

# Listening to Our Users: Comparing Feedback and Insights from Multiple Surveys and Points of Contact

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## Abstract

The Texas A&M University Libraries annually conducts several surveys and focus groups that seek to understand and identify the needs and expectations of Users. The purpose of this paper and presentation will be to collate the findings of these separate listening devices and then report the similar and desperate themes that came out of these collected works. We will also discuss how effective and interactive these tools can be when delivered at critical points within our library services.

Each year the University Libraries conducts two surveys and one focus group project. These are the Association of Research Libraries' LibQUAL+™ survey (in use for 12 years), the Library Instruction Services Feedback Form analysis (in use for 4 years) and the Web Usability Study (in use for 6 years). In addition, beginning in 2012, the Libraries will use Transactional Surveys at our Customer Service Desks and eMail surveys as part of our user-driven acquisitions policy (pilot study was conducted in 2009).

Previously, no study has been conducted to compare and contrast the data that has resulted, or that will result, from these Customer listening tools. As we begin to experiment with more of the 9 listening devices outlined in Leonard Berry's book, *Delivering quality service*, we need to look at the importance and impact of each tool, how these individual efforts interact and support one another and how sustainable these programs will be for the Libraries.

Overall, our goal is to address our search for identifying the most effective means of reaching out to our Customers so that we can understand what their current and potential needs are with regard to the services and resources that we provide. We will do this by reviewing data, discussing common and unique themes, considering sustainability of listening tools and pinpointing critical points of Customer interaction where we can best seek out these insights.

**Core Audience:** Academic

**Keywords:** Assessment, User Feedback, Qualitative Research, Academic Libraries, Customer Service

## **Introduction**

The Texas A&M University Libraries (University Libraries) regularly employs various listening devices to help determine what our users need, and expect, with regard to resources and services. The purpose of this paper is threefold. The first is to identify strategic areas where the Libraries' users can be asked about the success and effectiveness of a service or resource that a library has to offer. These strategic points will be labelled "Customer Service Points (CSP's)". Secondly, the paper will review if any correlations exist between the listening devices. If correlations do exist, this paper will highlight how exactly the survey results, taken at various CSP's, compare to one another and to the University Libraries' principle user needs assessment tool, the Association of Research Libraries' LibQUAL+® survey. Third, throughout the paper as we identify listening devices, we will discuss findings as well what conclusions or questions these findings generated.

## **Our End Game**

What do our users need and want in order to meet their learning, research and teaching missions? Most libraries have always asked this question and historically used quantitative data to demonstrate its needs and successes. This question has recently required a new perspective as accrediting agencies are now requiring academic libraries to demonstrate compliance using both quantitative and qualitative data (Forte 2009, 1-11; Saunders 2008, 305-313; Coleman and Jarred 1994, 273-284). For additional resources related to assessment in libraries, see the Library Assessment SPEC Kit bibliography (Wright and White 2007). There is also a forthcoming SPEC Kit addressing a library's role in the accreditation process and highlights quantitative data and analysis that is used for accreditation reporting.

The University Libraries, over the years, has come to understand that in order to help our users succeed in their learning, research and teaching missions we must meet both user needs and user expectations. To meet their needs and expectations best we need to reach out to our users, treat them as customers, ask questions, learn what other questions to ask, and listen to their answers.

What we have learned is that our customers want to be treated courteously, have access to information specialists that can understand the unique information needs of each user group and, when necessary, instruction that prepares our customers to find information independently. Our users want relevant information resources that are accessible to them when they want them and in a format that is easy to read. Finally, as a place of study, our users want library facilities that support both individual and group study efforts in a comfortable and inviting environment. As our facilities grow older and call out for renovations (Branin 2007, 27-53; McKay 2011, 1-6; Bennett 2007, 165-179) as materials costs rise (Bosch and Henderson 2012, 28-32; Bosch, Henderson, and Klusendorf 2012, 87-94) and technology's constantly changing environment requires new and timely information support (Johnson, Adams, and Cummins 2012, 1-40) meeting these needs can be daunting.

*“... only Customers judge quality; all other judgments are essentially irrelevant”*  
(Zeithaml)

If we are to rely upon our customers to judge our endeavours and if we want to succeed then we must have a clear understanding of what our customers want.

The University Libraries employs the ARL LibQUAL+® survey to understand our customers’ needs, expectations and trends. Time and time again this user-centered survey device has proven invaluable – identifying areas where we have been successful, areas where we need to improve and, very often, pointing out gaps in services or resources that have come about because of technological advancements. A case in point: for years the Libraries invested its efforts in placing as many PC workstations as possible within our buildings. However, with the cost of laptops dropping over the past few years, the critical concern is not providing PC workstations but instead electrical outlets for our users to plug in their own laptops.

There are cases however when LibQUAL+® identifies that a gap exists but cannot explicitly state the users’ expectation and/or what is the solution. In those situations we need to use other listening and research devices to accurately identify needs and expectations. For this we turn to Berry’s list of customer listening approaches (Berry 1995, 32-61). These will be discussed later in this paper. We need to reach out to our customers and one of the ways to accomplish this through the already established relationships we have with them. We call these Customer Service Points (CSP’s) (Figure 1). Most people in the library field are already aware of these crossroads.

Figure 1

Customer Service Points	
1)	Service Transactions
2)	Instructional Service Programs
3)	User Driven Acquisitions
4)	Web Usability
5)	Document Delivery
6)	Facilities/Inventories Usage Transactions
7)	Liaison Services
8)	New Customers Orientations
9)	Graduating Senior Surveys
10)	LibQUAL+® Survey Findings Follow Up
11)	Customer Service Studies

Talking to our Customers at these CSP’s offers a huge benefit. Discussions at and about these services points generally isolates the specialized needs of our customers at those discrete service and/or resource areas. While some expectations are universal (“I want to be treated with respect”) some are also specific to a service point (e.g. compare the needs and expectations of someone wanting technical reference help vs. the needs and expectations of someone who needs an individual study room).

## About LibQUAL+®

As indicated, the University Libraries principle listening device is a total market survey called LibQUAL+® ([www.libqual.org](http://www.libqual.org)). This is a survey that is administered by the Association of Research Libraries. The survey and the analyses the survey can generate are powerful tools. Results and analyses of LibQUAL+® survey data have served as both harbinger and barometer of user needs and expectations for the 12 years in which the University Libraries has used this tool.

Its findings provide insight into user perspectives on a library's customer treatment, the staff and faculty's job knowledge, information resources, accessibility to these resources and the library as a place of study for both group and individual study efforts. The survey also provides data on a user's general satisfaction of library treatment, support and overall service; the ability of a library to provide users with effective and germane information; and, the regularity that a library's physical and online resources are used. Survey respondents are asked to rate services and resources from three different points of view: 1) user perceptions of our current services and resources, 2) identification of the priorities our users place on services and resources, and, 3) identification of user concerns with regard to a service(s) or resource(s). (Cook and Maciel 2010, 4-12)

When the LibQUAL+® survey results are reviewed, in conjunction with an analysis of the comments that survey respondents provide, we are often able to identify specific user concerns and user-recommended solutions. There are, however, instances when the LibQUAL+® survey only identifies the like or dislike of a service or resource but not the specifics as to what led to this user assessment. In these cases a library must turn to other listening devices to better understand user needs and expectations. Even in these cases the LibQUAL+® Survey still has a role; the role of establishing benchmarks. Since it was the survey device that identified (and applied a metric to) the concern one of best sources for validation that the concern has been addressed will be through subsequent LibQUAL+® surveys.

The LibQUAL+® Survey is made up 5 sections (Figure 2).

Figure 2

LibQUAL+® Survey Sections	
1)	Core Questions
2)	General Satisfaction Questions
3)	Information Literacy Questions
4)	Library Usage Patterns Questions
5)	Demographic Questions

The Core Questions are organized into three categories a) Affect of Service, b) Information Control and c) the Library as a Place of Study (Figure 3). The Affect of Service category is made up of questions that address various aspects of customer service and a library employee's knowledge to complete their jobs (addressing customer needs) successfully. Information Control includes questions and aspects on the information resources (e.g. monographs, serials, print vs. electronic formats) a library provides and a customer's ability to access these information

resources (e.g. can customers find information on their own and/or access the information from the location of their choice). The Library as a Place of Study category includes questions that address the physical environment of the libraries including both group and individual study facilities.

Figure 3

<b>LibQUAL+® Core Questions organization</b>	
Affect of Service	Customer Service
	Job Knowledge
Information Control	Information Resources
	Information Accessibility
Library as a Place of Study	Library Environment
	Individual/Quiet Study
	Group Study

In 2010 the University Libraries began using the LibQUAL+® Lite Survey which asked 3 core questions and 5 additional questions randomly selected from the remaining core questions.

Data from the LibQUAL+® survey, regardless of which version is used, can provide analysis, by core question, by core question categories, by user group (undergraduate students by year, graduate students by program, faculty by rank, staff & library staff by assignment) and by college and/or unit.

Since its introduction, LibQUAL+®, and probably particularly because of its success, has been part of many discussions about the device's strengths and weaknesses (Saunders 2007, 21-24). With regard to the LibQUAL+® Lite survey it is structured so that if a survey respondent only answers 4 or less of the 8 questions on the survey (and thus by default selecting "N/A" for the remaining questions) those survey responses are not included in the overall scores for the survey report. The data is still available for review and analysis but in raw data table but, to reiterate, not included in the reported overall LibQUAL+® scores included in its notebooks or analytics.

The risk in this type of construct is two pronged. Either the survey respondent's desire to evaluate only those services/resources that are germane to their library experience are not included in the survey reports data or the respondent, in order to make sure their insight is included in survey results, potentially answers questions that they have little if any insight into evaluating.

Another concern about the LibQUAL+® survey, as discussed earlier, is that because LibQUAL+® uses 22 standardized questions sometimes the survey results only addresses that there is a concern and does not specifically identify or address the concern. It is for this reason that having other listening devices available, that can be employed at strategic service points, can prove illuminating.

The LibQUAL+® survey results are reviewed from three different perspectives:

1. What have our users identified as **priorities**

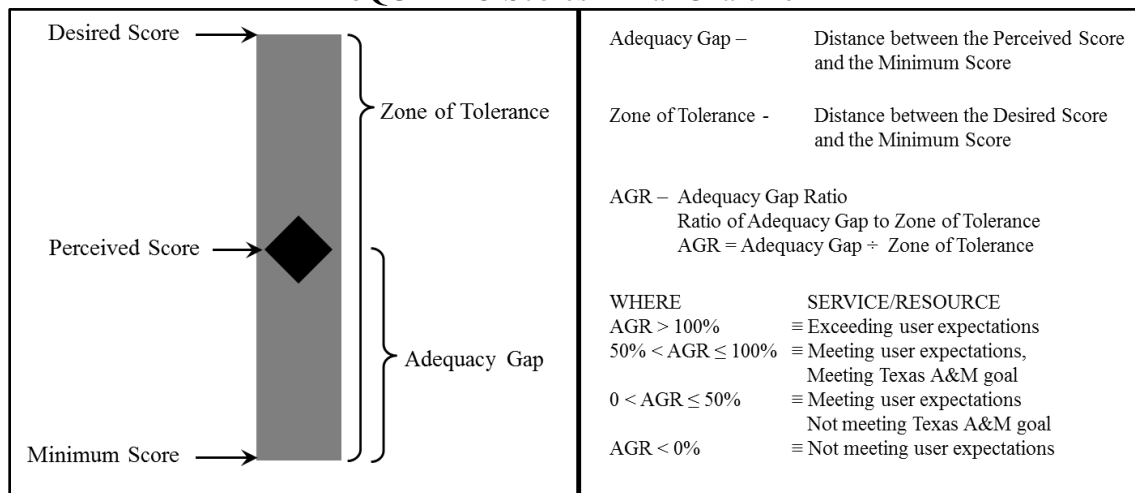
2. What have our users identified as areas where the **Libraries is succeeding**
3. What have our users identified as **areas of concern**

Using a 9 point rating scale, where 1 is the least and 9 is an optimal score, survey participants are asked to evaluate the core questions from three different points of view:

1. What is the minimum level of need or expectation that a user will accept before deeming that delivery of a service or resource has failed (**Minimum Score**)
2. What score represents a user's definition of the perfect delivery of a service or resource (**Desired Score**)
3. What score represents our users perception of the service/resource that the libraries is currently delivering (**Perceived Score**)

