Brock University: 2010 LibQual+ Survey Report

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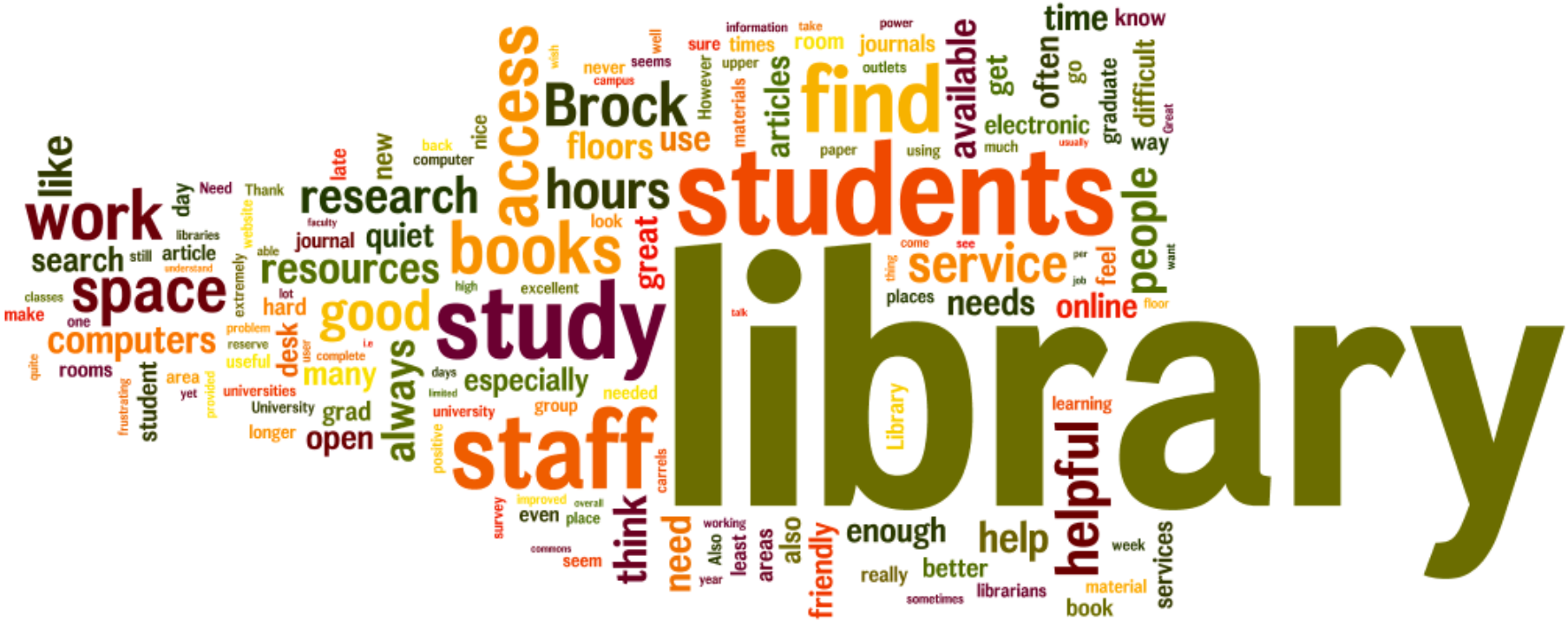

Word cloud presentation of all comments received (www.wordle.net).

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1.0 Introduction

In March 2010, Brock Library participated in LibQUAL+, a survey that measures patron perceptions of library services. Respondents were asked to rank 19 statements in three dimensions of service - 'Affect of Service' (staff and library services), 'Information Control' (print and online resources), and 'Library as Place' (space, hours, and equipment) on a scale of 1-9. Each statement was ranked for minimum acceptable level, perceived level, and desired level. The survey is used to determine 'gaps' in service between what users 'desire' and what users 'perceive', identifying library service areas in need of improvement. Respondents were also asked to rank frequency of library use, overall satisfaction, and information literacy outcomes. At the end of the survey, respondents could provide additional comments; 160 comments were submitted.

2.0 Sample Population

On March 8th 2010, 2000 surveys were distributed by e-mail to a random sample population of Brock's undergraduate and graduate students (1200 undergraduates, 800 graduate students). Direct e-mail invitations were not sent to faculty, library staff and other university staff. These groups were invited to complete the survey through campus advertisements and e-mails from liaison librarians to administrative assistants for dissemination and student associations. Additionally, the survey was opened to all members of the Brock community by featuring a link to the survey on the Library's home page. The survey was available from March 8th to 28th.

