



Western Illinois University

Association of Research Libraries / Texas A&M University

www.libqual.org



LibQUAL⁺

2006 Survey

Western Illinois University

Contributors

Colleen Cook
Texas A&M University

Fred Heath
University of Texas

Bruce Thompson
Texas A&M University

Martha Kyrillidou
Association of Research Libraries

Jonathan D. Sousa
Association of Research Libraries

Duane Webster
Association of Research Libraries

Association of Research Libraries / Texas A&M University

www.libqual.org

Association of Research Libraries

21 Dupont Circle NW

Suite 800

Washington, DC 20036

Phone 202-296-2296

Fax 202-872-0884

<http://www.libqual.org>

Copyright © 2006 Association of Research Libraries

1 Introduction

1.1 Acknowledgements

This notebook contains information from the 2006 administration of the LibQUAL+™ protocol. The material on the following pages is drawn from the analysis of responses from the participating institutions collected in 2006.

The LibQUAL+™ project requires the skills of a dedicated group. We would like to thank several members of the LibQUAL+™ team for their key roles in this developmental project. From Texas A&M University, the quantitative guidance of Bruce Thompson and the qualitative leadership of Yvonna Lincoln have been key to the project's integrity. The behind-the-scenes roles of Bill Chollet and others from the library Systems and Training units were also formative. From the Association of Research Libraries, we are appreciative of the project management role of Martha Kyrillidou and the technical development role of Jonathan Sousa, as well as the communications and administration support provided by Amy Hoseth, Richard Groves, and MaShana Davis.

A New Measures Initiative of this scope is possible only as the collaborative effort of many libraries. To the directors and liaisons at all participating libraries goes the largest measure of gratitude. Without your commitment, the development of LibQUAL+™ would not have been possible. We would like to extend a special thank you to all administrators at the participating consortia and libraries that are making this project happen effectively across various institutions.

We would like to acknowledge the role of the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education, which provided grant funds of \$498,368 over a three-year period (2001-03). We would also like to acknowledge the support of the National Science Foundation (NSF) for its grant of \$245,737 over a three-year period (2002-04) to adapt the LibQUAL+™ instrument for use in the science, math, engineering, and technology education digital library community, an assessment tool in development now called DigiQUAL. We would like to express our thanks for the financial support that has enabled the researchers engaged in this project to exceed all of our expectations in stated goals and objectives and deliver a remarkable assessment tool to the library community.

Colleen Cook
Texas A&M University

Fred Heath
University of Texas

Duane Webster
Association of Research Libraries

1.2 LibQUAL+™: a Project from StatsQUAL™

I would personally like to say a word about the development of LibQUAL+™ over the last few years and to thank the people that have been involved in this effort. LibQUAL+™ would not have been possible without the many people who have offered their time and constructive feedback over the years for the cause of improving library services. In a sense, LibQUAL+™ has built three kinds of partnerships: one between ARL and Texas A&M University, a second one among the participating libraries and their staff, and a third one comprising the thousands of users who have provided their valuable survey responses over the years.

LibQUAL+™ was initiated in 2000 as an experimental project for benchmarking perceptions of library service quality across 13 ARL Libraries under the leadership of, Fred Heath and Colleen Cook, then both at the Texas A&M University libraries. It matured quickly into a standard assessment tool that has been applied at more than 700 libraries, collecting information on more than half a million library users. Each year since 2003, we have had more than 200 libraries conduct LibQUAL+™, more than 100,000 users respond, and annually more than 50,000 users provide rich comments about the ways they use their libraries.

There have been numerous advancements over the years. In 2005, libraries were able to conduct LibQUAL+™ over a two session period (Session I: January to May and Session II: July to December). The LibQUAL+™ servers were moved from Texas A&M to an external hosting facility under the ARL brand known as StatsQUAL™. Through the StatsQUAL™ gateway we will continue to provide innovative tools for libraries to assess and manage their environments in the coming years.