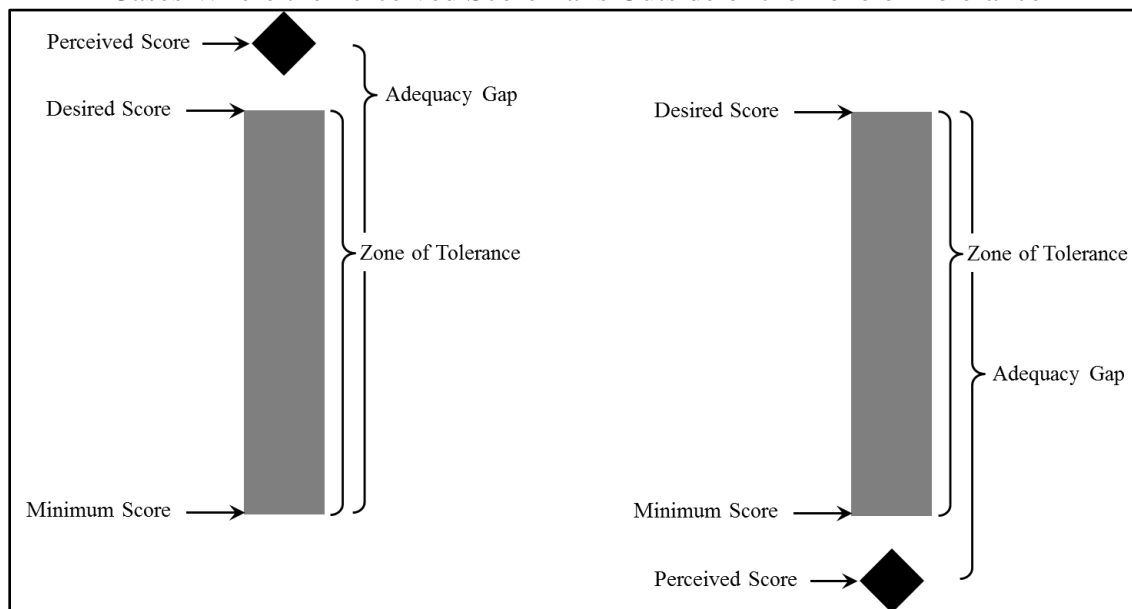
Means of these scores can then be calculated and charted (Figure 4). The top of the bar representing the Desired Score, the bottom of the bar the Minimum Score and the diamond the Perceived Score. Areas within, or beyond, the bar can also be identified. The area between the Minimum Score and the Desired Score is defined as the Zone of Tolerance. The area created between the Minimum Score and the Perceived Score is defined as the Adequacy Gap. The area created between the Perceived Score and the Desired Score is defined as the Superiority Gap. As Perceived Scores approach (and in some cases overtake) Desired Scores, the greater the evidence that the Libraries is providing a service/resource that is approaching an ideal delivery of that service/resource. Conversely, as the Perceived Score approaches the Minimum Score the greater the likelihood that a service/resource is not meeting minimum user expectations.

Figure 4  
LibQUAL+® Scores in Bar Chart Form



There are cases, in fact, where Perceived Scores are less than Minimum Scores – these situations indicate that a service/resource is not even meeting minimum levels of user satisfaction. There are also cases where the Perceived Score exceeds the Desired Score – cases where the services or resources the Libraries provide exceed user expectations (Figure 5).

Figure 5  
LibQUAL+® Scores in Bar Chart Form:  
Cases Where the Perceived Score Falls Outside of the Zone of Tolerance



At the University Libraries, we take a close look at the ratio created by comparing the Adequacy Gap to the Zone of Tolerance. We have defined this ratio as the Adequacy Gap Ratio (AGR). If the AGR is between 0% and 100% this means the Perceived Score falls within the Zone of Tolerance – i.e. the library is meeting users’ needs and expectations. If the AGR is negative this means a library is not meeting user expectations, while an AGR over 100% means a library is exceeding user expectations. Further, the Texas A&M University Libraries looks at AGR ratios between 0% to 50% - areas where, while meeting user expectations, our Perceived Scores are closer to the meeting minimum expectations instead meeting ideal expectations (Desired Score). In addition to looking at current year’s AGR’s, AGR’s can be very useful when viewed longitudinally – comparing AGR scores from one year to the next. In both cases, trends can be identified. It should be noted that AGR scores should not be viewed as a single means of reviewing and interpreting LibQUAL+® data. Among its weaknesses, when used solely, is that an AGR score does not report other pertinent scores such as the Desired Score or Perceived Score. Even if two questions, or years, may have the same AGR score, a low priority score (Desired Score) for one question may have a different sense of urgency when deciding how and when to address then a question with a very high priority score.

## Subject Review

In the book, On great service: a framework for action, the author, Leonard Berry, discusses the development of a “Service Quality Information System”. A service quality information system is means of systematically listening to the customers’ voice (Berry 1995, 32-61). Berry defines the information system as a means to use “multiple research approaches to systematically capture and disseminate service quality information to support decision making” (p. 33). The most integral parts of this statement are the imposition of multiple approaches and that data from these

efforts will *support decision making*. Benefits of creating and implementing a service quality information system include: 1) encouraging and enabling management to incorporate the voice of the customer into decision making, 2) reveals customers' service priorities, 3) identifies service-improvement priorities and guides resource-allocation decisions, 4) allows the tracking of company and competitor service over time (benchmark and longitudinal studies), 5) discloses the impact of service quality initiatives and investments, and 6) offers performance-based data to reward excellent service and correct poor service (Berry, p. 34). Berry identifies nine types of listening devices (Figure 6) that should be considered for implementation (pgs. 34-5).

Figure 6

Berry Defined Listening Devices
1) Transactional Surveys
2) Total Market Surveys
3) Mystery Shopping Reports
4) Service Reviews
5) Customer Advisory Panels
6) New-, Declining- & Former-Customer Surveys
7) Focus Group Interviews
8) Employee Field Reporting
9) Employee Research

To reiterate, the ultimate goal of implementing these devices is to ensure that the customer, and not the library administrator or manager, leads the way to determining how to craft and manage a service or resource to best meet user needs and expectations. Since each listening strategy has its own advantages and limitations, Berry explains that a using a combination of approaches allows the organization to take advantage of the strengths of each system while offsetting the weaknesses.

## TRANSACTION SURVEYS

The purpose of using *transaction surveys* is to capture a user's perception of service in the immediate aftermath of the service and while the user's perceptions of service delivery, treatment, concerns and recommendations are still fresh on the user's mind (Berry 1995, 32-61). Transaction surveys are a commonly used tool for libraries. They have been used to assess user satisfaction and concerns at various service points including reference desks (Cornish 1991), document delivery services (Littlejohn and Wales 1996, 3-18), after library instruction sessions, and library websites (Lombard 2007, 57-69). The Learning Services Unit at the University Libraries uses a feedback form is an example of a transaction survey. This survey not only provides important information to the unit about the effectiveness of their efforts but is a key contribution by the Libraries to the University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

## TOTAL MARKET SURVEYS

The goal of a library *total market survey* is to measure customers' overall perceptions and



expectations for a library, its resources, services and facilities. Total market surveys are not intended to measure user perceptions of a specific service experience (Berry 1995, 32-61). It bears noting that a single significant case can influence an overall perception. Two such surveys available for libraries are ARL's LibQUAL+® survey ([www.libqual.org](http://www.libqual.org)) and Counting Opinion's LibSat™ (<http://www.countingopinions.com/products/libsat.php>). A goal of total market surveys is to provide decision makers with a means to "understand customer needs, wants, perceptions and preferences" (Aguwa, Monplaisir, and Turgut 2012, 10112-10119).

## MYSTERY SHOPPER REPORTS

*Mystery shopper reports* are similar to transaction survey in that the goal of the report is to measure the effectiveness of a specific transaction. Unlike transaction surveys, users are not asked to participate in the evaluation. Instead, trained researchers pose as customers. Mystery shopping reports have historically been used, with some controversy, to measure reference desk customer treatment and the information literacy expertise of library reference employees (Hernon and McClure 1987, 77-93; Kocevar-Weidinger et al. 2010, 28-43; Benjes-Small and Kocevar-Weidinger 2011, 274-287).

## SERVICE REVIEWS

One method of gaining an in-depth insight into customer perspectives is to conduct periodic service reviews. *Service reviews* are visits with customers, or a small segment of customers (e.g. college department heads) to assess their satisfaction with and their recommendations to improve library services. A library administrator who is interested in genuinely developing customer relationships is the best choice to conduct these interviews, as the customer will better see what they stand to gain by participating in what may be a time consuming endeavour. Service reviews not only involve the initial meeting with the customer but also follow up conversations, eMails, etc. which include a summary of what was discussed and what changes or improvements will be made. An example of a service review would be an annual meeting between the dean of the library and the dean of a college to identify current contributions to the college by the library, future needs, existing successes and pending concerns (Berry 1995, 32-61).

## CUSTOMER ADVISORY PANELS

Many libraries host *customer advisory panels*. Many librarians serve on publisher or vendor advisory boards. In both cases, these advisory panels help the organization understand how their products and services are used and perceived. Individuals agree to serve on these panels; this leads to a sense of commitment to the group and encourages continuing interaction with the organization. The Texas A&M University Libraries and the Texas A&M Medical Sciences Library each hosts two such panels for a total of four for the Libraries' organization. Two of these groups consist of faculty representation from client colleges while another University Libraries' council consist of leadership from both faculty and student government organizations. The fourth advisory panel is made up of students only from the Medical Sciences Library

constituent colleges. One item of note with regard to the Medical Sciences Library advisory panel is that a college representative and not a library member chair it. (Fries and James 2006, 85-93; Kendrick-Samuel 2012, 15-18; Farrell 2011, 189-197; Berry 1995, 32-61)

## **NEW-, DECLINING- AND FORMER-CUSTOMER SURVEYS**

Conducting *new-, declining- and former-customer surveys* provides insight as to the reasons people were attracted to your services or turned off from them. New customer surveying helps the organization understand how they captured the customer's attention (e.g. a new marketing campaign, instructional session, word of mouth). Declining and former customer surveys can help the organization recognize the reasons services and resources are used less often. If the library can identify these reasons and determine their impact, then the data trend over time will demonstrate the benefits of good customer service performance and/or the consequences of poor customer service performance (Berry 1995, 32-61).

## **FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

An interview concerning a specific issue or topic directed at a group of eight to 12 people is known as a *focus group interview* and is a qualitative methodology that has been growing in popularity as a means of collecting feedback from library users. This focused, small group conversation is an ideal way to go deep into an issue, for example, customers can talk about how they judge quality service in your library or what they find frustrating about the library website. Focus groups can consist of customers or employees as a way of gathering information on a particular topic. New ideas and perspectives can be brought to light, however, it should be noted that information learned in a focus group is not necessarily representative of your larger population. This type of research provides the most value when combined with other methodologies, for example, it can help explain data gathered in a total market survey or it can help with the design of survey questions (Berry 1995, 32-61; Von Seggern and Young 2003, 272-284). Annually, the University Libraries' Digital Services Librarian conducts a web usability study that includes focus groups. Her efforts using this listening device has yielded valuable insights into how our users search for information.

## **EMPLOYEE FIELD REPORTING**

Using a formal mechanism to talk with your front-line staff and sharing this market intelligence is basically what is known as *employee field reporting*. Employees who work directly with customers can report on what they are hearing and observing in customer behaviour and can provide stories that illustrate or explain data from other customer research methodologies. For example, your staff with extensive contact with customers may already know why are so many students abandon their print jobs. Berry recommends sharing this feedback widely throughout the organization, covering what customers are saying, major accomplishments, quality ideas, and problems; this type of shared market intelligence reinforces the employees' "need to listen to customers and to reflect on what they say" (Berry 1995, 32-61) .

## EMPLOYEE RESEARCH

A critical factor in service improvement includes researching the experiences of internal customers. *Employee research* measures internal services that employees provide to each other. This is a critical factor because if the internal service is poor, it directly affects the organization's ability to provide quality external service. It can illuminate the reasons behind service problems and provide potential solutions. Consider asking library employees anonymously what one change they would make to improve employee motivation or what challenge they face regularly while trying to deliver excellent service to customers or if they were the library director and could only make one change to improve services, what change would they make. Library staff are a critical source of service-improvement information and ideas and will compliment customer research. Managers must be forewarned that the key to good employee research is the willingness to act when problems are identified; failure to do so sends the message that managers do not care about employees.(Harer 2008, 307-320; Berry 1995, 32-61)

## The Texas A&M Model

The Texas A&M University Libraries has, through the years, developed a culture of assessment. Historically this has been by reporting numbers that represented collection counts, service transactions or materials inventories. In the last 12-15 years (Cook, Heath, and Thompson 2000) a user-centric perspective has developed within libraries. Libraries began seeking devices to determine how a library could be a relevant and, hopefully, integral part of the users' learning or research objectives. As this concept evolved libraries began, and continue to employ devices, that include mechanisms to speak directly to our users, to support and partner with instructional faculty's learning outcomes and to support overall institutional lifelong learning standards. Libraries sought not only to determine our users' needs but also their expectations (e.g. I need to have access to the top journals in my field of study vs. I expect this access to be electronic). Finally, libraries were looking for a metaphorical crystal ball, something that would alert them of new or trending user learning trends (e.g. How many libraries currently offer or are considering offering a Google®-like single search box?).

