our field like us, or at our level, anyway where linking would be beneficial. What we do is court links with *publishers* and *academic providers* which benefits our reputation and allows us to better serve our audience. E.g. Routledge sponsoring our essay award and 6 publishers giving money to our last 2 scholarships. We also have partnerships with journals or scholarly publishers in ad hoc terms when an opportunity arises. So the strategy here (editorially) is one of deepening, not widening.
6. Better results from search enquiries on home page. Yes, this is certainly something we need to work on. The website is built on Wordpress which is awful at searching – so we upgraded it quite a bit last year with some more powerful search technology. But, we will keep an eye out for ways we can improve it further and build that in when we have some development funds spare. The main weakness is searching for author name. Other searches are usually functional.
7. Having categories for articles like we do with student essays. We can look into that, and it’s been to mind for a long time, but we have never found a workable solution. And, after researching other websites in the politics area, they don’t seem to categorise content by subject either. The problem is that there’s too many potential categories... we would end up having hundreds. Perhaps if we build a better search engine (see above) – that would be a solution. One to think over though.
8. There were a few comments about ‘why not have more content in X or Y area’ these are interesting for sure, but with 30+ commissioning editors we don’t operate (and don’t have the time to operate) an active editorial mandate of assigning topics like an editor of a news desk would do – we rely on editors going out and finding content themselves. So if you are passionate about certain areas, then we hope you will work to make it visible on the website. You are welcome to be pitching ideas to other editors on slack – or even pitching an edited collection on a topic.

The way E-IR works is that we give you the tools, but you have to utilise them with your own drive and enthusiasm. That being said, I think it’s true that we can do more to actively pursue certain areas. And in the past that’s taken the form of us recruiting editors in targeted areas (like gender, climate, middle east etc.) and we will use your feedback to target the next wave of this – including trying harder to court people outside IR/politics which is a priority for us editorially.

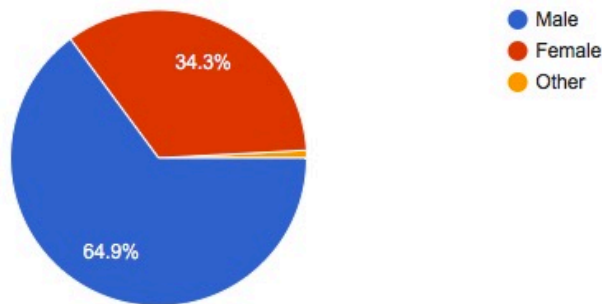
AUDIENCE SURVEY FEEDBACK (239 respondents)

This was overwhelmingly positive, and came up with some useful data. Generally, the issues pointed out where they want us to improve echo the editors' comments as summarised above. But, based on comparing this survey with prior years, it's the most positive and encouraging result I've seen. Our readers are very happy with E-IR and think we are on the right track – well done everyone!

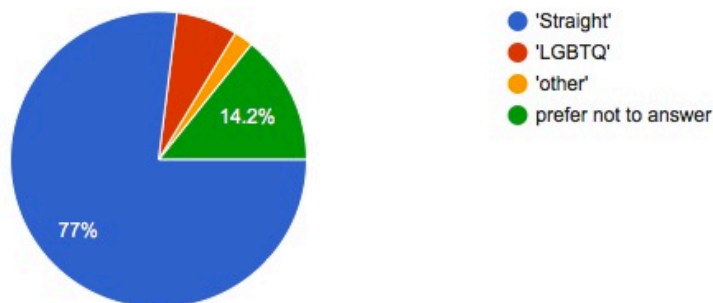
Your Age (239 responses)



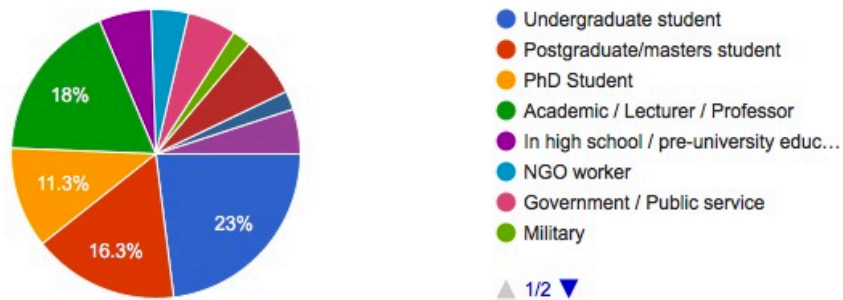
Your Gender (239 responses)



Your Sexuality (as defined broadly) (239 responses)