A total of 280 surveys were completed for a response rate of 14%. The response rate was calculated by dividing the total number of surveys completed by the number of surveys emailed (2000). In addition, 160 participants (57%) took the additional time to make comments. An incentive consisted of a chance to win one of fifteen $15 gift certificates to the Common Grounds Café. Table 1 provides information on the survey respondents, including status and discipline, and allows us to compare our respondent distribution to the distribution of these users on-campus.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

User Profile	Number (n=)	Percentage	
		% of respondents	% of Brock population*
Status			
Undergraduates	136	46%	89%
Graduates	81	27%	7%
Faculty	63	21%	4%
Library Staff	10	3%	
Staff	7	2%	
Discipline			
Applied Health Sciences	35	13%	12%
Business	28	10%	14%
Education	49	18%	13%
Humanities	63	23%	19%
Mathematics & Science	23	8%	14%
Other	6	2%	0%
Social Sciences	75	27%	28%

* Based on data from Brock University's Office of Institutional Analysis.

3.0 Library Use

Users were asked to report how often they use the Library on site, the library web and non-library gateways (i.e. Google). Table 2 below provides an overview of combined daily and weekly usage overall and by specific user groups. As expected, the results suggest that undergraduates reported the highest usage of the library building. The results also suggest very strong usage of the library web pages as a gateway for research for all users.

Table 2: Combined Daily / Weekly Library Usage

	All Users	Undergraduate Students	Graduate Students	Faculty	Staff
How often do you use resources in the library?	65%	81%	57%	41%	90%
How often do you access library resources through a library web page?	90%	89%	91%	92%	100%
How often do you use Yahoo, Google, or non-library gateways for information?	88%	87%	85%	92%	100%

4.0 Findings

Caution should be used when drawing conclusions from the findings, since variations between service levels are minimal, the student population is somewhat unrepresentative of the population and the overall sample is below the expected range. The information below highlights some of the major findings. To obtain more detailed quantitative findings, you may consult the ARL LibQual+ Results Booklet, available at Reserve.

4.1 General Satisfaction

Users were asked to rate a number of library services on a scale of 1 to 9, 1 being the lowest and 9 being the highest ranking. Table 3 below shows the average ratings from all users and each user group. Overall, users are satisfied with the resources and services they receive from the Library.

Table 3: General Satisfaction

General Area	All Users	Undergraduate Students	Graduate Students	Faculty	Staff
In general, I am satisfied with the way in which I am treated at the library.	7.34	6.82	7.53	7.94	7.75
In general, I am satisfied with library support for my learning, research, and/or teaching needs.	6.91	6.88	6.93	6.94	7.33
How would you rate the overall quality of the service provided by the library?	7.08	6.76	7.35	7.37	7.57

4.2 Minimum, Perceived and Desired Levels of Service

In general students, faculty and staff rated perceived levels of service beyond the minimum level but they are slightly short of desired levels in all three areas being examined. Again, users were asked to rate a number of library services on a scale of 1 to 9. Table 4 shows the average scores for perceived level of service in the three dimensions being studied. What these numbers suggest is that users in general are satisfied with services they receive from the Library. Further, the results suggest that users in general are least satisfied with 'Library as Place' issues.

Table 4: Average Perceived Level of Service in the Three Areas Being Studied

General Area	All Users	Undergraduate Students	Graduate Students	Faculty	Staff
Affect of Service	7.19	6.77	7.45	7.71	7.52
Information Control	6.96	6.89	6.99	7.05	7.14
Library as Place	6.29	5.96	6.64	6.53	7.63
Overall	6.89	6.64	7.06	7.18	7.33

Graduate students, faculty and staff commented on a few areas where their perceived level of service exceeded their desired service level – where they feel the library "goes above and beyond." These are displayed in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Superiority Average (Average Perceived Level of Service is Higher Than Desired)

Question	Graduate Students	Faculty	Staff
AS-2: Giving users individual attention.			1.00
AS-3: Employees who are consistently courteous.		0.18	
AS-8: Willingness to help users.	0.29		
LP-3: A comfortable and inviting location.		0.29	
IC-3: The printed library materials I need for my work.			0.25

There were some areas where perceived level of service was slightly lower than the minimum service expected. In Table 6 below, these gaps are highlighted. Results from Table 6 suggest that:

- Overall, users highlighted issues surrounding group study space and hours of service.
- Undergraduate students expressed greatest frustration with hours of service and 'Library as Place' issues, specifically in relation to group study space.
- Graduate students and faculty expressed dissatisfaction with hours of service, interlibrary loans, and information control issues, specifically the availability of print and/or electronic materials.
- Staff expressed dissatisfaction with issues related to hours of service and information control issues, specifically ease-of-use of information tools including the library web site.