At the libraries, through their own initiative, our faculty and staff have created qualitative assessment tools to learn how their units could best meet their customers' needs and expectations. These studies provide the opportunity for on-going assessment – the use of an effective means to cultivate a dialog with our customers at a service point. With this, the Libraries employs two methods of organizational communication. One in which we go into our users' worlds to ask for feedback (e.g. the libraries sending eMail surveys to our users, or inviting users to participate in a focus group) and another where we speak to our users in environments we design (asking our users to complete a survey after using a library's service).

When used in partnership, LibQUAL+® qualitative findings and those from other qualitative devices, the Texas A&M Libraries has, and continues to, be able to identify both broad and detailed user perspectives of their needs, their expectations, how they include the libraries

resources and services in their learning, teaching or research missions and the results of our efforts to meet these needs/expectations.

## **Texas A&M's Total Market Survey: 2011 LibQUAL+® Results**

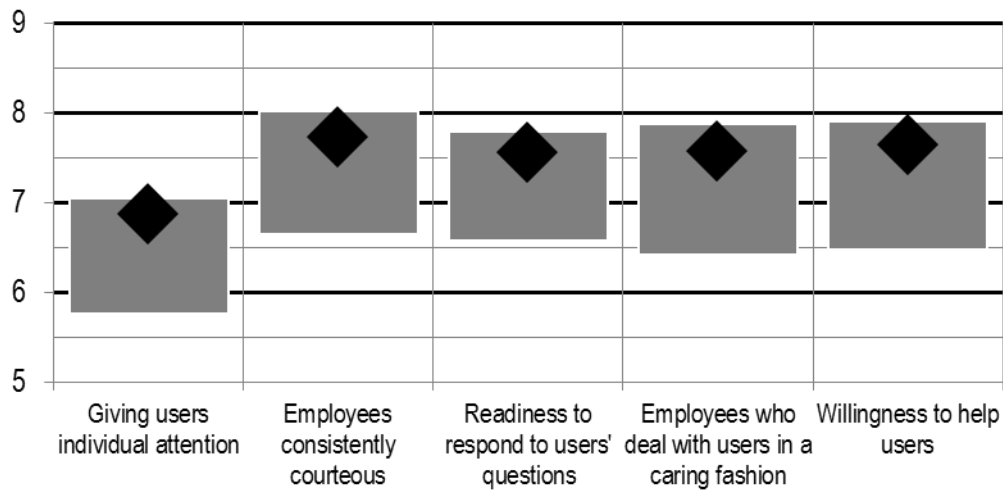
At present, the Texas A&M University Libraries conducts the LibQUAL+® Lite survey on an annual basis. To prevent survey fatigue, random samplings of students are invited to participate in the survey. Science & Engineering faculty and Liberal Arts/Social Sciences faculty are separated and asked to participate in the survey on alternating years. The results presented below are for students only (Undergraduate, Graduate and Professional Degree Seeking Students). Another paper addressing LibQUAL+® findings for faculty customers will later be prepared for presentation.

### **AFFECT OF SERVICE**

#### **Affect of Service: Customer Service**

LibQUAL+® Customer Service scores have increased annually for all Texas A&M user groups since 2001. However, each year comments received with the surveys expressed a frustration with the consistency of service. In 2009, with the developmental support of the Disney Institute, the Libraries' began building a foundation of customer service training and goal setting for its employees. The Libraries focused on providing our users with the consistency they wanted. As this program has matured the number of LibQUAL+® comments about poor or inconsistent service is declining. In fact from many of the comments' content we have been able to identify areas where training should be focused.

Figure 7  
**AFFECT OF SERVICE: Customer Service**



Of the five questions that make up the Affect of Service Customer Service core questions the most notable 2011 results (Figure 7) are from the question “Giving users individual attention.” When looking at the Figure 7 chart, compared to the other questions, all three scores (Minimum, Perceived and Desired) are significantly lower for the individual attention question. Two comments can be made about these results. First, as compared to other questions about Customer Service, students do not seem to place a high priority on receiving individual attention.

For all Customer Service core questions the AGR scores are:

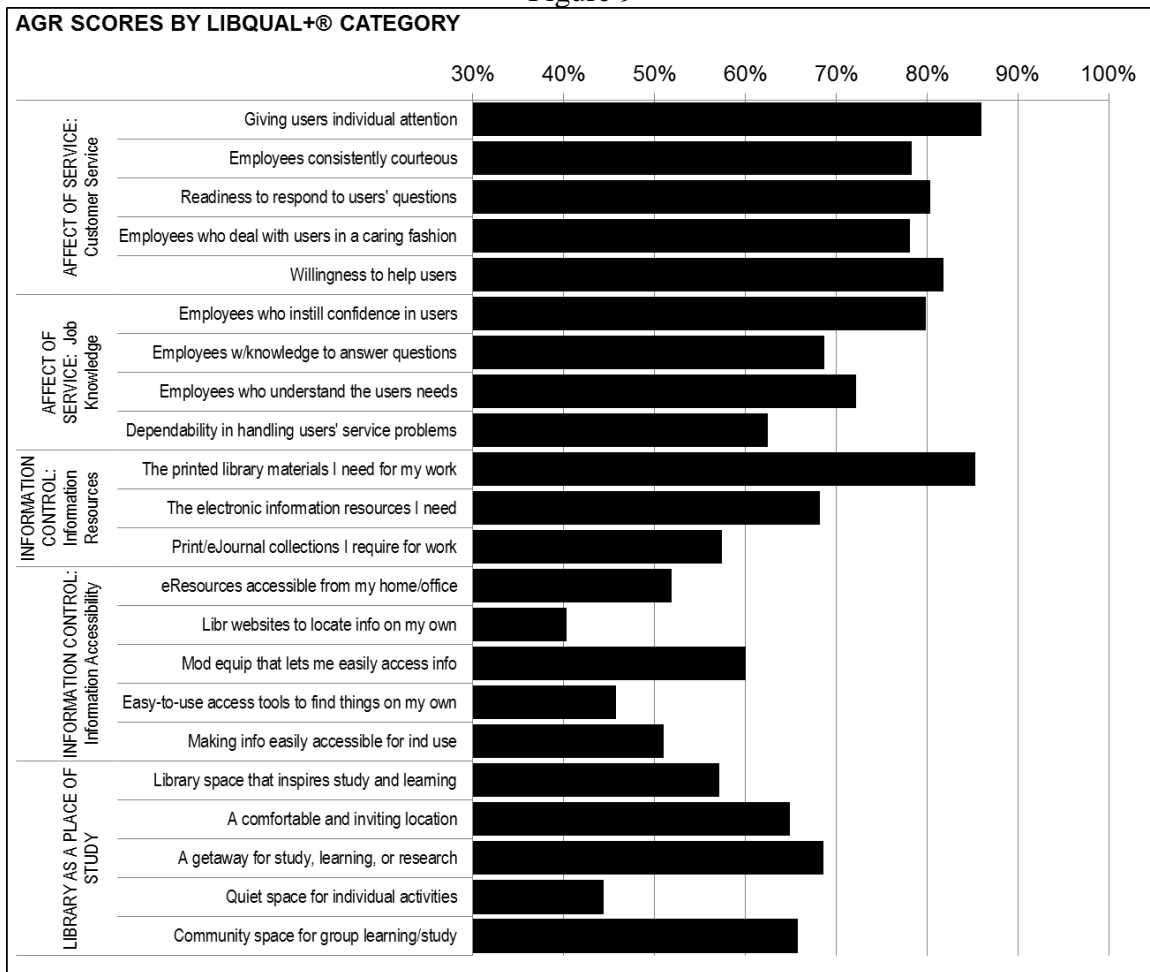
Figure 8

LibQUAL+® Affect of Svc: Customer Service Questions	
Giving users individual attention	86%
Employees who are consistently courteous	78%
Readiness to respond to users' questions	80%
Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion	78%
Willingness to help users	82%

Secondly, while the Perceived Score is lower than other Perceived Scores, this question’s AGR score is the highest for the other Customer Service core questions (Figure 8). In other words, our users perceive we are providing individual attention services that are closely approaching our users’ concept of perfect service. Taking this question by itself few other inferences can be made. However, when taken in conjunction with other LibQUAL+® questions we will have an even clearer picture our students’ full expectations.

Overall, the Customer Service Core Questions AGRs are among the highest relative to the other core question AGRs (Figure 9). This assessment indicates our student users view the customer service program that we have developed and are implementing as effective.

Figure 9



At the same time we should look at the converse of this point of view. Remember that the Adequacy Gap Ratio is the ratio between the Adequacy Gap and the Zone of Tolerance. The Adequacy Gap and Zone of Tolerance are defined by **mean** Desired, Perceived and Minimum Scores. Looking at the raw LibQUAL+® data provides an additional perspective. Figure 10 reports, by LibQUAL+® question, the percentage of respondents that - through establishing Desired, Perceived and Minimum scores - gave the Libraries an AGR score of 50% or less (recall that the Texas A&M Libraries addresses both negative AGR scores and AGR scores that are between 0% and 50%).

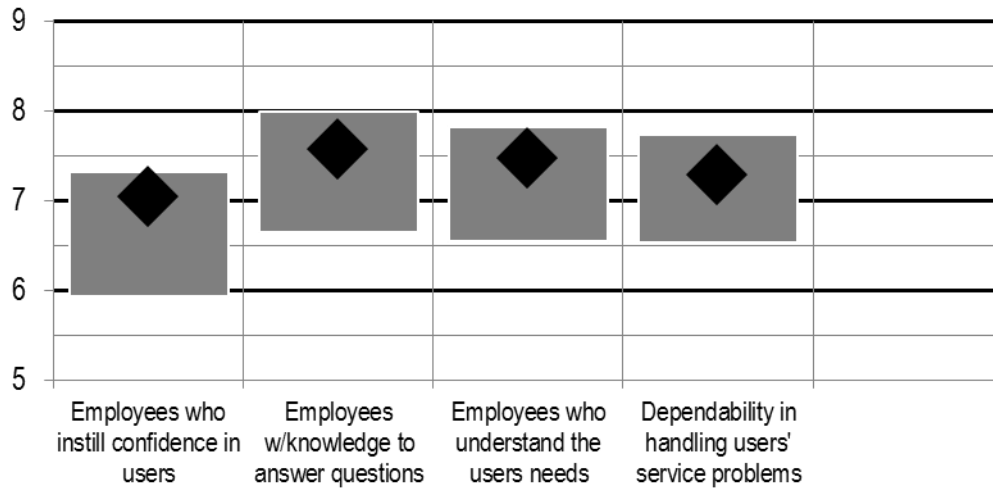
Figure 10

LibQUAL+® Core Questions	Individual Responses: % that indicated Libraries delivering a 50% or lower AGR Score
AS-1 Employees who instill confidence in users	11%
AS-2 Giving users individual attention	15%
AS-3 Employees who are consistently courteous	12%
AS-4 Readiness to respond to users questions	11%
AS-5 Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions	17%
AS-6 Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion	13%
AS-7 Employees who understand the needs of their users	14%
AS-8 Willingness to help users	13%
AS-9 Dependability in handling users service problems	16%
IC-1 Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	17%
IC-2 A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own	21%
IC-3 The printed library materials I need for my work	15%
IC-4 The electronic information resources I need	19%
IC-5 Modern equip. that lets me easily access needed information	19%
IC-6 Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	24%
IC-7 Making information easily accessible for independent use	21%
IC-8 Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work	18%
LP-1 Library space that inspires study and learning	22%
LP-2 Quiet space for individual activities	19%
LP-3 A comfortable and inviting location	19%
LP-4 A getaway for study, learning, or research	15%
LP-5 Community space for group learning and group study	17%

These percentages represent people. A percentage of 20% means both 1 out of 5 survey respondents deemed that a service or resource was not meeting Texas A&M University Libraries standards. Customer Service questions, even with high AGR scores based upon the reported mean Desired, Perceived and Minimum Scores, warrant attention. Look again at the question “Giving users individual attention”, even with favorable scores, including a high AGR, the raw data analysis indicates that 15%, or roughly 450 out of 3,000 respondents, rated the Libraries as not meeting minimum service standards. The raw data analysis highlights the point that there is still room for improvement and the specific areas where to place this focus.