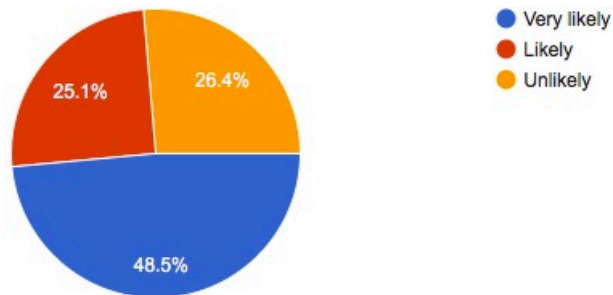


Which one of these options best describes you? (239 responses)



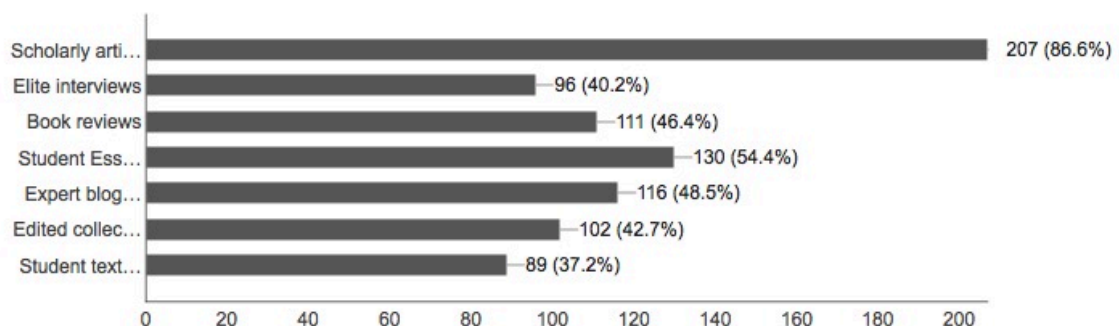
How likely are you to continue in education with a further degree / qualification?

(239 responses)



Which of the following types of E-IR's range of publications are of use to you (check as many as required)

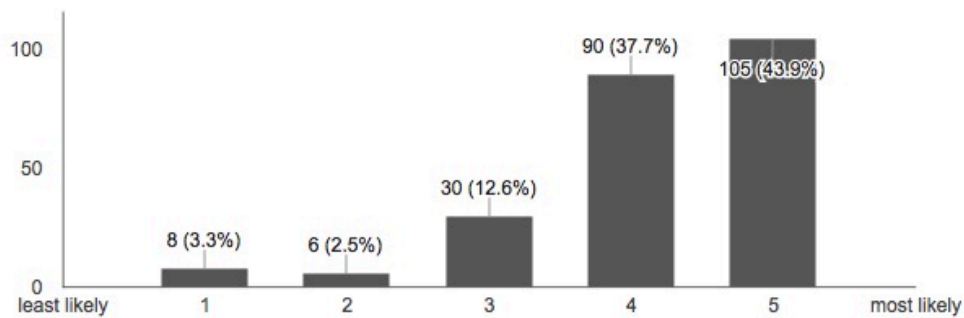
(239 responses)



Our reach to lecturers/academics continues to rise in percentage. This is encouraging. Also encouraging is that more than ¼ of our audience is not in academia or studying... so we are reaching wider into society and this ratio is growing fast year on year.

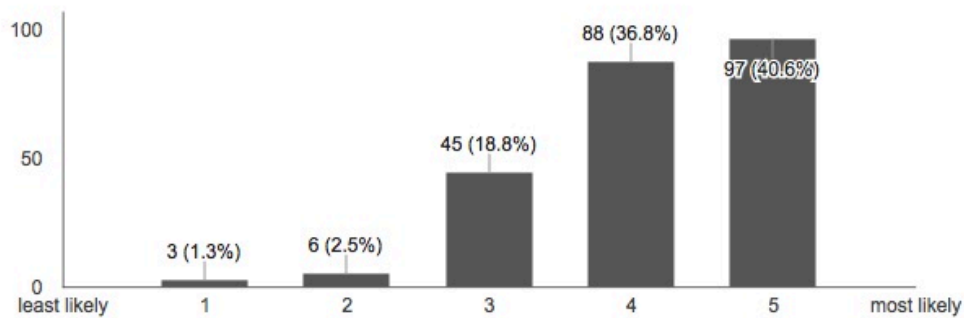
The last dataset above is very interesting this year. As we asked the question in a way where they could check as many options as they wanted (before it was just 'which section is the most useful to you'). The articles being highest, and essays second, corresponds with our verified traffic data from the server and last year's survey result. The other sections are all fairly within a range of each other.

