The aim of the presentation is twofold: 1) to investigate studies on dictionary use and 2) to compare the results of two surveys relating to students’ preferences and habits of dictionary use conducted in 2007 and 2012. Studying academic and professional language involves extensive search for terminology and complex information in order to efficiently comprehend specialized texts as well as carry out related vocabulary tasks. The repository of reference sources is enormous, and it has been increasing with the development of electronic tools. Furthermore, as English constantly renews itself to integrate new ideas and new developments, and electronic media are updated on regular basis, students are inclined to refer to up-to-date online sources, requiring different search skills in comparison to traditional ones. An overview of studies on dictionaries comprises literature on dictionary types (both electronic and printed) and the comparison of dictionaries in the way they influence users’ activities, revealing the significance of the dictionary as a source of information, suggesting some benefits and drawbacks of different types of dictionaries. Moreover, recent studies on the development of dictionaries as information tools discuss a different approach applied in devising internet dictionaries. Users’ needs tend to be an underlying binding common feature in recent studies on online lexicography. More research is needed to better understand the users’ needs and demands when the online tool is going to become fully customizable enabling the user to create and change his/her profile. The presentation is based on the author’s experience of teaching English for specific purposes as well as the analysis and comparison of two surveys, the findings of which demonstrate the students’ use of reference sources, the problems they encounter, and the importance of their active engagement.