### **Affect of Service: Job Knowledge**

Figure 11  
AFFECT OF SERVICE: Job Knowledge



Like the Affect of Service Customer Service core questions, the Desired Scores for the Affect of Service Job Knowledge core questions are within the 7-8 point range (Figure 11). This implies that job knowledge is in important priority for student users but not critical priorities that would be reflected in the 8-9 point range.

Figure 12

LibQUAL+® Affect of Svc: Job Knowledge Questions	
Employees who instill confidence in users	80%
Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions	69%
Employees who understand the needs of their users	72%
Dependability in handling users' service problems	63%

AGR scores are also relatively high (Figure 12), again implying user satisfaction with the expertise level provided by the Libraries. The Job Knowledge AGR scores are however, lower than the Customer Service AGR scores and in particular the “giving users individual attention”. This difference not only indicates room for improvement but when taken in perspective with the individual attention question yields the question, “when our users do need individual attention, what kind of attention and approach do they want?” The AGR scores for the job knowledge questions may describe a micro-environment of customer satisfaction – those times when our users who do not normally want individual attention find themselves in a situation where they **have to** ask for it. This scenario may warrant further investigation. Think of the customer that discovers the store they have frequently shopped at for years has suddenly and drastically been re-arranged. When the customer finds they have to ask a salesperson for a product they used to be able to find on their own their disposition may be slightly off – more frustrated and curt. Meeting the service needs of that type of customer requires a different approach and skill set than the customers that have never been in the store before. Is a special skill set needed to recognize and serve our customers that are not comfortable or do not like asking for assistance?



## INFORMATION CONTROL

Libraries, especially in these evolving format times, find themselves challenged to not only provide a material inventory of information resources but also to be able to provide access to these resources in a manner that meets our users needs and wants. Libraries must now manage both resources and access to these resources. (Lincoln 2002, 3-16) . At the beginning of the new century, the Texas A&M University Libraries made a decision to, when given the choice between purchasing a resource in print or in online format, would always give the preferred choice to purchasing the electronic format. As with other libraries at the time, the University Libraries, began to market the concept of a presence on our users' desktop that could be accessed 24/7 rather than only during a library building's open hours of operation.

There are 8 questions that make up the LibQUAL+® Core Questions and these can further categorized into two groups – 1) Information Resources – questions that ask users to rate the information resources, by physical or electronic format, and 2) Information Accessibility – questions that ask users to rate ease of retrieving information from the libraries' information resources and sources.

### Information Control: Information Resources

Figure 13

#### INFORMATION CONTROL: Information Resources

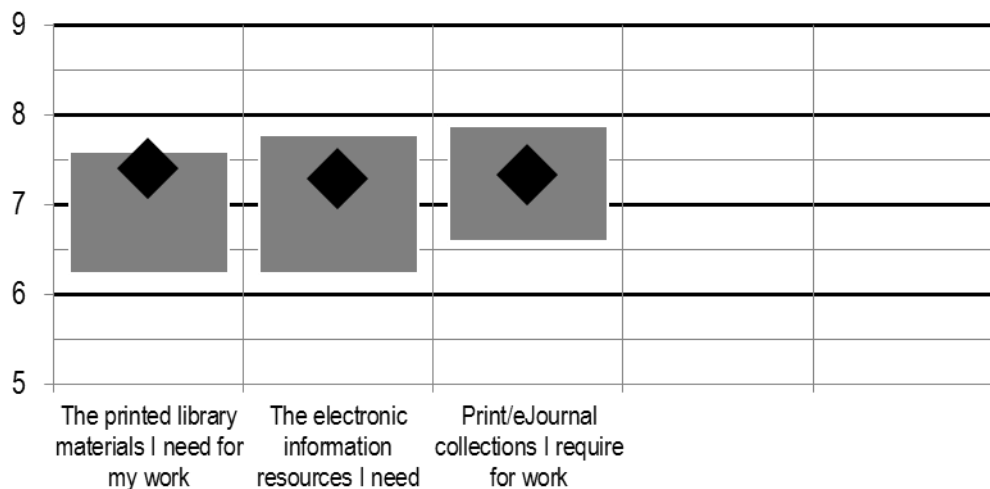
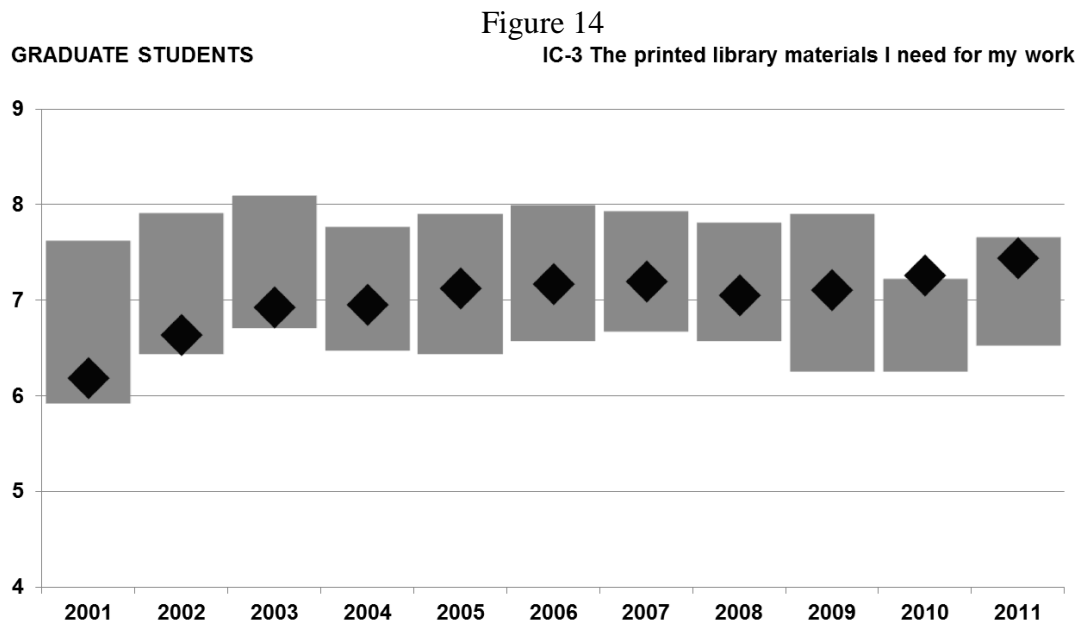


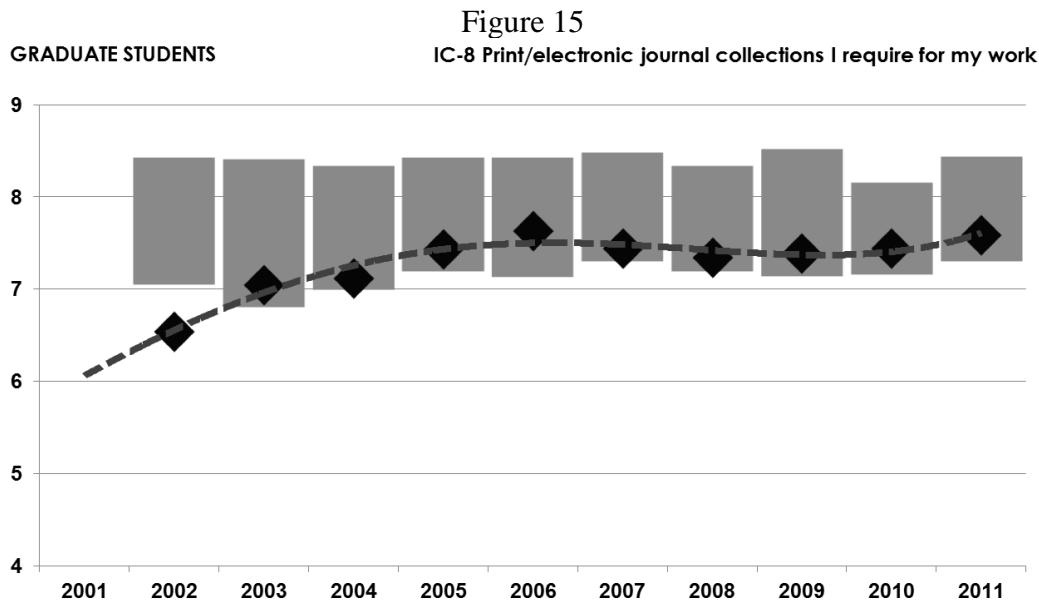
Figure 13 charts the University Libraries' 2011 results for the Information Control: Information Resources Core Questions. For years, as Texas A&M conducted the LibQUAL+® survey, results for the Information Resources Core Question "The printed library materials I need for me work" (Figure 14) have been in a state of flux. While there have been many print-only die-hards that have answered this question, a significant number of respondents that provided comments that have lamented more about the absence of a resource or subject speciality than the actual

format of the materials. When the LibQUAL+® survey was first introduced at the Texas A&M University Desired Scores were high, Perceived Scores were low – often below the Minimum Score. As a result AGR scores were also low - many times these were negative ratios reflecting the print materials that the Libraries were providing were not meeting even minimum user expectations. Looking at the progression of scores in Figure 14 shows that while Desired Scores, and thus the priority our customers have placed on this format, has increased and decreased over the past 11 years, Perceived Scores have steadily increased – to a point today where we are closely meeting or even exceeding ideal circumstances.



When correlating comments to Perceived Scores for this question we find that our users comments generally address difficulty locating resources on the Libraries' web pages and through our search engines. This is especially the case when coverage of a journal title switched from print to electronic only format. Further, in a large amount of instances, the titles that our respondents cite as the Libraries not owning were in fact found to be owned or provided access to by the Libraries. We have found that often a low Perceived Score for the printed materials question is not about the format of a resource as much as it is about the ease of locating a resource. (Note we have also found that that the other explanation for comments addressing a missing needed research resource is that these resources have not yet been made available in an online format). AGR scores for the print materials LibQUAL+® question have increased over time as we have improved the discoverability of titles on our web and online catalog resources.

For our graduate students journal collections (Figure 15), irrespective of format, and electronic resources in general have been tough categories for the Libraries to succeed in meeting the needs and expectations of our users.



The scores for these questions are noteworthy in that the mean Information Resources scores for Association of Research Libraries (ARL) libraries that participated in the LibQUAL+® survey have been as low or lower than Texas A&M scores. This frustration by our users for adequate and more electronic resources as well as more journals is found nationwide and not just at Texas A&M. Looking at the data shows that Desired Scores – i.e. user priorities – are very high, consistently in the 8-9 point section of the LibQUAL+® survey. It is only the most recent years that the Libraries has begun to meet user expectations.

AGR scores for the Information Control Information Resources core questions, in 2011 are reported in Figure 16.

Figure 16

LibQUAL+® Information Control: Information Resources	
The printed library materials I need for my work	85%
The electronic information resources I need	68%
Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work	57%

Four factors have contributed to the AGR scores, and specifically the Perceived Scores, improving through the years.

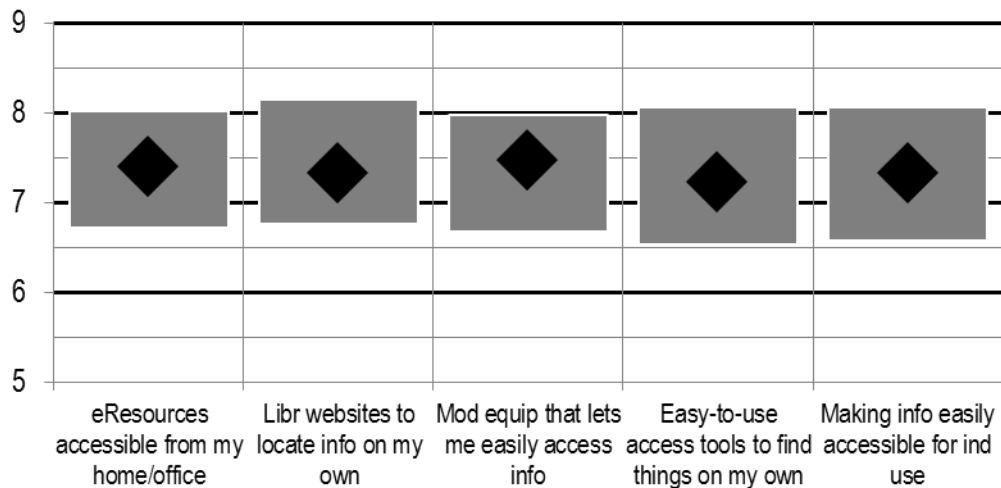
1. Discoverability of resources on our web pages and online catalog has improved. Each year the Libraries' conducts a web usability study. Results from this study have led to structuring and programming our web and online catalog to better match how our users search for materials.
2. Marketing of the materials we carry and how to access them has improved. An example is that since 2008 we have increased the number of group presentations by the Libraries' provide 63% and number of participants in these presentations 64% (Data available through the subscription-based [www.arlstatistics.org](http://www.arlstatistics.org) analytics website)

3. Our collections have increased sizeably. Since 2008 volumes held increased 15% and current serials received 42% (www.arlstatistic.org).
4. The number of resources available in electronic format has grown.