LibQUAL+™ findings have engaged thousands of librarians in discussions with colleagues and ARL on what these findings mean for local libraries, for their regions, and for the future of libraries across the globe. Consortia have supported their members' participation in LibQUAL+™ in order to offer an informed understanding of the changes occurring in their shared environment. Summary highlights have been published on an annual basis showcasing the rich array of information available through LibQUAL+™:

LibQUAL+™ 2005 Survey Highlights

<http://www.libqual.org/documents/admin/LibQUALHighlights20051.pdf>

LibQUAL+™ 2004 Survey Highlights

<http://www.libqual.org/documents/admin/ExecSummary%201.3.pdf>

LibQUAL+™ 2003 Survey Highlights

http://www.libqual.org/documents/admin/ExecSummary1.1_locked.pdf

Summary published reports have also been made available:

<http://www.arl.org/pubscat/libqualpubs.html>

The socio-economic and technological changes that are taking place around us are affecting the ways users interact with libraries. We used to think that libraries could provide reliable and reasonably complete access to published and scholarly output, yet we now know from LibQUAL+™ that users have an insatiable appetite for content. No library can ever have sufficient information content that would come close to satisfying this appetite.

The team at ARL and beyond has worked hard to nurture the community that has been built around LibQUAL+™. We believe that closer collaboration and sharing of resources will bring libraries nearer to meeting the ever changing needs of their demanding users. It is this spirit of collaboration and a willingness to view the world of libraries as an organic, integrated, and cohesive environment that can bring forth major innovations and break new ground. Innovation and aggressive marketing of the role of libraries in benefiting their communities strengthen libraries.

In an example of collaboration, LibQUAL+™ participants are sharing their results within the LibQUAL+™ community with an openness that nevertheless respects the confidentiality of each institution and its users. LibQUAL+™ participants are actively shaping our Share Fair gatherings, our in-person events, and our understanding of how the collected data can be used. LibQUAL+™ offers a rich resource that can be viewed using many lenses, should be interpreted in multiple ways, and is a powerful tool libraries can use to understand their environment.

LibQUAL+™ is a community mechanism for improving libraries and I hope we see an increasing number of libraries utilizing it successfully in the years to come. I look forward to your continuing active involvement in helping us understand the many ways we can improve library services.

With warm regards,

Martha Kyrillidou
Director, ARL Statistics and Measurement Program

1.3 LibQUAL+™: Defining and Promoting Library Service Quality

What is LibQUAL+™?

LibQUAL+™ is a suite of services that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinions of service quality. These services are offered to the library community by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). The program's centerpiece is a rigorously tested Web-based survey bundled with training that helps libraries assess and improve library services, change organizational culture, and market the library. The goals of LibQUAL+™ are to:

- Foster a culture of excellence in providing library service
- Help libraries better understand user perceptions of library service quality
- Collect and interpret library user feedback systematically over time
- Provide libraries with comparable assessment information from peer institutions
- Identify best practices in library service
- Enhance library staff members' analytical skills for interpreting and acting on data

As of spring 2006, more than 700 libraries have participated in the LibQUAL+™ survey, including colleges and universities, community colleges, health sciences and hospital/medical libraries, law libraries, and public libraries-some through various consortia, others as independent participants. LibQUAL+™ has expanded internationally, with participating institutions in Canada, the U.K., and other European countries as well as Australia and South Africa. It has been translated into a number of languages, including French, Swedish, Dutch, Afrikaans, German, Danish, Finnish, and Norwegian. The growing LibQUAL+™ community of participants and its extensive dataset are rich resources for improving library services.

How will LibQUAL+™ benefit your library?

Library administrators have successfully used LibQUAL+™ survey data to identify best practices, analyze deficits, and effectively allocate resources. Benefits to participating institutions include:

- Institutional data and reports that enable you to assess whether your library services are meeting user expectations
- Aggregate data and reports that allow you to compare your library's performance with that of peer institutions
- Workshops designed for participants
- Access to an online library of LibQUAL+™ research articles
- The opportunity to become part of a community interested in developing excellence in library services

LibQUAL+™ gives your library users a chance to tell you where your services need improvement so you can respond to and better manage their expectations. You can develop services that better meet your users' expectations by comparing your library's data with that of peer institutions and examining the practices of those libraries that are evaluated highly by their users.

How is the LibQUAL+™ survey conducted?

Conducting the LibQUAL+™ survey requires little technical expertise on your part. You invite your users to take

the survey by distributing the URL for your library's Web form via e-mail. Respondents complete the survey form and their answers are sent to a central database. The data are analyzed and presented to you in reports describing your users' desired, perceived, and minimum expectations of service.

What are the origins of the LibQUAL+™ survey?

The LibQUAL+™ survey evolved from a conceptual model based on the SERVQUAL instrument, a popular tool for assessing service quality in the private sector. The Texas A&M University Libraries and other libraries used modified SERVQUAL instruments for several years; those applications revealed the need for a newly adapted tool that would serve the particular requirements of libraries. ARL, representing the largest research libraries in North America, partnered with Texas A&M University Libraries to develop, test, and refine LibQUAL+™. This effort was supported in part by a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE).