I would recommend E-IR to students as a trusted learning resource (239 responses)



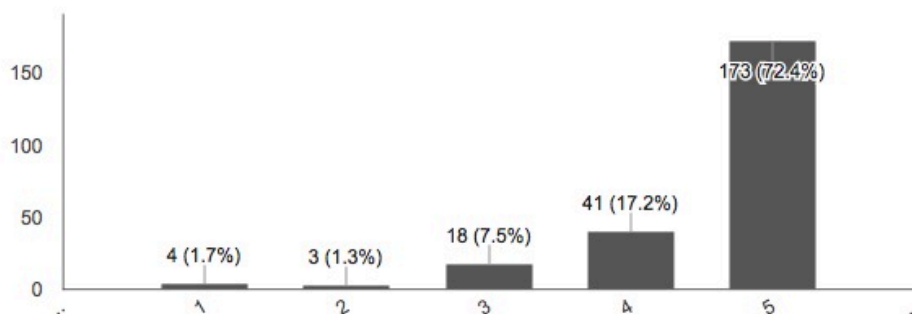
I would recommend E-IR to lecturers / professors as a reputable source of accessible scholarly debate in International Relations

(239 responses)



How important is it to you that E-IR is open access and provides all its material freely?

(239 responses)



3% of people don't care if we charge for access!?! Guess those are the rich ones. So much for the fable of 'the 1%' ☺

I hope this was interesting for those who read it. And thanks for taking the editor's survey as it really helped us get a good idea of how things are developing from the grass roots, to the top of the organisation.

I'd just like to end on this comment from one of our readers – I'm not religious but it was touching:

“changing the world does not always mean giving alms or praying always. sometimes it is ensuring that whatever you do helps all you intend to. At E-IR you are changing the world by making sure the kids at Princeton and those at Egerton in Kenya can read get the same knowledge if they come to you. God bless”

and this one, equally cool, but more concise!

“stay free till judgement day, copyleft ftw!”

Best,

Steve McGlinchey



Editor-in-Chief & Director

Footnote: [here's all the results from this year's 'funny question' on what beverage E-IR would be if we were a drink – some are funny and/or revelatory!](#)

Editors' responses:

- Chai Latte
- A single malt.
- Coke; it fizzes with ideas and enthusiasm.
- Lemon Iced Tea. Not too sweet, not too strong. Just perfect for intellectual stimulation.
- tea
- Port - rich
- Milk
- beer :)
- Water. Everyone needs water.
- Definitely Trappist Belgian beer. It's a wide category, but there's a lot to the category (like the website) and each type of beer (section) can be really approachable for many people and some are super complex and appeal to the serious consumer.
- Coffee because it sets the cogs in your brain whirring
- Vodka Martini....Very classy and sophisticated.
- Tea (my favourite) -- many kinds and something for everyone!
- A cup of coffee or a glass of scotch. Those, like E-IR, are constant companions at my desk!
- water- (most) people have access, and it's good (required!) for you
- king's cup. Not sure what's in there, but it's probably life changing.
- wine
- Fizzy water. Fully of potential (gas inside) and adding flavours to improve taste is easy (flow of ideas, listening to take on board feedback to improve)

- A fruit tea
- Coffee
- coffee -always refreshing !
- A very, very complex wine. A red blend of some sort. Hearty yet approachable.
- A nice cup of warm cafe latte. You enjoy drinking it. It has a positive impact on your mood and motivates you to keep working
- Ginger Ale, because that is my favorite drink (a high compliment from a soda addict!)
- Caipirinha, basic ingredients, but well made
- Screwdriver (Vodka + Orange Juice). Makes something rather dry way more tasty.
- The world's largest open access liquor store for drinks of international politics: 1) "Keeping it real" for those sipping for realism; 2) "Cooperations in times of testification" for the liberals; 3) "Get to Know Ya" for the constructivists.
- a gin and tonic- refreshing, but with a kick. My personal favourite
- I am in Canada and I love craft beers. Lately I've been drinking Goose Island Beer CO's Goose Hunkers Ale.
- Rhubarb and Custard Gin
- E-IR would be a beer. In other words, E-IR is not pretentious, like wine or champagne can be, but is rather hardworking and classy :)
- Mulled Cider - it has some nutrients hidden away behind things that make your brain feel warm and fuzzy ;)
- coffee
- Boutique gin and tonic
- Soda: unpretentious, reliable, transparent, and goes with anything.
- A beer, because it's chill but enjoyable
- Pale Ale. British origin and with an increasing presence abroad.< this is my personal favourite ☺
- Baileys, chill and enjoyable but with a twist
- Buckfast
- Jaggerbombs because they're the best
- Cocktail having different flavours and fragrances
- A scotch because its timeless & classy.
- errr...Fizzy Pop or something Anglo like that
- freshly squeezed, free-of-charge, multivitamin juice :) (it's current and trendy, it's open access and by volunteers , it is diverse, multidimensional and nutrient :))
- a Long Island Ice Tea
- Wine because my main drikn is beer (which would be newspaper sites), and then frquently i switch into e-ir like wine
- A kale juice (because it's trendy but it's also good for you and it has an edge)
- Champagne ! Fun and bubbly.
- Cocktail! Fun and interesting, always different flavours/ideas.
- some fruitjuice mix - all kinds of ideas/expertise around that fit well together
- Like a Coffee - You will need it all the time