### Information Control: Information Accessibility

Figure 17

#### INFORMATION CONTROL: Information Accessibility



Core Question and AGR Scores for Information Control Information Accessibility Core Question in 2011 are shown in Figure 17 and Figure 18.

Figure 18

LibQUAL+® Information Control: Information Accessibility	
Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	52%
A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own	40%
Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information	60%
Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	46%
Making information easily accessible for independent use	51%

With exception of the question, “Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information”, all other AGR scores hover around the 50% mark. Two in fact, “A library web site enabling me to locate information on my own”, and Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own” in fact are below the 50% mark – at Texas A&M not only is attention placed on negative AGR scores by any that are below 50%. An AGR score from 0% to just below 50% suggests that roughly half of our users say we are meeting their needs but just barely.

Regarding the modern equipment question, while not as low as the other Information Accessibility core questions, is still low relative to the other 21 core LibQUAL+® questions (Figure 10). When viewing this data in conjunction with the survey comments we found that

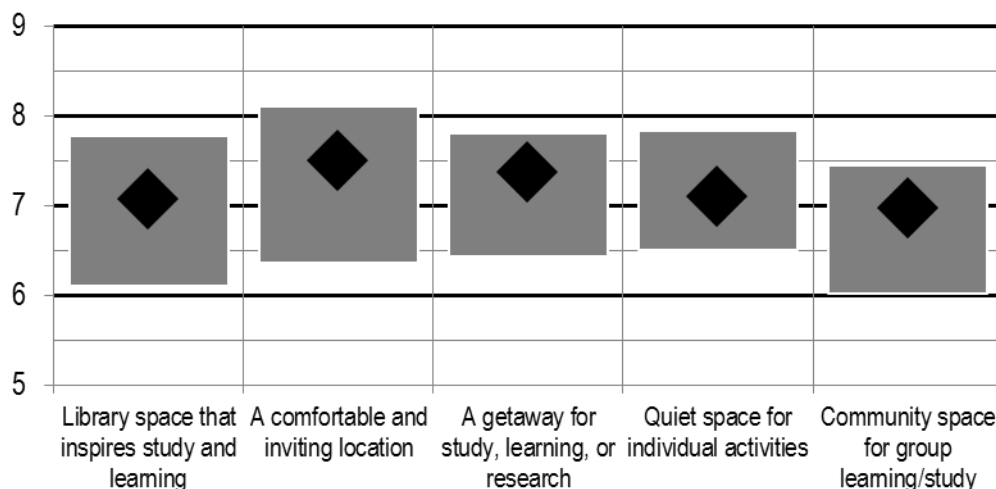
what is important, in terms of accessible equipment, has changed through the years. When this survey was first conducted the largest concern was our users asking for more PC's located within the Libraries' facilities. Currently, the concern has shifted from the number of PC's available to the number of electric outlets available. As the prices for laptops have decreased and the power and versatility of laptops has increased more users are bringing in their own computing devices. Smart phone and tablet support has also become a growing topic within the LibQUAL+® comments. The other growing concern is wireless networks. As students aggressively migrate from wired networks to wireless networks the Libraries and the University's IT departments are being challenged to proactively increase capacity to meet these demands.

The low AGR scores of the other Information Accessibility core questions reflect many of our users desire to act independently – to be able to find and access resources on their own. As the Libraries goal of bringing the library to our users' desktops becomes a reality so does the need to both provide resources that are self-discoverable and the challenge to provide support that meets our users' current learning, teaching and research patterns.

## LIBRARY AS A PLACE OF STUDY

Figure 19

### LIBRARY AS A PLACE OF STUDY



Results from the 2011 Texas A&M LibQUAL+® survey's Library as a Place of Study Core Questions (Figure 19) are quite surprising given the significant improvements that the University Libraries has made to their facilities. In 2009 and 2010 the main floor of the Sterling C. Evans Library, the university's largest library, was renovated to provide adaptable study spaces, additional outlets for laptops, additional PC's, improved ergonomic seating and an expanded coffee shop. Improvements are continually made to the Libraries' other facilities including better equipment, improved seating and investment in new group study facilities that support collaboration among multiple laptop users. In 2012, renovations began on the first floors of the West Campus Library and the Medical Sciences Library. We have found that in many cases LibQUAL+® Desired Scores increase when a need is not being met and then lower once this

need has been filled. At the same time, when the need is not being met the AGR decreases and when the need is being met the AGR increases. This is not the case for the Library as a Place of Study Core Questions. While the lower Desired Scores may reflect that, because of the improvements, students no longer consider library facilities a major concern; AGR scores are not as large as we would expect them to be given these improvements. It is only by reading and analysing comments that were made by the survey's student respondents that an explanation develops. Three concerns were raised once the newly improved Evans Library first floor was opened for use. First, comments came back to us that said, "Great job, now what about the remaining 5 floors in the Evans Library". Second, many students that used libraries other than the Evans Library noted that their respective libraries could use full renovations such as Evans (noted before, the Medical Sciences Library and the West Campus Library are both began renovations in 2012). Finally, the newly renovated Evans first floor was crafted to support group studies, by providing additional study room and developing adaptable, open group study environments throughout the first floor. For those library users, and in particular our graduate students, that prefer quiet study spaces the lament came back to us that the first floor renovations were nice but what about "our study needs?"

Essentially, the improvements and renovations we completed have led to calls for more improvements – these are reflected in lower AGR scores (Figure 20).

Figure 20

LibQUAL+® Library as a Place of Study Questions	
Library space that inspires study and learning	57%
A comfortable and inviting location	65%
A getaway for study, learning, or research	69%
Quiet space for individual activities	44%
Community space for group learning and group study	66%

As indicated above, upon review of these results, plans to continue renovations are progressing. At the same time marketing efforts to address specific user group needs with regard to facilities' improvements are being considered. A case in point is the acquisition of additional space for the Medical Sciences Library (MSL) – an area that the MSL now calls the Graduate and Professional Students Zone (GPS Zone). For years, graduate and professional degree seeking students have asked for a separate study space, away from those rabble rousing Undergraduate students. The marketing of the opening of the GPS Zone would reinforce the Libraries' message that our decisions are based upon user-driven needs and expectations.

## Customer Service Points

One of the goals of introducing qualitative measuring devices to the University Libraries Assessment Projects is to, when the LibQUAL+® survey cannot do it for us; determine the factors that are contributing to a particular LibQUAL+® score and/or analysis. The LibQUAL+® Survey and results have been a reliable and verifiable source of information. The principle intent of the additional qualitative devices is NOT to verify LibQUAL+ results (though,

we do this as a matter of course) but to 1) provide more understanding and depth to an issue or concern that was raised in the LibQUAL+® survey or to self-regulate a service we provide.

To review the University Libraries have identified 8 Customer Service Points. These in turn can be divided into specific areas of focus (Figure 21).

Figure 21

Qualitative Research Target		Listening Device	Status
Service Transactions	Service Desk Transactions	Transaction Survey	In Development
	Consultation Desks	Mystery Shopper Reports	In Development
	Telephone Transactions	Transaction Survey	In Planning
	eMail Communications	Transaction Survey	In Use
	Mobile Device Transactions	Transaction Survey	In Planning
	Virtual Ref/Chat Transactions	Transaction Survey	In Planning
	Online Comments and Suggestion Box	Transaction Survey	In Use
Instructional Service Programs		Transaction Survey	In Use
User Driven Acquisitions		Transaction Survey	In Development
Website Usability		Focus Group Interviews	In Use
Document Delivery		Transaction Survey	In Development
Facilities/ Inventories Usage Transactions	Study Room Reservations	Transaction Survey	In Use
	Equipment Use	Transaction Survey	In Planning
	Open Study Areas	TBD	In Development
Liaison Services	Faculty & Student Advisory Groups	Customer Advisory Panels	In Use
	Subject Specialist Duties	Service Reviews	In Development
New Customer Orientations	Fish Camp Library Presentations	New/Decl/Former-Customer Surveys	In Planning

Qualitative Research Target		Listening Device	Status
	T-Camp Library Presentations	New/Decl/Former-Customer Surveys	In Planning
	HOWDY WEEK, et al	New/Decl/Former-Customer Surveys	In Planning
Graduating Senior Surveys	NSSE	New/Decl/Former-Customer Surveys	In Use
	TAMU Graduating Seniors Survey	New/Decl/Former-Customer Surveys	In Development
	College of Vet Med Graduating Seniors Survey	New/Decl/Former-Customer Surveys	In Planning
LibQUAL+® Survey Findings Follow Up		Focus Groups	In Development
Customer Service Studies		Employee Field Reporting	In Planning
		Employee Research	In Planning

## **LISTENING DEVICES – IN USE**

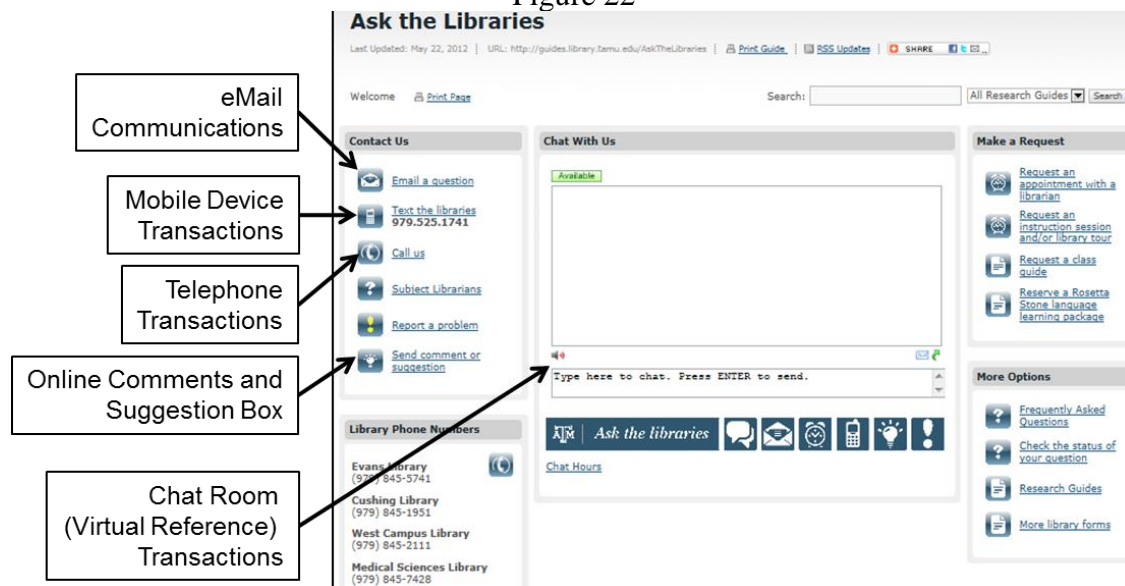
### **Service Transactions**

The University Libraries currently offers numerous access points for our users to ask for assistance by our service personnel. As listed above, in Figure 21, the Libraries have in place or are planning to implement transaction surveys to invite our users to rate and comment upon the service they recently received.

The Libraries maintains an “Ask the Libraries” website. From this site users can opt to ask questions via eMail, Telephone (website provides a list of telephone numbers, does directly connect the user to a telephone line), Mobile Device (Text Messages), Chat Room (Virtual Reference) and through an Online Comments and Suggestion box (Figure 22).



Figure 22



## eMAIL COMMUNICATIONS TRANSACTION SURVEY

The **eMail Communications Survey** (Figure 23) is sent as a URL link to our customers that have asked for and received support through an eMail. The majority of questions received via eMail concerns locating resources, particularly in our websites. Using a 4 point rating scale, with 4 being the highest/best score, eMail responses received a mean score of 3.84. Comments on the survey addressed primarily the successful timeliness of responding to the user's eMails. Issues about the Libraries' facilities were a distant second in comment response categories. The data from this survey reinforces 2011 LibQUAL+® findings that the Libraries are delivering successful customer service transactions, especially the Customer Service core question "readiness to respond to users' questions".

LibQUAL+® findings further showed that the Libraries need to continue to address a user's need to be able to independently discover and maneuver through the Libraries' information resources. At this time no analysis has been done of the original questions asked through eMail and what these questions can tell the Libraries about our customers' information searching techniques. In the next 3 months this analysis will be completed in order to include this analysis in the Libraries' annual assessment report due to the Texas A&M University Office of Institutional Assessment.