1.4 Web Access to Data

Data summaries from the 2006 iteration of the LibQUAL+™ survey will be available to project participants online via the LibQUAL+™ survey management site:

<<http://www.libqual.org/Manage/Results/index.cfm>>

1.5 Explanation of Charts and Tables

A working knowledge of how to read and derive relevant information from the tables and charts used in your LibQUAL+™ results notebook is essential. In addition to the explanatory text below, you can find a self-paced tutorial on the project web site at:

<http://www.libqual.org/Information/Tools/index.cfm>

Both the online tutorial and the text below are designed to help you understand your survey results and present and explain those results to others at your library.

Radar Charts

Radar charts are commonly used throughout the following pages to display both aggregate results and results from individual institutions. Basic information about radar charts is outlined below, and additional descriptive information is included throughout this notebook.

What is a radar chart?

Radar charts are useful when you want to look at several different factors all related to one item. Sometimes called “spider charts” or “polar charts”, radar charts feature multiple axes or “spokes” along which data can be plotted. Variations in the data are shown by distance from the center of the chart. Lines connect the data points for each series, forming a spiral around the center.

In the case of the LibQUAL+™ survey results, each axis represents a different survey question. Questions are identified by a code at the end of each axis. The three dimensions measured by the survey are grouped together on the radar charts, and each dimension is labeled: Affect of Service (AS), Library as Place (LP), and Information Control (IC).

Radar charts are used in this notebook to present the item summaries (the results from the 22 core survey questions).

How to read a radar chart

Radar charts are an effective way to graphically show strengths and weaknesses by enabling you to observe symmetry or uniformity of data. Points close to the center indicate a low value, while points near the edge indicate a high value. When interpreting a radar chart, it is important to check each individual axis as well as the chart’s overall shape in order to gain a complete understanding of its meaning. You can see how much data fluctuates by observing whether the spiral is smooth or has spikes of variability.

Respondents’ minimum, desired, and perceived levels of service quality are plotted on each axis of your LibQUAL+™ radar charts. The resulting “gaps” between the three levels are shaded in blue, yellow, green, and red. Generally, a radar graph shaded blue and yellow indicates that users’ perceptions of service fall within the “zone of tolerance”; the distance between minimum expectations and perceptions of service quality is shaded in blue, and the distance between their desired and perceived levels of service quality is shown in yellow. When users’ perceptions fall outside the “zone of tolerance,” the graph will include areas of red and green shading. If the distance between users’ minimum expectations and perceptions of service delivery is represented in red, that indicates a negative service adequacy gap score. If the distance between the desired level of service and perceptions of service delivery is represented in green, that indicates a positive service superiority gap score.

Means

The mean of a collection of numbers is their arithmetic average, computed by adding them up and dividing by their total number.

In this notebook, means are provided for users' minimum, desired, and perceived levels of service quality for each item on the LibQUAL+™ survey. Means are also provided for the general satisfaction and information literacy outcomes questions.

Standard Deviation

Standard deviation is a measure of the spread of data around their mean. The standard deviation (SD) depends on calculating the average distance of each score from the mean.

In this notebook, standard deviations are provided for every mean presented in the tables.

Service Adequacy

The Service adequacy gap score is calculated by subtracting the minimum score from the perceived score on any given question, for each user. Both means and standard deviations are provided for service adequacy gap scores on each item of the survey, as well as for each of the three dimensions of library service quality. In general, service adequacy is an indicator of the extent to which you are meeting the minimum expectations of your users. A negative service adequacy gap score indicates that your users' perceived level of service quality is below their minimum level of service quality and is printed in red.

Service Superiority

The Service superiority gap score is calculated by subtracting the desired score from the perceived score on any given question, for each user. Both means and standard deviations are provided for service superiority gap scores on each item of the survey, as well as for each of the three dimensions of library service quality. In general, service superiority is an indicator of the extent to which you are exceeding the desired expectations of your users. A positive service superiority gap score indicates that your users' perceived level of service quality is above their desired level of service quality and is printed in green.

Sections with charts and tables are omitted from the following pages when there are three or fewer individuals in a specific group.

In the consortium notebooks, institution type summaries are not shown if there is only one library for an institution type. Individual library notebooks are produced separately for each participant.

