PUTTING OURSELVES IN THE HOT SEAT: THE 2007 REFERENCE FORUM AND LIBRARY SURVEYS

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Once Upon a Time...

- A meeting of all of the kingdom system librarians was called
- They were concerned about how outside forces were starting to effect services in their fiefdoms

How could they utilize and incorporate these external forces into quality services for their subjects?
THE TALE CONTINUES

- After much discussion it was decided that the kingdom reference librarians needed to be consulted (after all they’re the ones who deal with the subjects on a daily basis).
Every story has a prince

- The handsome prince decided that he and his merry band would organize a meeting of the kingdoms’ reference librarians
A CALL TO ARMS

- Two Reference Librarian Forums
- Focus
- Selection of representatives
- The first Reference Forum was held February 9, 2007 at the LOUIS office.
February Reference Librarian Forum

- Thirty librarians from eighteen institutions
- Facilitated by Dr. Courtland Chaney
  - J. Trigg and Bettye Baskin Wood, Jr. Endowed Professor – Department of Management
  - Licensed Industrial Organizational Psychologist
  - Certified Senior Professional in Human Resources
March Reference Librarian Forum

- Held March 23, 2007 at LSU-A
- 16 librarians from 10 institutions
- Facilitated by Dr. Courtland Chaney
- More problems/issues were added to the list
- List incorporated into four categories
- Items were prioritized and solutions developed
WHAT TO TACKLE FIRST?

- Lots of problems and potential solutions
- What would be the most effective way to address a majority of the problems that all libraries have in common?

To view the Reference Forum executive summary go to nicole.morello.net
The Creation of the Survey

- A group of librarians and LOUIS staff members gathered together in July 2007 to create a survey that could universally be used.
- The purpose of the survey was to measure faculty, staff, and student use and perceptions of the library.
- The idea was that if we understood what their perceptions and use patterns were than we could better address our problems.
Areas of Concern

Library resources are underutilized by students and faculty

- Libraries don’t know what patrons need/want
- No effective metrics to evaluate library utilization
- Identify and implement best practices
- Fewer classes include research requirements
- Fewer library classes are required for students
- More online classes are being offered
Areas of concern

Faculty and student information literacy is deficient

- Identify and implement best practices
- Communication and collaboration between library staff and faculty
- Outreach to faculty and students
THE SURVEY

- The survey is general but can be customized by individual libraries
- Deployed in SurveyMonkey
- Tested by three libraries
The Guinea Pigs
2007 MSU Library Survey

- Hard Copies of the survey at the reference desk
- Link to electronic survey from the MSU Library Home Page
- $100 drawing at the end of the survey
2007 Survey Results

- Total # Collected: 158
- Respondents:
  - Undergrads 105 (64%)
  - Graduates 27 (16.5%)
  - Faculty 22 (13.4%)
  - Visitors 5 (3%)
  - Staff 5 (3%)
Our users want…

- Coffee and snacks
- Better signage
- Longer hours
- More computers, scanners, printers, copiers
- New and additional materials
- Quiet study spaces
- Writing tutors
- More comfortable seating
Why do they not use the library?

- The library is not a comfortable place to study
- The library is too loud
- There is not enough equipment
Since the survey...

- CC’s Coffee Shop
- Writing tutors in library on Sundays
- Grant writing to provide more furniture and equipment
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QUESTIONS?
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The Survey at BRCC Spring 2008

- Focused on Faculty
  - Email
- Purpose
  - SACS
  - Knowledge of library services
    - Liaisons
    - Bibliographic Instruction
2008 Survey Results

- Open 2 weeks
- Total Surveys = 40

Respondents:
- 7.5% Served as Department Chair
- 65% Full-time faculty
- 25% Adjunct Faculty
- 2.5% Other
Analysis

- Interesting results:
  - When was the last time you used any library resource(s) and/or services(s)?
  - How do you use the library?
  - What specific information resources have you used/do you use?
  - Awareness of the liaison program
  - What services would you like the library to provide?
Lessons Learned

- Surprise requests:
  - Can you make sure all students are reading on college level?
  - Invite authors for book talks
  - Request for InfoTrac and Internet Movie Database Professional to be added to our database offerings
  - Host conversations with faculty
  - Calm and quiet place for study/reading
  - Require that textbooks be placed on reserve
Lessons Learned

- Needed services/resources
  - Listening Room
  - Collection Development
    - More cultural videos
    - More music resources
    - More journals
    - Resources for new programs and courses
- Services for students, faculty and staff with disabilities
- Will not conduct the survey so close to final exams
Steps Taken or Ongoing

- Website re-design
- Increased outreach
  - Library Open House
- Collection Development Unit Goal
- Grants
  - Listening room
  - Equipment for disabled students
Spring 2009 Survey

- Hold earlier in the semester
- Open to students
- Get SGA involved

Schedule Change
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Questions?
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LIBRARY SURVEYS

Dr. Karen Cook, University of Louisiana Monroe
The Survey at ULM Fall 2007

Online

- Linked from Library home page
- Emails
  - Department heads
  - Student groups

Hard-Copy

- At Library service points
- Dedicated box
- During instruction classes
- “Peddled” at events around campus
2007 Survey Results

- Open @ 3 weeks
- Two formats:
  - Online @ 20%
  - Hard-copy @ 80%
- Total Surveys = 483

- Respondents:
  - Undergraduates = 62%
  - Faculty = 23%
  - Graduate Students = 10%
  - Alumni/Visitors/Others
Analysis

- Age, gender not meaningful factors
- Biggest user concerns no surprise:
  - Age & selection of collection materials
  - Desire for more & newer computers, printers, other equipment
  - Hours of operation
  - Food & water policy
Lessons Learned

- **Surprises:**
  - Requests for more fiction, recreational materials
  - A few negative comments on staff courtesy
  - Some “obvious” things not obvious to users = need for better signage, improvements to website, etc.
  - Some user expectations unrealistic

- **Report, comments on survey questions to LOUIS**
Steps Taken or Ongoing

- Library hours extended
- New PCs
- Strategic Plan
- “Consciousness-raising”
- Information Commons
- Website re-design
- Increased signage
- Increased outreach
Reprise Fall 2008

- Timing changed …
- Kept question changes to minimum
  - Eliminated some questions (age, gender)
  - Further reduced library jargon
  - Provided more specifics about the reluctance to ask for help
- Added kiosk
- To be open @ 3 weeks
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QUESTIONS?