Figure 23  
eMail Communications Transactions Survey

The screenshot shows a web form titled "eMail Communications Transactions Survey" from Texas A&M University Libraries. The header includes the university logo and the text "Ask the Libraries" with several icons. Below the header, a light gray box contains instructions: "Please use the following form to submit your query, request, comment, or information. Note - the ✓ symbol indicates a required field." The form is divided into two main sections. The first section, "How did we do?", has two radio buttons: "Grade us!" and "Tell us!". The "Tell us!" option is selected, indicated by a blue checkmark. Next to it is a text area with the prompt "Your views are important to us. Please comment on the quality the service you received." and a small icon of a document with a plus sign. The second section, "Contact details", has a prompt: "If you would like us to respond to your comment and/or suggestion please provide us with your contact details." It contains two radio buttons: "Name" and "Email Address", both of which are unselected. Below the radio buttons are two empty text input fields. At the bottom right of the form are two buttons: "Submit" and "Reset".

**How did we do?**

☐ Grade us!

☒ Tell us! ☒ Your views are important to us. Please comment on the quality the service you received.

**Contact details**

If you would like us to respond to your comment and/or suggestion please provide us with your contact details.

☐ Name

☐ Email Address

## Instructional Sessions

During the 2010-2011 school term 2,812 students who attended an instructional session sponsored by the university libraries completed the Student Feedback Form (Figure 24), another transaction survey.

Figure 24

**Student Feedback Form**  
**Spring, 2011**

*In an effort to improve our services, we welcome your feedback!*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a: Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior ☐ Grad. Student ☐

My major is \_\_\_\_\_

Have you attended a library instruction session before? Yes ☐ No ☐ If Yes, what class? \_\_\_\_\_

Was today's session useful? Yes ☐ No ☐ Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

Circle your level of agreement to the statements below using the following scale:  
 1 = Low ... 10 = High NA = Not applicable

Delivery:	Low	High
could hear the instructor clearly.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NA	
The instructor presented the information in a way I could understand.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NA	
The instructor encouraged students to ask questions and/or interact.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NA	
The instructor showed interest and enthusiasm.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NA	

Overall:	Low	High
now feel more confident about using the library and its resources.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NA	
The information presented will help me complete assignments for this course.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NA	
The amount of information presented was sufficient.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NA	
The quality of the session was excellent.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NA	

The pace of instruction was:(circle one)      Too fast      Too slow      Just right

What do you wish we would have told you more about?

We plan to renovate our classrooms to help make our sessions more interactive. Do you have any recommendations?

Please enter any additional comments or suggestions below.

The form asks students to rate 8 different questions/categories based upon a 10 point scale. These 8 questions with their average response rates are listed in Figure 25.

Figure 25

<b>Question</b>	<b>Average (1=Low ... 10=High)</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>DELIVERY QUESTIONS</b>		
I could hear the instructor clearly	9.55	1.22
Instructor presented the info in a way I understood	9.51	1.02
Instructor encouraged students to ask ques and/or interact	9.11	1.69
Instructor showed interest and enthusiasm	9.22	1.43
<b>OVERALL SESSION QUESTIONS</b>		
Feel more confident about using the library & resources	8.96	1.60
Info presented will help me complete assignments for this course	9.16	1.67
Amount of information presented was sufficient	9.32	1.25
Quality of the session was excellent	9.20	1.37

The survey is presented in paper form. Much discussion has gone into deciding whether to offer this survey in print or online versions. The decision to provide it in print was that more students would be inclined to participate in the survey if it was handed out at the end of the instructional session and the explicit expectation was made that it had to be completed before leaving the classroom. The goal was to increase the survey response rate. In the 2009/2010 school year, the response rates for online surveys was 11% while, for print surveys the response rate was 40-60% depending upon the instructor (another statistic to review and consider better methods of encouraging participation in the survey. Compiling data from a print survey however is very time consuming and further use of print surveys should consider including the use of Scantron® -like technologies to gather the data.

Based upon a first review of these results it appears as if the University Libraries' instructional sessions are meeting student user needs. And, our instructional services team is meeting user needs. There is however room for improvement and analysis of this survey data offers a map on where to begin improvements.

There are three questions that stand out because of higher than usual standard deviations: 1) Instructor encouraged students to ask questions and/or interact, 2) Students feel more confident about using the library & resources and 3) Information presented will help me complete assignments for this course. Of these three questions the question "Students feel more confident about using the library & resources" stands out because it has not only the lowest average score but also has one of the top three highest standard deviations. The most immediate concern stems from the large standard deviation from the question "information presented will help me complete assignments for this course". While the question received a high overall mean score of 9.16 out of 10 point scale, the standard deviation suggests not all agree with this question's mean score – at least to the extent that the data should be looked at more closely. 98 scores for this question were at 5 or below.

Going back to the raw data, the average number of responses that provided a score of 5 or less for all questions was approximately 2%. For the question, "Instructor encouraged students to ask questions and/or interact", 4% of the responses were at the 5 or below mark. That is over 100

responses that rated this question at 5 or below. Clearly we want students to be offered the opportunity – or at least perceive the opportunity – to ask questions and interact, thereby reflecting a student’s interest in the course. Additionally, we want students to walk away from the completed class feeling, with the knowledge they obtained in the class, that they can find information on their own.

With regard to LibQUAL results, there are three Information Control questions (Figure 26) that address a user’s ability to find information on their own, and thus indirectly address the question do the students feel confident finding information from the libraries’ resources on their own. The table below shows the results of the 2011 LibQUAL+® survey for these questions:

Figure 26

<b>LibQUAL+® Info Control Questions: User’s ability to find info on their own</b>				
	A library web site enabling me to locate information on my own	Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	Making information accessible for independent use	
Minimum	6.76	6.53	6.57	
Perceived	7.32	7.23	7.33	
Desired	8.15	8.06	8.06	
AG	0.56	0.7	0.76	
Zone	1.39	1.53	1.49	
<b>AGR</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>51%</b>	

At the University Libraries, AGR scores below 50% warrant review. In two of the three questions that address a user’s ability to act independently, AGR scores were below 50%. These low scores correlate with the concerns raised by the Instructional Session Feedback Form results for confidence.

Further, there is one LibQUAL+® question in particular that addresses information literacy. This is “the library provides me with the information skills I need in my work or study.” On the 9 point scale the average response score was a 7.31. This is about an 81% success rate. In terms of the number of students that participated in the LibQUAL survey 87 or roughly 14% of all respondents rated this question at a 5 or below. Again, these results correlate with the Instructional Session Feedback Form results regarding confidence to find information on their own and thus possess the skills necessary for our users’ work or study.

So what does this mean? All users regardless of whether or not they have taken a library instructional class feel that more can be done to address confidence in finding information on their own. By decision, recent efforts by the University Libraries’ instructors to reach more users and provide more sessions on use of library resources has increased dramatically. Comments from the LibQUAL+® survey contain a recurring theme – “I wish I knew then what I know now about using the library.” Based upon these results the University Libraries Instruction Unit has not only increased efforts to reach more students but also to reach them earlier on – preferably during their first year and/or early on in a student’s prerequisite core writing intensive classes. Attendance numbers show that outreach has increased and more of these outreach efforts are occurring as envisioned – during the early part of a student’s tenure and/or during strategically

appropriate course prerequisites. We have seen these efforts have contributed to the increasing positive scores and comments we are receiving about the Libraries' information literacy efforts.

The data implies that, while increasing the number of customers the Libraries are trying to instruct has been effective, the next efforts need to be directed toward session content quality. Results from the Instructional Feedback Form indicate that the instructional sessions' design should be crafted to provide more opportunity for participation by the users during the class session and bolstering confidence, by various methods, of our users ability to navigate through the libraries' information resources. For example, one positive comment that we received from the Instructional Feedback Forms was how much our students liked the user-friendly hand-outs we gave them at the end of each session. Will the consistent use of hand-outs have an impact on confidence building and resource discoverability?

## **Facilities Usage Transactions**

### **STUDY ROOM RESERVATION SURVEY**

The LibQUAL+ survey revealed a frustration with the number of group and individual study rooms available and with the process to reserve these rooms. Prior to 2007 our users would stand in long lines at our service desks and be assigned a room and/or reservation for a room as they became available. In 2007 this system was replaced with the use of pagers that were assigned to users. Once a room became available the pager would go off and the user could check in. This method was also predicated on rooms becoming available one at a time. Our customers still had to wait extended periods of time for a room and/or to be told no rooms would be available for the day/evening. As of 2012 the majority of group and individual study rooms can be reserved online. As part of the process to reserve a room a contact eMail address is requested. These contact sources are then being used to survey our users as to the ease of reserving a room and the user's satisfaction with the room itself (Figure 27).

Figure 27

The screenshot displays a web-based survey titled "Events Library". At the top, there is a blue header bar with the title. Below the header, a button labeled "+ Add Question" is visible. The survey content is organized into three distinct sections, each enclosed in a dashed border. Each section begins with a question ID (Q1, Q2, Q3) and a set of control buttons: "Edit Question", "Add Question Logic", "Move", "Copy", and "Delete".

**Question 1 (Q1):** The question is "1. Rate the ease of the system". It features five radio button options: "1 Easy", "2", "3", "4", and "5 Hard". Below the options is a text prompt "What did you like? What didn't you like?" followed by a large, empty text input area with a vertical scrollbar.

**Question 2 (Q2):** The question is "2. Would you use it again?". It has two radio button options: "Yes" and "No". Below these is a text prompt "Why?" followed by a large, empty text input area with a vertical scrollbar.

**Question 3 (Q3):** The question is "3. Any additional comments:". It is followed by a large, empty text input area with a vertical scrollbar.

Between the question sections, there are buttons for "+ Add Question" and "Split Page Here".

Results from the project pilot revealed that 61% of those that used the online reservation system found it easy to use and 70% said they would use this reservation system again. At this time efforts are being made to further simplify the reservation process. Comments from the survey have been mixed. Many people like the ease of the system while others are concerned about what impact the system may have on actual room availability ("People leave early, arrive late or just don't show up at all [at] their reserved rooms and you cannot reserve it because they already have, even though no one is using the room."). Since this project has only been in place for 2 months at the main library, adjustments and improvements to policies are still being made. These adjustments/improvements are being made with the strong guidance of our users.

Many of the comments received on the LibQUAL+® survey that addressed study rooms

identified equipment maintenance, cleanliness and noise abatement as concerns. Future iterations of this survey will include questions that address these issues.

## Libraries Web Usability Focus Groups

Each year our Digital Services Librarian conducts a Web Usability Study. The study is structured to determine not only the needs of users but to better understand how they navigate through our web pages to seek out information on their own. The study reveals not only successes and concerns but also helps foretell developing trends in information technology that our users prefer. An example of this is the implementation of a Google®-like single search box rather than multiple search boxes/pages depending upon the originating source (e.g. online catalog, electronic journals, electronic databases, electronic articles).

A true partnership has developed between the Web Usability Studies and the LibQUAL+® survey. The LibQUAL+® survey helps identify concerns and trends that in turn help our Digital Services Librarian determine what questions to ask. The features implemented by the Web Usability Study are then rated and reflected in the LibQUAL+® survey scores.

Figure 28 summarizes the 2011 Usability Study results:

Figure 28

	UNDERGRADUATES			GRADUATES		
	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
The website is easy to use	64%	19%	17%	63%	21%	16%
The website is too complex	20%	25%	54%	21%	21%	58%
I often need help to use the website	14%	14%	70%	13%	15%	70%
Functions of the website are well integrated	63%	25%	12%	61%	24%	14%
Too much inconsistency on the website	14%	27%	57%	15%	27%	58%
People will find the website easy to learn	58%	24%	17%	52%	25%	21%
The website is too cumbersome	20%	35%	44%	22%	25%	53%
Confident I can find things on the website	74%	13%	12%	72%	14%	14%
The website is well organized	68%	20%	12%	63%	21%	16%
I get lost in the website	27%	16%	54%	23%	19%	58%
The most imp links are on the homepage	76%	17%	6%	72%	17%	10%
Related subj info on is grouped together well	68%	22%	10%	57%	30%	12%
It is hard to find help and instructions	17%	27%	54%	22%	28%	48%
The color scheme is too dark	9%	32%	56%	11%	35%	52%

For most questions the difference in Agree/Strongly Agree ratings between Undergraduate and Graduate Students is a 1 to 2 point difference. There are some questions where the point difference is greater than 2%. These are:



1. People will find the website easy to learn
2. The website is well organized
3. I get lost in the website
4. The most important links are on the homepage
5. Related information on a subject is grouped together well
6. It is hard to find help and instructions

For the first five questions the Undergraduate students had higher percentages of agreement, showing a stronger opinion by this user group. The type of questions are a mixed bag – some expressing satisfaction and others dissatisfaction. This indicates the Undergraduate students do not perceive a consistent level of support. The message on how to navigate our websites needs to become more consistent. The one question where Graduate students showed a larger percentage of agreement was on the question “It is hard to find help and instructions”. 22% of Graduate students agree with this statement as compared to 17% for Undergraduate students. While both groups indicate that they would like to find it easier to find help and instructions, the difference between Graduate and Undergraduate students suggest additional research is needed for determine the type of help and instructions this user group needs.