1.6 A Few Words about LibQUAL+™ 2006

Libraries today confront escalating pressure to demonstrate impact. As Cullen (2001) has noted,

Academic libraries are currently facing their greatest challenge since the explosion in tertiary education and academic publishing which began after World War II... [T]he emergence of the virtual university, supported by the virtual library, calls into question many of our basic assumptions about the role of the academic library, and the security of its future. Retaining and growing their customer base, and focusing more energy on meeting their customers' expectations is the only way for academic libraries to survive in this volatile environment. (pp. 662-663)

Today, "A measure of library quality based solely on collections has become obsolete" (Nitecki, 1996, p. 181). These considerations have prompted the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) to sponsor a number of "New Measures" initiatives. The New Measures efforts represent a collective determination on the part of the ARL membership to augment the collection-count and fiscal input measures that comprise the ARL Index and ARL Statistics, to date the most consistently collected statistics for research libraries, with outcome measures such as assessments of service quality and satisfaction. One New Measures initiative is the LibQUAL+™ project (Cook, Heath & B. Thompson, 2002, 2003; Heath, Cook, Kyrillidou & Thompson, 2002; Thompson, Cook & Heath, 2003; Thompson, Cook & Thompson, 2002).

Within a service-quality assessment model, "only customers judge quality; all other judgments are **essentially irrelevant**" (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, Berry, 1990, p. 16). LibQUAL+™ was modeled on the 22-item SERVQUAL tool developed by Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1991). However, SERVQUAL has been shown to measure some issues not particularly relevant in libraries, and to not measure some issues of considerable interest to library users.

The final 22 LibQUAL+™ items were developed through several iterations of studies involving a larger pool of 56 items. The selection of items employed in the LibQUAL+™ survey has been grounded in the *users' perspective* as revealed in a series of qualitative studies involving a larger pool of items. The items were identified following qualitative research interviews with student and faculty library users at several different universities (Cook, 2002a; Cook & Heath, 2001).

LibQUAL+™ is **not** just a list of 22 standardized items. First, LibQUAL+™ offers libraries the ability to select five optional local service quality assessment items. Second, the survey includes a comments box soliciting open-ended user views. *Almost half of the people responding to the LibQUAL+™ survey provide valuable feedback through the comments box.* These open-ended comments are helpful for not only (a) understanding **why** users provide certain ratings, but also (b) understanding **what policy changes** users suggest, because many users feel the obligation to be constructive. Participating libraries are finding the real-time access to user comments one of the most useful devices in challenging library administrators to think outside of the box and develop innovative ways for improving library services.

LibQUAL+™ is one of 11 ways of listening to users, called a *total market survey*. As Berry (1995) explained,

When well designed and executed, total market surveys provide a range of information unmatched by any other method... A critical facet of total market surveys (and the reason for using the word 'total') is the measurement of competitors' service quality. This [also] requires

using non-customers in the sample to rate the service of their suppliers. (p. 37)

Although (a) measuring perceptions of both users and non-users, and (b) collecting perceptions data with regard to peer institutions can provide important insights Berry recommended using multiple listening methods, and emphasized that "Ongoing data collection... is a necessity. Transactional surveys, total market surveys, and employee research should always be included" (Berry, 1995, p. 54).

Score Scaling

"Perceived" scores on the 22 LibQUAL+™ core items, the three subscales, and the total score, are all scaled 1 to 9, with 9 being the most favorable. Both the gap scores ("Adequacy" = "Perceived" - "Minimum"; "Superiority" = "Perceived" - "Desired") are scaled such that higher scores are more favorable. Thus, an *adequacy* gap score of +1.2 on an item, subscale, or total score is better than an adequacy gap score of +1.0. A *superiority* gap score of -0.5 on an item, subscale, or total score is better than a superiority gap score of -1.0.

Using LibQUAL+™ Data

In some cases LibQUAL+™ data may confirm prior expectations and library staff will readily formulate action plans to remedy perceived deficiencies. But in many cases library decision-makers will seek additional information to corroborate interpretations or to better understand the dynamics underlying user perceptions.

For example, once an interpretation is formulated, library staff might review recent submissions of users to suggestion boxes to evaluate whether LibQUAL+™ data are consistent with interpretations, and the suggestion box data perhaps also provide user suggestions for remedies. User focus groups also provide a powerful way to explore problems and potential solutions. A university-wide retreat with a small-group facilitated discussion to solicit suggestions for improvement is another follow-up mechanism that has been implemented in several LibQUAL+™ participating libraries.