Table 6: Negative Adequacy Average (Average Perceived Level of Service is Lower than Minimum)

Question	All Users	Undergraduates	Graduate Students	Faculty	Staff
AS-1: Giving users individual attention.			-0.08		
AS-2: Employees who are consistently courteous.		-0.33			
AS-6: Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion.		-0.14			
AS-9: Dependability in handling users' service problems.				-0.30	
IC-1: Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office.	-0.11	-0.25		-0.05	
IC-2: A library web site enabling me to locate information on my own.	-0.02		-0.06	-0.11	
IC-3: The printed library materials I need for my work.	-0.10		-0.50	-0.74	
IC-4: The electronic information resources I need.			-0.15		
IC-6: Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own.				-0.10	-1.00
IC-7: Making information easily accessible for independent use.			-0.25		-1.00
IC-8: Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work.	-0.39		-0.64	-1.21	
LP-1: Library space that inspires study and learning.	-0.08	-0.66			
LP-2: Quiet space for individual activities.	-0.06	-0.16	-0.53		
LP-4: A getaway for study, learning, or research.		-0.16			
LP-5: Community space for group learning and group study.	-0.77	-1.14			
Ability to navigate library Web pages easily.					-3.00
Adequate hours of service	-0.47	-0.62	-0.50		-2.00
Ease and timeliness in getting materials from other libraries.	-0.22	-0.17	-1.00		
Making me aware of library resources and services.			-0.12		
Teaching me how to access, evaluate, and use information					-0.33

5.0 The Comments

Comments were received from 160 respondents (57%) and generally support the findings of the quantitative data. We received comments from 76 undergraduate students, 45 graduate students, 31 faculty members, and 8 staff and library staff members.

5.1 Affect of Service

'Affect of Service' refers to the user's experience of personal interactions with library staff, including qualities such as politeness, empathy, willingness to help, and competence. Overall, Brock Library rated positively with regards to 'Affect of Service'. Respondents found library staff to be helpful and friendly. There were 61 uses of the code "service quality positive." Here is a sampling of some of those comments:

- I've been grateful for the support from the library staff, with regard to my teaching and my research.
- The staff are excellent – very helpful and friendly, no matter what the inquiry.
- Thanks for the good work!

There were also a number of negative comments. There were 27 uses of the code "service quality negative," many of which focused on the manner in which service is delivered. There were also a number of negative comments related to policies.

- There are a few [staff] who are grumpy and unhelpful.
- (re: noise in silent study) Most of the times when staff walk by they do not say anything to these individuals.
- The Apple Mac computers are somewhat foreign to most staff and it makes Brock staff look unprofessional.

5.2 Information Control

There were some general comments, both positive and negative, about the collection as a whole. Examples of "resources positive" include: "Grateful for and absolutely essential that resources be accessible on-line. Thank you for being up to date and responding to access issues," and "[I have yet to encounter a journal I need that we don't subscribe to electronically." The code "electronic resources negative" was found 13 times, often with mention of the lack of availability of recent journal issues, the need for more online journals for the sciences, and the lack of access to specific databases. Another frequent comment found 11 times was coded "resources negative." These comments mainly related to the limitations of our collection and the need to rely on RACER. Nine respondents addressed a "difficulty finding library resources," expressing frustration with unsuccessful database searches or finding an item in the stacks.

The remainder of the comments addressed the following topics: need more research help (6), print resources negative (6), electronic resources positive (4), library website negative (4), A.V. resources negative (3), workshops positive (3), resources positive (2), communication negative (2), print resources positive (1), special collections positive (1).

5.3 Library as Place

The large majority of comments related to 'Library as Place' issues. A number of respondents (8) commented positively about the Learning Commons ("general library environment positive"): A faculty member wrote, "The Learning Commons has made the Library a destination and an active workspace for students." Six respondents commented negatively on the general library environment. The two biggest issues were "study space inadequate" (23) and "hours too short" (19). An interesting theme was the request for "improved quiet study" (11): Respondents submitted statements such as, "There should be more accommodation for students that want to study in a quiet space," and "You could be so much better if you were stricter on enforcing policies about noise pollution."

A collection of comments addressed dissatisfaction with equipment and facilities: need more computers (9), need more group study (8), need more (electrical) plugs (7), study space unclean (4), facilities negative (2), space for grad students inadequate (2), need more photocopiers (1), construction negative (1). Four respondents commented positively on study space, specifically mentioning the silent study room and the study carrels.

5.4 Other Comments

A small number of comments fell outside the above categories, many related to specific library policies: policy change suggestions (5) such as "Would be nice to have a reserve drop box system on the upper floors of the library", fees negative (2), and laptop loan negative (2). Three comments were not related to library services, addressing issues such as public transit and wireless internet access. One social sciences faculty member commented negatively on the survey tool.

6.0 Next Steps

Thank you to all of the participants who took the time to provide valuable feedback. Over the next few months, the Library expects to conduct a detailed analysis of the results. Library staff have already begun to review the survey data and comments that will inform the Library's service improvement plans.