In addition to summary data, the Usability Study collects and sorts comments into the following categories (Figure 29):

Figure 29

WEB USABILITY STUDY COMMENT CATEGORIES	
Navigation	Design
Catalog	Content
Mobile	Log-In
Room Reservations	Get It For Me
Check Out Information Pages	Database
eBook	Pop-Up Windows
Bookbag	Recall
Browsable Lists	Citation Software
Other	Non-Web Comments

A comments analysis of this data is currently underway.

## Subject Specialists Duties

### FACULTY AND STUDENT ADVISORY GROUPS

The University Libraries has 4 formal advisory groups. For the main libraries there is the Student Advisory group made up of student government leaders and faculty representatives from each college. There is also an advisory council that is made up of members from the Faculty Senate. The Medical Sciences Libraries participates in two other advisory groups that have ties to the Texas A&M University. These are the MSL Student Advisory Council that is made up from

representatives from the University's College of Agriculture and College of Veterinary Medicine. Other members in the group include student representatives from the Texas A&M Health Sciences Center units. In addition, there is a joint Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and the Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine. This advisory council supports for the Texas A&M Systems One Health Initiative.

These councils are used to gauge reactions to and guidance in implementing changes to services, resources and facilities. Over the years these groups have also provided insight into presentations that the Libraries subsequently made to student government groups, university administrators and system representatives.

## **Graduating Seniors Surveys**

### **NSSE**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) provides an estimate of what undergraduate students gain from attending 4-year colleges or universities. The survey looks to determine amount and effort of time a student puts into their studies and other educational activities and how an institution uses its resources to get students to become involved in activities linked to student learning (<http://www.nsse.iub.edu/>).

There are certain questions within the survey that the Libraries reviews and uses to gauge its indirect impact on student learning. The 2011 survey results for these questions are listed in Figure 30 (<http://mars.tamu.edu/surveys/index.htm>).

Figure 30

2011 Texas A&M University NSSE® Survey Results	First Year	Grad Year	% Change
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	2.12	2.38	12%
Worked on a paper or project that req'd integrating ideas or info from various sources	2.68	3.25	21%
Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work	3.36	3.29	-2%
Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	3.16	3.08	-3%
Using computers in academic work	3.41	3.53	4%
Acquiring a broad general education	3.23	3.34	4%
Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	2.93	3.22	10%
Writing clearly and effectively	2.69	3.1	16%

2011 Texas A&M University NSSE® Survey Results	First Year	Grad Year	% Change
Speaking clearly and effectively	2.63	2.96	13%
Thinking critically and analytically	3.28	3.47	6%
Analyzing quantitative problems	3.15	3.3	5%
Using computing and information technology	3.17	3.35	6%
How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?	3.49	3.54	1%

## **LISTENING DEVICES – IN DEVELOPMENT OR IN PLANNING**

### **Service Transactions**

#### **SERVICE TRANSACTION CARD**

As reported previously, even though LibQUAL+® Customer Service scores have increased annually since 2001, each year comments received with the surveys expressed a frustration with the consistency of service. The introduction of a service transaction card would be a further method to assess our quality and consistency of service with the advantage that there will be shorter assessment periods than the annual LibQUAL+® surveys the Libraries currently conducts.

A Service Transaction card (Figure 31) is currently being developed to be given to our users and asked to be completed at the service desk at the conclusion of each transaction. The survey has been designed to be short enough to complete at a service desk, rather than to be taken by the user to be completed later.

Figure 31

**How are we doing?**

We are proud to be serving the Aggie Community and would like to hear how our services are meeting your needs and expectations.  
[library.tamu.edu/howarewedoin](http://library.tamu.edu/howarewedoin)

**Are you:**  
☐ Undergraduate  
☐ Graduate  
☐ Faculty/Staff

**Your College/Major**  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Which Library did you use today?**  
☐ Sterling C. Evans  
☐ Library Annex  
☐ Coulter Memorial  
☐ Medical Sciences  
☐ West Campus  
☐ Policy Sciences and Economics

**What library services did you use today?**  
 (Select all that apply)  
 Checked ☐ Out ☐ Used  
☐ Print material (books, journals, etc.)  
☐ Media resources (dvd, kindle, specialized media computers, netbook/laptop etc.)  
☐ Electronic resources (databases, ebook, catalog, etc.)  
☐ Open study space  
☐ Computer (DIA)  
☐ Individual or group study room  
☐ Printer, copier, scanner  
☐ Coffee shop  
☐ AskUs desk to answer a question  
☐ Received research help from library staff/librarian  
☐ Attended a library class or tour  
☐ Writing Center  
☐ Attended a non-library related event in the building (workshops, lecture, meeting, etc.)  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**How would you rate the services you used today?**  
☐ Excellent  
☐ Good  
☐ Fair  
☐ Needs Improvement

**How would you rate your overall Library experience?**  
☐ Excellent  
☐ Good  
☐ Fair  
☐ Needs Improvement

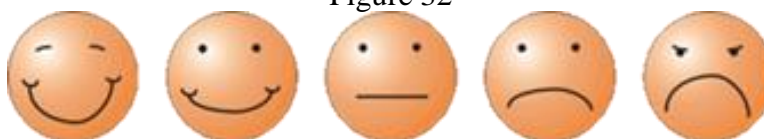
**Comments/Suggestions**  
 \_\_\_\_\_

FRONT

VERSO

In lieu of the section on the card asking our users to rate the services they received today we will instead be using smiley faces to rate the service (Figure 32) – again keeping with the goal of making the survey short enough to complete at the desk. With pictures, instead of words, our users should be able to more quickly assess the quality of service they just received.

Figure 32



## MYSTERY SHOPPERS REPORTS

**Mystery Shoppers Reports** are another way to evaluate service transactions. While historically they have been used by libraries to evaluate the quality and accuracy of reference information being delivered the University Libraries will initially using them to evaluate telephone and in person training effectiveness (Figure 33). For example, are service personnel following instructions on greeting, transferring, referring and treatment methodologies that the Libraries have constructed for these types of transactions?

Figure 33

Mystery Shopper Questionnaire				
<b>Purpose:</b> To assess the effectiveness of our Customer Service training programs through the identification of service strengths and weaknesses, and then based upon our findings work to enhance and sustain our Customer Service delivery and training initiatives.				
<b>Pre-Visit Telephone Contact</b> Date: _____ Time: _____ Library trying to reach: _____ Telephone Number called: _____				
				COMMENTS
1) Was the telephone answered within 3 rings?	3 rings or less	4 or 5 rings	6+ rings or went to Voice Mail	
2) Did the greeting include a salutation that identified the library?	I was greeted with a salutation and the library was identified	I was not greeted with a salutation or I was not greeted with the name of the library	I was neither greeted with a salutation or the name of the library	
3) Was the employee pleasant and courteous?	The employee was pleasant and courteous	The employee was indifferent	The employee was rude or short answered	
4) Was the employee focused on the conversation?	Yes, the employee was focused on our conversation	The employee followed my conversation but was slightly distracted	No, the employee was not focused on our conversation	
5) Did the employee attempt to answer your question	YES	NO		
6) Was the employee(s) able to answer your question to your satisfaction?	Yes, the employee was able to answer my question and encouraged me to return if more information was needed	Yes, the employee was able to answer my question to my satisfaction	No, the employee was not able to answer my question to my satisfaction	
7) If the employee was not able to answer your question, why?				
8) If the employee was not able to answer your question were you given options to find a solution?	YES, I was referred to a source outside the library	YES, I was referred to someone inside the library	NO	
9) Were you placed on hold?	I was not placed on hold	I was placed on hold for less than 1 minute	I was placed on hold for more than 1 minute	
10) Were you transferred? If yes, how many times?	I was not transferred	I was transferred once	I was transferred more than once	
11) If you were transferred, were you given a name and telephone number	YES	NO	N/A	
12) If placed on hold or transferred, did it seem that the new person had been briefed about your inquiry before they spoke to you?	YES	NO	N/A	
13) Was the employee(s) that you were referred to able to answer your question to your satisfaction?	Yes, the employee was able to answer my question and encouraged me to return if more information was needed	Yes, the employee was able to answer my question to my satisfaction	No, the employee was not able to answer my question to my satisfaction	
14) Overall, were you satisfied with your telephone experience?	YES	NO		
15) Based on this conversation would you likely use the telephone again to ask for assistance?	YES	NO		
16) Were you thanked at the end of the conversation?	YES	NO		
17) Is there anything we could have done to have made this experience better?				

Library Visit				
Date: _____ Time: _____ Library Visited: _____				
				COMMENTS
1) Was the entrance to the library clean and inviting?	YES	NO		
2) Was the lobby/waiting area clean and inviting?	YES	NO		
3) Was the service desk clean and clutter free?	YES	NO		
4) Were you immediately acknowledged?	I was acknowledged immediately	Within 20 seconds	More than 20 seconds or not acknowledged	
5) How many people were in line when you approached the service desk? (Please circle)	0	1	2	3
6) At what point did you begin to feel your wait time was excessive (Please circle)	N/A	1 min.	2 min.	3 min.
7) Were you greeted in a friendly manner?	YES	NO	N/A	
8) Was the employee wearing a name badge?	YES	NO		
9) Was the employee focused on the conversation?	Yes, the employee was focused on our conversation	The employee followed my conversation but was slightly distracted	No, the employee was not focused on our conversation	
10) Did the employee attempt to answer your question	YES	NO		
11) Did the employee(s) seem to have the knowledge and confidence to assist you with your question(s)?	Yes, the employee(s) seemed to have the knowledge and confidence to assist me with my question(s)	The employee(s) appeared to be hesitant or unsure with his/her answer to my question	The employee(s) did not have the knowledge and did not appear confident to assist me with my question	
12) Was the answer clear and free of jargon?	Yes, the answer was clear and free of jargon	The answer was not immediately clear or free of jargon but the employee explained everything to me	No, the answer was not clear and contained jargon	
13) Was the employee(s) able to answer your question to your satisfaction?	Yes, the employee was able to answer my question and encouraged me to return if more information was needed	Yes, the employee was able to answer my question to my satisfaction	No, the employee was not able to answer my question to my satisfaction	
14) If the employee was not able to answer your question, why?				
15) If the employee was not able to answer your question were you given options to find a solution?	YES, I was referred to a source outside the library	YES, I was referred to someone inside the library	NO	
16) If you were referred to someone inside the library, what was the type of referral?	I was referred to the on site Consultation Area	A librarian was called out to meet me at the service desk	I was referred to the Librarians Virtual Reference website	
17) If you were referred, were you escorted to the new location?	Escorted to the new location?	Met at the service desk?	Given a map to the referred location?	
18) If you were referred, did it seem the new person had been briefed about your inquiry before they spoke to you?	None of above	Yes, the new person was fully briefed about my inquiry	Other: The new person was partially briefed about my inquiry	
19) Was the employee(s) that you were referred to able to answer your	Yes, the employee was	Yes, the employee	No, the employee was	

## MOBILE DEVICE TRANSACTIONS

**Mobile Device/Text Message Transactions.** The LibQUAL+® surveys for the last two years have included comments by our respondents on the Libraries support of mobile devices and the ability to communicate through text messages. In 2010 introduced the ability to view and receive library-related information on their mobile phones and, later, tablets. In 2011 the ability to receive and respond to text messages from our customers was implemented. Technology has created new customer service points and based upon LibQUAL+® the Libraries needs to

incorporate into its operations the opportunity to assess these new CSPs.

Measuring the quality of service received and the identification of information needs trends will become a necessity as libraries move to support mobile devices. In time, not only will be supporting text messaging mobile device video conferencing and reference support.

## ONLINE SUGGESTION BOX TRANSACTIONS

The **Online Suggestion Box** (Figure 34) is structured currently not to ask satisfaction questions but to get directly to the user's suggestion. This method lets the user set the tone and structure of the evaluation. Our online users are directed to this survey page after clicking on the "Send a comment or suggestion" link on the Libraries "Ask the Libraries" webpage. Responses have been scarce from users. A security box was added to the form to prevent receipt of SPAM eMail. Work will be done on this survey during the 2012 Summer in order to address use of this survey and, upon receipt of responses, begin analysing content for trends.