Indeed, the open-ended comments gathered as part of LibQUAL+™ are themselves useful in fleshing out insights into perceived library service quality. Respondents often use the comments box on the survey to make constructive suggestions on specific ways to address their concerns. Qualitative analysis of these comments can be very fruitful. In short, LibQUAL+™ is not 22 items. LibQUAL+™ is 22 items plus a comments box!

Cook (2002b) provided case study reports of how staff at various libraries have employed data from prior renditions of LibQUAL+™. Heath, Kyrillidou, and Askew edited a special issue of the Journal of Library Administration (Vol. 40, No. 3/4) reporting additional case studies on the use of LibQUAL+™ data to aid the improvement of library service quality. This special issue has recently been published by Hayworth Press as a monograph. These publications can be ordered by sending an email to libqual@arl.org.

2006 Data Screening

The 22 LibQUAL+™ core quantitative items measure perceptions of total service quality, as well as three sub-dimensions of perceived library quality: (a) *Service Affect* (9 items, such as "willingness to help users"); (b) *Library as Place* (5 items, such as "a getaway for study, learning, or research"); and (c) *Information Control* (8 items, such as "a library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own" and "print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work").

However, as happens in any survey, in 2006 some users provided incomplete data, or inconsistent data, or both. In compiling the summary data reported here, several criteria were used to determine which respondents to omit from these analyses.

1. Complete Data. The Web software that presents the 22 core items monitors whether a given user has completed all items. On each of these items, in order to submit the survey successfully, users must provide a rating of (a) minimally-acceptable service, (b) desired service, and (c) perceived service or rate the item "not applicable" ("NA"). If these conditions are not met, when the user attempts to leave the Web page presenting the 22 core items, the software shows the user where missing data are located, and requests complete data. The user may of course abandon the survey without completing all the items. *Only records with complete data on the 22 items and where respondents chose a "user group," if applicable, were retained in summary statistics.*

2. Excessive "NA" Responses. Because some institutions provided access to a lottery drawing for an incentive (e.g., a Palm PDA) for completing the survey, some users might have selected "NA" choices for all or most of the items rather than reporting their actual perceptions. Or some users may have views on such a narrow range of quality issues that their data are not very informative. *In this survey it was decided that records containing more than 11 "NA" responses should be eliminated from the summary statistics.*

3. Excessive Inconsistent Responses. On LibQUAL+™, user perceptions can be interpreted by locating "perceived" results within the "zone of tolerance" defined by data from the "minimum" and the "desired" ratings. For example, a mean "perceived" rating on the 1-to-9 (9 is highest) scale of 7.5 might be very good if the mean "desired" rating is 6.0. But a 7.5 perception score is less satisfactory if the mean "desired" rating is 8.6, or if the mean "minimum" rating is 7.7.

One appealing feature of such a "gap measurement model" is that the rating format provides a check for inconsistencies (i.e., score inversions) in the response data (Thompson, Cook & Heath, 2000). Logically, on a given item the "minimum" rating should not be higher than the "desired" rating on the same item. For each user a count of such inconsistencies, ranging from "0" to "22," was made. *Records containing more than 9 logical inconsistencies were eliminated from the summary statistics.*

LibQUAL+™ Norms

An important way to interpret LibQUAL+™ data is by examining the zones of tolerance for items, the three subscale scores, and the total scores. However, the collection of such a huge number of user perceptions has afforded us with the unique opportunity to create norms tables that provide yet another perspective on results.

Norms tell us how scores "stack up" within a particular user group. For example, on the 1-to-9 (9 is highest) scale, users might provide a mean "perceived" rating of 6.5 on an item, "the printed library materials I need for my work." The same users might provide a mean rating on "minimum" for this item of 7.0, and a mean service-adequacy "gap score" (i.e., "perceived" minus "minimum") of -0.5.

The zone-of-tolerance perspective suggests that this library is not doing well on this item, because "perceived" falls below "minimally acceptable." This is important to know. But there is also a second way (i.e., normatively) to interpret the data. Both perspectives can be valuable.

A total market survey administered to more than 100,000 users, as was LibQUAL+™ in 2004 and 2005, affords the

opportunity to ask normative questions such as, "How does a mean 'perceived' score of 6.5 stack up among all individual users who completed the survey?", or "How does a mean service-adequacy gap score of -0.5 stack up among the gap scores of all institutions participating in the survey?"