Audience responses:

- Wine
- Wine
- Water
- Redbull! :D
- sunny delight
- Sex on the Beach
- Chai tea
- coconut water (cool and refreshing)
- Ok this is cute, Fanta
- Mojito
- Lemonade
- Water - very essential to students :))
- Water.

- Gin and tonic
- Whiskey
- sparkle soda
- an unusual health shake
- beer
- An uplifting drink, probably aged scotch
- Cola
- Almond milk
- Gin and Tonic
- An alcopop
- Vodka Martini
- Daikiri
- nothing
- cola, it will taste better when you drink it right after you open the seal.
- Fruit punch
- Sparkling wine
- search for books by difficult ways
- I don't know, i should try this kind of weird beverage!
- Cherry Coke
- Beer. My favourite.
- Sorry, just juce...
- I would have preferred it for WEEKENDS.
- wine
- wine
- wine
- it would be fun!!
- cappucino
- Wine...lol
- Diet Coke
- ДУМАЮ, ЧТО КАК ШАМПАНСКОЕ
- honey lemon
- DR Pepper
- RedBull (bwahaha :D)
- Pinacolada (just for fun... :-p)
- tiquila
- Coffee
- Coffee
- Coffee
- Beer
- Beer
- Beer
- wtf? A glass of Shloer... (classy)
- Hahaha Coconut water weird at first but benifitial
- No idea
- A Black Velvet, a little strange in the beginning, but full of interesting flavors the longer you drink
- SWIMMING POOL
- A moelleux white wine, looks like wine, smells like wine, but is so much easier to drink!
- Coca cola
- Chai latte
- Tequila
- Banana-strawberry :)
- Jager Bomb
- Victoria Lemonade
- Diet Pepsi
- Daily cup of Tea
- coke-refreshing
- milk shake

- Ambrosia
- G&T
- Tab
- Jack Daniela
- Energy drink
- Single malt whisky
- Desert wine! :)
- an award winning pint of ale
- A widely available craft ale
- Sekt
- Singapore Sling
- as vital as water :)
- A very good wine
- Feuerzangenbowle
- Papaya juice
- Coffee because it keeps me awake!
- Cocktail
- Salty Pale Ale
- no coments
- a fine tea ;)
- A delicious beer
- Coca Cola
- Free champagne
- Good red
- smothie - combination of good stuff!
- Coffee (very important!)
- one more bottle, pse
- Well matured wine
- Orange juice mixed with dog vomit
- a really sweet cappuccino
- a grape wine!
- Imported Beer. Because I'am pretentious enough to read an English language Website about a subject not many people are well-versed on.
- A Scotch malt whisky
- champagne
- champagne
- any nourishing drink
- Since I'm a teetotaller, it would be the best of coffes
- Champagne!
- AN EXCELLENT ROSE WINE!!!
- I would like to sit with it on my coffee table.
- Water (needed to live (aka write international relations essays))
- i drink it at 1 time
- Amber ale
- Squirt because I love Squirt
- healthy and tasty altogether
- Café au lait
- single malt
- Coffee - there's some kind for everyone
- an energy drink lol
- Vichy water ;-)
- Pilsener beer
- CocaCola
- Yes
- Red wine
- Honest Tea
- High class red wine

- Curative, delightful and essential.
- Gluehwein
- Soda
- Sprite; it fizzes, is gone fast, and always has a twist
- Iced tea
- yummy
- Vine
- Fanta. Expectations are always good about finding a good article/interview.
- Bawls energy drink
- yes
- Irn Bru
- Irn Bru
- A rhum - not well known and very under rated.
- Good pale ale
- Whisky
- SPRITE
- Molotov cocktail
- soda
- Cuppa tea
- A Pint of Guinness
- 'other'
- Ribena
- A nonalcoholic craft beer. Can't recall the name of any at the moment.
- Orange fanta!
- A black tea :)
- Orange juice
- Orange juice
- coffee
- No comment
- Horchata (of insights, ask a mexican what it means)
- ciro!
- fruitpunch
- Red Wine
- Belgium special beer, good quality and always tasty ;-)
- Ram