Figure 34  
Online Suggestion Box

The screenshot shows the 'Online Suggestion Box' form. At the top is a header with the Texas A&M University Libraries logo and the text 'Ask the Libraries' followed by several icons. Below the header is a light gray box with an information icon and the text: 'Please use the following form to submit your query, request, comment, or information. Note - the ✓ symbol indicates a required field.' The main form area is divided into sections. The first section is titled 'Comments/Suggestions' and contains a radio button labeled 'Your views are important to us!' with a blue checkmark, followed by a large text input field. The second section is titled 'Contact details' and contains two radio buttons: 'Name' and 'Email Address', each followed by a text input field. A note above these fields says 'If you would like us to respond to your comment and/or suggestion please provide us with your contact details.' The third section is a security box containing a CAPTCHA image with the text 'SKSDV' and the instruction 'Enter the code from the image'. Below the image are links for 'Get a new code' and 'Listen to the code', and a text input field for the code. At the bottom right are 'Submit' and 'Reset' buttons.

**Comments/Suggestions**

☒ Your views are important to us! ✓

**Contact details**

☐ Name

☐ Email Address

If you would like us to respond to your comment and/or suggestion please provide us with your contact details.

**Security**

SKSDV

Enter the code from the image

[Get a new code](#)

[Listen to the code](#)

## **VIRTUAL REFERENCE/CHATROOM TRANSACTIONS**

**Virtual Reference/Chatroom Transactions.** The University Libraries recently purchased a new virtual reference software package, RefTracker. Results from the previous virtual reference software indicated our users were pleased with the virtual reference support they received. A comments analysis was not completed. The new software provides new tools to assess the quality and effectiveness of virtual service transactions. A transaction survey is being developed.

### **User Driven Acquisitions Transaction Survey**

A study conducted in 2006 showed that only 40% of materials received on approval plans were actually checked out by our users. This data came at a time when calls were being made to reduce all academic budgets in response to worldwide economic conditions. Two steps were taken to address the budget reductions. First, reduce the coverage and expense of the current approval plan and, second, provide a mechanism for our users to be able to identify resources they needed for their research. This led to the development of User Driven Acquisitions Project (Reynolds et al. 2010, 244-254). Three of the LibQUAL+® core questions address resources and historically we have found that both our graduate student and faculty users have expressed concerns, both in LibQUAL+® scores and in LibQUAL+® comments, about titles that were missing from the collection. The Libraries' implementation of the "Suggest a Purchase" project and the subsequent aggressive marketing of this feature enabled our users to not only identify gaps in our collections but also suggest materials that were highly relevant to filling the gap.

Results from the User Driven Acquisitions transaction survey found that 97% of those polled were satisfied with the service with many becoming repeat, if not frequent, users of the service. In addition to surveying the users of the service, the Libraries' subject specialists were also surveyed and asked to determine the appropriateness of the materials being requested – e.g. did the request align with current collection development policies. 62.5% of the librarians surveyed indicated the materials aligned with the collection development policies they had crafted. 80% of librarians surveyed indicated they were satisfied with the "Suggest a Purchase" project with some indicating they had modified their collection development policies as a result of trends in the suggested purchases.

While this survey had originally been planned as a one-time only discovery tool, plans are now being made to conduct this survey on an on-going basis. At this time we have not determined if this will be survey sent out annually, biennially or at the conclusion of each transaction. The survey revealed that 79% of those that had used the service had used it more than once. Given this information the current thinking is to offer the survey at the end of given period (once a year, once every other year) in order to prevent survey fatigue by those users that use this feature frequently.

## **Document Delivery Transaction Survey**

Over the years the service that has received the greatest number of positive recognition as been the University Libraries' Get It For Me service. This is a combination of our inter-library loan services and our document delivery services that, whenever possible, delivers electronic documents to our users' desk tops.

While also receiving the greatest number of compliments, a growing number of LibQUAL+® comments have come back to us that the delivery services are too slow. For many years the response to this concern was that the University Libraries had to rely upon the speed of the outside sources to provide the information to use to process and deliver materials to our users. That is, we can control the timeliness of delivery of the materials we already own but not the time it takes to acquire resources from other libraries and/or companies and then provide these materials to our users. As this successful service becomes better known and more widespread in terms of use so have the number of concerns about timeliness. There are two things that we need to accomplish. First we need to educate our users on the difference between processing in house materials for document delivery and ordering materials from outside sources on behalf of our users. The second is that we need to take a closer look at our operations and determine beyond a doubt the delay only exists with outside resources and then determine if use of one source of another can improve delivery times.

In 2012 our Associate Dean for Technical Services and two of her associates prepared a document delivery services survey to distribute to only our customers that have used our document delivery services. Within the survey it asked questions about what services were used, i.e. was our user asking for materials that the Libraries' already owned or were they asking for materials that the Libraries had to borrow from another source. In addition, the document delivery survey asked users to rate their satisfaction with the amount of time it took to receive the documents they had requested. Results from this survey can then determine if the delay only exists with ILL materials or is timeliness a concern for other types of document delivery services as well?

The survey was sent out to all individuals that had used the document delivery services in the previous year (approximately 20,000 unique names). We received 677 responses back, that fell within a 95% confidence interval with a  $\pm 5\%$  confidence level.

Results from the survey are still pending however discussions have begun on conducting this survey on an on-going basis sending it out at the conclusion of each document delivery transaction or on an annual/biennial basis to all users who used document delivery services during that period.

## **Facilities Usage Transactions**

### **Equipment Use**



The Libraries offers many items for in-building use as well as for check out. This includes laptops, tablets, presentation equipment, calculators and dedicated eBook readers. The Libraries has aggressively attempted to stay current with new models and new technologies that our customers incorporate into their learning routines. One benefit that use of listening devices provides is the ability to quickly learn what devices and technologies are growing in use. A survey to be given to our customers that use and check out equipment will go a long way in staying current in these areas of customer service.

### **Open Study Areas**

The MSL periodically conducts a “census survey”. On a given day or evening, MSL staff approach students entering the MSL as well as those sitting at the open table areas within the library. These users are asked to complete a short survey. This survey helps identify what users groups and colleges are represented by the people studying at the MSL. This survey could be expanded or amended to include information about our users experience at the Libraries’ open study areas. 2011 LibQUAL+® comments about the study areas indicated that there was an equal amount of users that preferred the open community environments that exist in our Libraries and those that while preferring an open community environment wished that these environments were not quite as boisterous as they currently can become (Texas Aggies like to get noisy). There were also those users that complained about lack of enforcement of the Libraries quiet study zones. The Libraries is currently working on concepts to manage study environments and the opportunity to get assessment data in shorter periods of time than the annual LibQUAL+® would be useful in fine tuning any space management efforts.

### **Subject Specialists Duties**

#### **SUBJECT SPECIALIST DUTIES**

The role of our subject specialists as liaison librarians is to reach out to students, staff and faculty by college or department and establish a relationship with these user groups. Liaison librarians can serve as a physical reminder to our customers that the Libraries are present and willing to help. They can also act as conduits, conveying to the Libraries user needs and expectations. In 2012 the head of the Libraries Liaison Services developed a worksheet for Liaison librarians to use when setting goals for the number of contacts they hope to achieve and the subject or goals of these contacts. Results for the 2012 school year will be collated and analysed in late September, 2012.

### **New Customers Orientations**

As reported previously, comments from the LibQUAL+® survey contain a recurring theme – “I wish I knew then what I know now about using the library.” Also reported previously was that the Libraries were increasing efforts to reach students early on in their Texas A&M tenure.

The Texas A&M University offers two orientation “camps” for incoming first year and transfer students. The Libraries’ instructional faculty attended the Fish Camps, the three day orientation

camps offered to incoming first year students. The Libraries made presentations to approximately 75% of the incoming Texas A&M freshmen. Discussions have begun to offer these presentations to T-Camp attendees. T-Camp is a three day orientation program available to students transferring from other higher education institutions.

### **FISH CAMP LIBRARY PRESENTATIONS**

Since the Libraries are already making presentations at the Fish Camps including a brief survey would be possible. The purpose of the survey would be to understand what kinds of library experiences our users have had before that would in turn help identify what areas the orientation camp presentations should address (e.g. the University Libraries uses the Library of Congress classification schedule while most high schools organize their materials by the Dewey Decimal System). The survey would also start building a culture of assessment into our users' perception of the Libraries – a means to emphasize to our newest students that their input and feedback matter (How many times have we heard of someone lament that their single vote will not make a difference).

### **T-CAMP LIBRARY PRESENTATIONS**

A similar survey can be developed for the transfer student orientation camps. There is, however, another perspective our transfer students can provide the Libraries. Many of these transfer students have had experience with an academic library at their previous institution. The Libraries would have the opportunity to learn what services and resources the previous libraries offered that these students liked and disliked and the reasons for these assessments.

### **HOWDY WEEK, et al**

In addition to the orientation camps, the Libraries offers its own orientation program at the entry of each of our libraries at the beginning of each school term. The Medical Sciences Library also offers several other orientation programs that target the colleges the MSL serves (this includes the College of Agriculture, College of Veterinary Medicine, and the units within the Texas A&M Health Science Center including the College of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy and Rural Public Health). A survey could be distributed along with library promotional materials to help the Libraries, early on, understand the services and resources that our new users expect.

### **Graduating Seniors Surveys**

#### **TEXAS A&M GRADUATING SENIORS SURVEY**

Along with the NSSE survey our graduating students are asked to complete a graduation survey administered by the Texas A&M University. Beginning in the 2012/2013 school year the Libraries will submit questions to be included in the survey. Figure 35 shows a very early draft

of questions that are being considered.

Figure 35

To what extent do you think the University Libraries contributed to your knowledge, skills and learning while attending Texas A&M?

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
The Libraries' staff was accessible for help & support								
The Libraries' staff possessed the knowledge to help me with my learning & research needs								
The Libraries' provided me with the necessary information resources								
The Libraries' information resources were easily accessible for me to use								
The Libraries' hours of operation met my needs								
The Libraries' provided me with a comfortable & inviting place to study								
The Libraries provided me with the necessary individual & group study facilities								
Overall, the University Libraries' supported my education needs								
Would you care to provide additional comments about the University Libraries' services?								

## TEXAS A&M COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE GRADUATING SENIORS SURVEY

Like the questions being provided by the Libraries to include in the Texas A&M University Graduating Seniors survey similar questions will be submitted to the College of Veterinary Medicine to include in their graduating seniors survey.

## **LibQUAL+® Survey Findings Follow Up – Other**

LibQUAL+® findings sometime identify one areas of study. In the 2010 Medical Sciences Library LibQUAL+® survey results we learned that we need to learn more, in this case, about our professional degree seeking students. Focus Groups are being planned to invite students from the College of Veterinary Medicine, the College of Medicine and the College of Pharmacy to better understand both the general needs of professional degree seeking students as well as any notable differences in needs or expectations from our animal vs. human medicine students as well as the differences and similarities between our main campus students and students from the other Texas A&M University System campuses.

### **Customer Service Studies**

#### **EMPLOYEE FIELD REPORTING**

One of the outcomes of this paper has been a growing interest in conducting an employee field reports. Our Interim Dean for User Services will be spearheading this project.

#### **EMPLOYEE RESEARCH**

In 2011 efforts to begin a formal means of addressing our internal customers began by inviting the Libraries personnel to participate in the LibQUAL+® survey. Results for this user group will help us understand our own team members' perceptions of the Libraries services and resources.

### **CONCLUSION**

The multiple customer listening approaches employed inform strategic planning and decision making at Texas A&M University Libraries. Reviewing and analysing the findings allow managers to identify trends or the need for additional information to better understand and meet the needs of our customers. These assessment activities lead to more effective and targeted services.

Libraries have multiple strategic customer service points where and how a library's users can be asked about the success and effectiveness of a service. At the Texas A&M University Libraries, the voice of the customer as heard through the most recent total market survey, focus group interviews, and transactional surveys results are impacting service delivery. In order to better capture and analyse user feedback, several new listening approaches are planned and in development to enrich the picture of customer expectations.

Preliminary results from multiple listening devices indicate that data collected from the LibQUAL+® survey do correlate with information taken from customer service points and this is building a strong foundation for improved library services. When the LibQUAL+® survey results are analysed in combination with feedback transactional surveys and focus group

interviews, both very specific user concerns and recommended solutions become apparent. These individual efforts support one another and the key question becomes how sustainable the various modes of collecting data will be over time.

The goal of this study was to identify the most effective means of reaching out to our customers in order to better understand their current and potential information and resource needs. Collecting data regularly is not enough. It must be analysed, reviewed, and discussed to identify common and unique themes, then it should be shared throughout the organization to identify improvements and new service offerings to best meet the needs of our users.

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