If 70 percent of individual users generated "perceived" ratings lower than 6.5, 6.5 might not be so bad. And if 90 percent of institutions had service-adequacy gap scores lower than -0.5 (e.g., -0.7, -1.1), a mean gap score of -0.5 might actually be quite good. Users simply may have quite high expectations in this area. They may also communicate their dissatisfaction by rating both (a) "perceived" lower and (b) "minimum" higher.

This does not mean that a service-adequacy gap score of -0.5 is necessarily a cause for celebration. But a service-adequacy gap score of -0.5 on an item for which 90 percent of institutions have a lower gap score is a different gap score than the same -0.5 for a different item in which 90 percent of institutions have a higher service-adequacy gap score.

Only norms give us insight into this comparative perspective. And a local user-satisfaction survey (as against a total market survey) can never provide this insight.

Common Misconception Regarding Norms. An unfortunate and incorrect misconception is that norms make value statements. Norms do not make value statements! Norms make fact statements. If you are a forest ranger, and you make \$25,000 a year, a norms table might inform you of the fact that you make less money than 85 percent of the adults in the United States.

But if you love the outdoors, you do not care very much about money, and you are very service -oriented, this fact statement might not be relevant to you. Or, in the context of your values, you might interpret this fact as being quite satisfactory.

LibQUAL+™ Norms Tables. Of course, the fact statements made by the LibQUAL+™ norms are only valuable if you care about the dimensions being evaluated by the measure. More background on LibQUAL+™ norms is provided by Cook and Thompson (2001) and Cook, Heath and B. Thompson (2002). LibQUAL+™ norms for earlier years are available on the Web at the following URLs:

<<http://www.coe.tamu.edu/~bthompson/libq2005.htm>>

<<http://www.coe.tamu.edu/~bthompson/libq2004.htm>>

Response Rates

At the American Library Association mid-winter meeting in San Antonio in January, 2000, participants were cautioned that response rates on the final LibQUAL+™ survey would probably range from 25-33 percent. Higher response rates can be realized (a) with shorter surveys that (b) are directly action-oriented (Cook, Heath & R.L. Thompson, 2000). For example, a very high response rate could be realized by a library director administering the following one-item survey to users:

Instructions. Please tell us what time to close the library every day. In the future **we will close at whatever time receives the most votes.**

Should we close the library at?

(A) 10 p.m. (B) 11 p.m. (C) midnight (D) 2 p.m.

Lower response rates will be expected for total market surveys measuring general perceptions of users across institutions, and when an intentional effort is made to solicit perceptions of both users and non-users. Two considerations should govern the evaluation of LibQUAL+™ response rates.

Minimum Response Rates. Response rates are computed by dividing the number of completed surveys at an institution by the number of persons asked to complete the survey. However, we do not know the actual response rates on LibQUAL+™, because we do not know the correct denominators for these calculations.

For example, given inadequacy in records at schools, we are not sure how many e-mail addresses for users are accurate. And we do not know how many messages to invite participation were actually opened. In other words, what we know for LibQUAL+™ is the "lower-bound estimate" of response rates.

For example, if 200 out of 800 solicitations result in completed surveys, we know that the response rate is at least 25 percent. But because we are not sure whether 800 e-mail addresses were correct or that 800 e-mail messages were opened, we are not sure that 800 is the correct denominator. The response rate involving only correct e-mail addresses might be 35 or 45 percent. We don't know the exact response rate.

Representativeness Versus Response Rate. If 100 percent of the 800 people we randomly selected to complete our survey did so, then we can be assured that the results are representative of all users. But if only 25 percent of the 800 users complete the survey, the representativeness of the results is not assured. Nor is unrepresentativeness assured.

Representativeness is actually a matter of degree. And several institutions each with 25 percent response rates may have data with different degrees of representativeness.

We can never be sure about how representative our data are as long as not everyone completes the survey. But we can at least address this concern by comparing the demographic profiles of survey completers with the population (Thompson, 2000). At which university below would one feel more confident that LibQUAL+™ results were reasonably representative?

Alpha University

Completers (n=200 / 800)

Gender

Students 53% female

Faculty 45% female

Disciplines

Liberal Arts 40%

Science 15%

Other 45%

Population (N=16,000)

Gender

Students 51% female

Faculty 41% female

Disciplines

Liberal Arts 35%

Science 20%

Other 45%

Omega University

Completers (n=200 / 800)

Gender

Students 35% female

Faculty 65% female

Disciplines

Liberal Arts 40%

Science 20%

Other 40%

Population (N=23,000)

Gender

Students 59% female

Faculty 43% female

Disciplines

Liberal Arts 15%

Science 35%

Other 50%

The persuasiveness of such analyses is greater as the number of variables used in the comparisons is greater. The LibQUAL+™ software has been expanded to automate these comparisons and to output side-by-side graphs and tables comparing sample and population profiles for given institutions. Show these to people who question result representativeness.

