Library Survey Team Recommendations

The members of LST have surveyed the literature and reviewed practices currently performed by this team in the collection of valuable information about our users. In our reading we discovered that there is no **Magic Bullet** for assessing user populations. Instead, our approach to assessing the Library’s users should include multiple methods. Methods currently being used include: focus groups, national/local surveys, and web polls/surveys. There also seems to be a trend toward more simplistic methods of collecting data (simplistic does not mean less valuable information) and less frequent polls/surveys in conjunction with larger national surveys. We’ve also discovered that institutions that do assessment well have trained experts in statistical analysis on staff. If personnel meeting the aforementioned criteria are not on staff, the analysis of data is outsourced to other departments or agencies. Collecting data is the easy part.

Recommendations:

1. **Bring in the Effective, Sustainable, and Practical Library Assessment group**
   The service involves a site visit, a report with recommendations on practical and sustainable assessment, and follow-up assistance with implementing the recommendations. The cost for participation is $3,500 plus travel expenses for the two project leaders. Libraries interested in participating should contact Martha Kyrillidou martha@arl.org.

2. **Send the lead person for Library assessment activities out for training 2008 Service Quality Evaluation Academy.**
   The 2008 Service Quality Evaluation Academy is now accepting participant nominations, with a deadline of January 14, 2008. The academy is an intensive five-day program that focuses on both qualitative and quantitative methods for collecting and analyzing library service quality data. The program emphasizes basic concepts and skills in measurement and data analysis that will be applicable to service quality evaluations. Time is also spent on relevant software skills, including the use of ATLAS.ti to analyze the content of interviews or responses to open-ended surveys and the use of SPSS for quantitative data analysis. More information is available at [http://www.arl.org/news/pr/serv_qual_eval_acad_apps_30july07.shtml](http://www.arl.org/news/pr/serv_qual_eval_acad_apps_30july07.shtml).

3. **Develop a multiyear plan for assessment that implements various survey methods to gain a better understanding of our user population’s wants, needs, and expectations.**

4. **LibQual should NOT be done every year.**
   We recognize that this survey provides valuable information, but feel that many of our users are developing survey fatigue. Would I take a 10 minute survey that appears to keep asking the same question? No! The declining response rate seen in our LibQual surveys is indicative of the growing survey fatigue experienced by our users. We suggest that this survey be conducted on a 2 or 3 or 4 year cycle.

5. **Give more focused surveys or questionnaires to select groups to address specific services or points of interest that relate to them.**
   Rather than conducting huge surveys every year, we suggest smaller more simple surveys or questionnaires that should be sent to targeted groups on the
campus. Smaller groups and randomized participants will be the key to gathering valuable assessment data. No one person should receive every survey or questionnaire that the Library conducts.

6. The Thomas Cooper Library should continue to do its building wide survey. These surveys continue to provide valuable information about how patrons utilize the Library’s services and spaces. They also provide indicators of the successfulness of modifications made and provide insight into future and current needs of users.

7. Results/findings from electronic resource statistics, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires should be made available on the Library’s intranet. This information should also be selectively disseminated to the campus by way of Library web pages. This project has already been started, but it requires refinement and expansion.

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August 2, 2007

Addendum: Comments from Bill Sudduth

#1 - excellent
#2 - excellent
#3 - excellent
#4 - Delete 2nd sentence; do every 2 or 3 years (4 is too long); 2 is probably best particularly for capturing changes from underclass (1st or 2nd year students/Masters) and upper class (3-5 year undergrads/PHDs)
#5 - note the specific surveys would be based on new program opportunities, library initiatives, library strategic plan or follow-up on issues from the previous LibQual+; the University of Washington has a three year assessment plan that could be a good model.
#6 successfulness - how about "The building survey provides data to measure the success of changes made in the library's spaces" or something like that.
#7 - very good