However, one caution is in order regarding percentages. When total n is small for an institution, or within a particular subgroup, huge changes in percentages can result from very small shifts in numbers.

LibQUAL+™ Interactive Statistics

In addition to the institution and group notebooks and the norms, LibQUAL+™ has also provided an interactive environment for data analysis where institutions can mine institutional data for peer comparisons in 2003 and 2004. The LibQUAL+™ Interactive Statistics for these years includes graphing capabilities for all LibQUAL+™ scores (total and dimension scores) for each individual institution or groups of institutions. Graphs may be generated in either JPEG format for presentation purposes or flash format that includes more detailed information for online browsing. Tables may also be produced in an interactive fashion for one or multiple selections of variables for all individual institutions or groups of participating institutions. Additional development aims at delivering norms in an interactive environment. To access the LibQUAL+™ Interactive Statistics online, go to:

[<http://www.libqual.org/Manage/Results/index.cfm>](http://www.libqual.org/Manage/Results/index.cfm)

In addition to the framework that is there for analyzing the 2003 and 2004 data, ARL is working on establishing a data mining environment that will allow all institutions to analyze data from every year whether or not they have conducted the survey that year. This interface will be available to participants on a subscription basis.

Survey Data

In addition to the notebooks, the interactive statistics, and the norms, LibQUAL+™ also makes available (a) raw survey data in SPSS at the request of participating libraries, and (b) raw survey data in Excel for all participating libraries. Additional training using the SPSS datafile is available as a follow-up workshop activity and through the Service Quality Evaluation Academy (see below), which also offers training on analyzing qualitative data. The survey comments are also downloadable in Excel format.

ARL Service Quality Evaluation Academy

LibQUAL+™ is an important tool in the New Measures toolbox that librarians can use to improve service quality. But, even more fundamentally, the LibQUAL+™ initiative is more than a single tool. LibQUAL+™ is an effort to create a culture of data-driven service quality assessment and service quality improvement within libraries.

Such a culture must be informed by more than one tool, and by more than only one of the 11 ways of listening to users. To facilitate a culture of service quality assessment, and to facilitate more informed usage of LibQUAL+™ data, the Association of Research Libraries has created the annual *ARL Service Quality Evaluation Academy*. For more information about the Academy, see the LibQUAL+™ events page at

[<http://www.libqual.org/Events/index.cfm>](http://www.libqual.org/Events/index.cfm)

The intensive, five-day Academy teaches both qualitative and quantitative skills that library staff can use to evaluate and generate service-quality assessment information. The fourth cohort of Academy participants graduated in May,

2005. The Academy is one more resource for library staff who would like to develop enhanced service-quality assessment skills.

For more information, about LibQUAL+™ or the Association of Research Libraries' Statistics and Measurement program, see:

<<http://www.libqual.org/>>

<<http://www.statsqual.org/>>

<<http://www.arl.org/stats/>>

References

- Berry, L.L. (1995). On great service: A framework for action. New York: The Free Press.
- Cook, C.C., Heath F., Thompson, B. LibQUAL+™ from the UK Perspective. 5th Northumbria International Conference Proceedings, Durham, UK, July, 2003.
- Cook, C.C. (2002a). A mixed-methods approach to the identification and measurement of academic library service quality constructs: LibQUAL+™. (Doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M University, 2001). Dissertation Abstracts International, 62, 2295A. (University Microfilms No. AAT3020024)
- Cook, C. (Guest Ed.). (2002b). Library decision-makers speak to their uses of their LibQUAL+™ data: Some LibQUAL+™ case studies. Performance Measurement and Metrics, 3.
- Cook, C., & Heath, F. (2001). Users' perceptions of library service quality: A "LibQUAL+™" qualitative study. Library Trends, 49, 548-584.
- Cook, C., Heath, F. & Thompson, B. (2002). Score norms for improving library service quality: A LibQUAL+™ study. portal: Libraries and the Academy, 2, 13-26.
- Cook, C., Heath, F. & Thompson, B. (2003). "Zones of tolerance" in perceptions of library service quality: A LibQUAL+™ study. portal: Libraries and the Academy, 3, 113-123.
- Cook, C., Heath, F., & Thompson, R.L. (2000). A meta-analysis of response rates in Web- or Internet-based surveys. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 60, 821-836.
- Cook, C., & Thompson, B. (2001). Psychometric properties of scores from the Web-based LibQUAL+™ study of perceptions of library service quality. Library Trends, 49, 585-604.
- Cullen, R. (2001). Perspectives on user satisfaction surveys. Library Trends, 49, 662-686.
- Heath, F., Kyriallidou, M. & Askew, C.A. (Guest Eds.). (2004). Libraries report on their LibQUAL+™ findings: From Data to Action. Journal of Library Administration (40) 3/4 (2004).
- Heath, F., Cook, C., Kyriallidou, M., & Thompson, B. (2002). ARL Index and other validity correlates of LibQUAL+™ scores. portal: Libraries and the Academy, 2, 27-42.

- Kyrillidou, Martha (2005). The globalization of library assessment and the role of LibQUAL+™. From library science to information science: studies in honor of G. Kakouri (Athens, Greece: Tipothito-Giorgos Dardanos, 2005). [in Greek]
- Kyrillidou, Martha (2005/2006). Library Assessment as a Collaborative Enterprise. Resource Sharing and Information Networks 18, 1/2, 73-87.
- Kyrillidou, M., Olshen, T., Heath, F., Bonnelly, C., and Cote, J. P. Cross-cultural implementation of LibQUAL+™: the French language experience. 5th Northumbria International Conference Proceedings, Durham, UK, July, 2003.
- Kyrillidou, M. and Young, M. (2005). ARL Statistics 2003-04. Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries.
- Nitecki, D.A. (1996). Changing the concept and measure of service quality in academic libraries. The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 22, 181-190.
- Parasuraman, A., Berry, L.L., and Zeithaml, V.A. Refinement and Reassessment of the SERVQUAL Scale. Journal of Retailing 67 (1991): 420-450.
- Thompson, B. (2000, October). Representativeness versus response rate: It ain't the response rate!. Paper presented at the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Measuring Service Quality Symposium on the New Culture of Assessment: Measuring Service Quality, Washington, DC.
- Thompson, B., Cook, C., & Heath, F. (2000). The LibQUAL+™ gap measurement model: The bad, the ugly, and the good of gap measurement. Performance Measurement and Metrics, 1, 165-178.
- Thompson, B., Cook, C., & Heath, F. (2003). Structure of perceptions of service quality in libraries: A LibQUAL+™ study. Structural Equation Modeling, 10, 456-464.
- Thompson, B., Cook, C., & Thompson, R.L. (2002). Reliability and structure of LibQUAL+™ scores: Measuring perceived library service quality. portal: Libraries and the Academy, 2, 3-12.
- Thompson, B., Cook, C., & Kyrillidou, M. (2005). Concurrent validity of LibQUAL+™ scores: What do LibQUAL+™ scores measure? Journal of Academic Librarianship, 31, 517-522.
- Thompson, B., Cook, C., & Kyrillidou, M. (forthcoming). Using Localized Survey Items to Augment Standardized Benchmarking Measures Across User Groups: A LibQUAL+™ Study. portal: Libraries and the Academy
- Zeithaml, V.A., Parasuraman, A., Berry, L.L. (1990). Delivering quality service: Balancing customer perceptions and expectations. New York: Free Press.

1.7 Library Statistics for Western Illinois University

The statistical data below were provided by the participating institution in the online Representativeness* section. Definitions for these items can be found in the *ARL Statistics*: <<http://www.arl.org/stats/>>.

Note: Participating institutions were not required to complete the Representativeness section. When statistical data is missing or incomplete, it is because this data was not provided.

Volumes held June 30, 2005:	1,223,395
Volumes added during year - Gross:	26,270
Total number of current serials received:	20,452
Total library expenditures (in USD):	\$4,517,709
Personnel - professional staff, FTE:	17
Personnel - support staff, FTE:	42

1.8 Contact Information for Western Illinois University

The person below served as the institution's primary LibQUAL+™ liaison during this survey implementation.

Name:	Mr. Charles E. Malone
Title:	Interim Unit Coordinator of Access Services
Address:	Western Illinois University University Libraries 1 University Circle Macomb, IL 61455 USA
Phone:	309-298-2715
Email:	c-malone@wiu.edu
