WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THE BOX? INTERPRETATIONS OF THE LIBQUAL+®QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED FOR FIU LIBRARIES

Dr. Consuella Askew
Associate Dean for Public Services
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Executive Summary

The results of the 2013 iteration of the FIU Libraries LibQUAL+® survey resulted in a total of 546 comments collected in addition to the quantitative data. The comments were captured separately from the quantitative data along with the respondents’ following demographic data: position (i.e., student, faculty, staff), gender, age group, discipline area and most frequently used library. This analysis focuses on the Green Library, Hubert Library, and Engineering Library Services (ELS); unlike the medical and law libraries, these three libraries focus their services on our undergraduate population, as well as our graduate students. A sample of n=516 comments from users who frequent these three libraries were analyzed.

The results show that more students than faculty (11%) left comments. A large percentage of upper level undergraduate (43.0%) students chose to provide comments in contrast to graduate students (27.0%). In particular, third and fourth year undergraduate students seemed to be more likely to share their opinions and comments than first and second year undergraduates. The results of the analysis indicated that the comments are in direct alignment with the three dimensions measured by the survey: library as place, affect of service, and information control.

The comments concerning library as place focused on the library buildings, space usage and noise in the library. The respondents indicated that both buildings are in need of renovations of some sort. Green Library needs to be expanded and the Hubert Library needs a “makeover”. Outlets and space were issues for Green Library where finding a seat was described as a “mission” and the lack of available
seating – particularly near an outlet – has deterred some from coming to the library. Respondents indicated that noise was an issue at both libraries and called for more vigilant enforcement of the quiet policy.

Respondents indicated their overall satisfaction with the quality of service provided by library staff. Respondents even went so far as to self manage their service expectations based on their understanding and knowledge of the constraints that the Libraries are operating within. There was an indication that respondent would like to see new services and the tweaking of old services particularly as it pertains to shelf maintenance, resource sharing (ILL), and acquisitions. There was a call for the Libraries to increase their visibility with more promotion and marketing of the services and resources provided to the FIU community. There still remains some confusion as to what units that are housed in the library building are actually under the aegis of the Libraries.

The usability of the access to resources, technology, and the Libraries’ web site, were the most repeated areas concerning the dimension of Information Control. Our users are asking for more online resources, particularly online journals. However, they also ask that we improve the maintenance of our print resources. Many noted that too often they have found that although the item is said to be available in the online catalog, it is nowhere to be found on the shelf. While the availability of laptops and other equipment for check out or “rental” is appreciated, there is still a need for more. Additionally, they have asked that more attention be paid to the “hygiene” of the laptops, requesting that these units be wiped down or cleaned periodically. Lastly, although the new version of the Libraries’ web site was
found appealing it seems that it is difficult to use to find needed information. While many liked the aesthetics of the new site, they preferred the usability of the old.

The results substantiate the needs that the library administration has been advocating for in recent years, such as more space to accommodate additional seating and study areas for students, more faculty and staff to facilitate the information control that our users seek and a review of library operations to address our workflows so that we can maximize the efforts of the staff for the service benefit of our users.
Introduction

In spring 2013, the FIU Libraries implemented a fourth iteration of the LibQUAL+® survey of the entire university population. The survey implementation was coordinated and led by a task force comprised of 18 library staff and faculty members from across the FIU campus libraries led by Associate Dean, Dr. Consuella Askew. Permission was obtained from the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of the Provost to send out the survey announcement, invitation and reminders to the 46,000+ students, faculty and staff using the university’s official e-mail listservs. An additional announcement including the survey link was distributed via the university’s daily email announcement service and was provided on the Libraries homepage. To facilitate and encourage survey participation, the survey form was made available in print form and was handed out at several remote locations used to promote the survey. The data from the print forms were entered via a separate survey form link provided for that specific purpose. In the early days of the LibQUAL+® survey, the instrument was advertised as “21 items and a box”. This paper examines what our Libraries learned from the “box”.

Our most recent survey effort resulted in valid survey responses (n=981) almost doubling the responses collected (n=442) in the prior (2008) iteration. Over half of the respondents (n=546) took the time to provide a comment after completing the quantitative portion of the instrument. The comments were captured separately from the quantitative data along with the following respondents’ demographic data: position (i.e., student, faculty, staff), gender, age group, discipline area and most frequently used library. Seven of the respondents
did not provide demographic information by which their comments could be further analyzed. This particular analysis will focus on the Green Library, Hubert Library, and Engineering Library Services (ELS). Unlike the medical and law libraries, these three libraries focus their services on our undergraduate population, as well as our graduate students. After removing the comments pertaining to the Medical Library, a sample of $n=516$ comments were analyzed.

Looking at the comments by library branch, the majority of the comments were made by users who frequent the Green Library (409), the next largest group of comments were given by users who frequent Hubert Library (95) followed by users of ELS (7).

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Comments by Classification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Number (n=516)</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct Faculty</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Academic Status</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Doctoral</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Masters</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Non-Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate: Non-Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate: First year</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate: Second year</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate: Third year</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate: Fourth year</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate: Fifth year</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Staff</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff other</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic data is also presented alongside the comments, so that we can ascertain, university affiliation (i.e., student, faculty, staff), gender, age group, discipline area and most frequently used library. It seems that students were more likely to take the time to share a comment. The table above shows that the comments might be skewed more towards upper level undergraduate (43.0%) and graduate students (27.0%). In particular, undergraduate third and fourth year students seemed to be more likely to share their opinions and comments than first and second year undergraduates. Faculty comments constituted 11.4% of the comments analyzed. The results of the analysis indicated that the comments are in direct alignment with the three dimensions measured by the survey: library as place, affect of service, and information control.

**Library as Place**

There were quite a number of comments related to the aesthetics, comfort, accommodation level and cleanliness of the Libraries facilities. The student population at FIU is predominantly commuter based and the student centers on our campuses either lack the space or comfortable accommodations to satisfy the students’ group or individual study needs in between classes. As a result, in addition to being a sanctuary for research and study, the Libraries have become social centers for our students. This is particularly evident on our Modesto Maidique Campus.

A 2011 in-house study conducted by Special Projects Librarian Nancy Hershoff showed how dire the need is for expanding our libraries to accommodate
the exponential growth of our student enrollment.\(^1\) Hershoff tallied the current seating capacity (including computer seats) as 806 seats in Green Library (GL) and 439 seats in Hubert Library (HL). In contrast, our gate counts indicate that an average 3,000+ people visit GL and 500+ visit HL on a daily basis; in other words we have more visitors than seats. More people in the building has equated to more noise and more food and detritus. The growing number of students flocking to the libraries has led to overcrowded buildings, insufficient spaces for quiet and collaborative study, and a need for additional furniture. It has also led to building infrastructure challenges, which include keeping the facility clean (e.g., carpet and bathrooms) regulating inside air temperature, and the excessive wear and tear of the buildings, which are in desperate need of renovations.

**Hubert Library Makeover and Renovation**

What came across quite clearly in the comments pertaining to the Hubert Library building was that it is in dire need of a renovation and make over. Users commented on the depressing and uninviting atmosphere of the HL. For example,

“...the facilities are [sic] BBC are horrendous and totally uninviting[sic]. Who wants to study in a library where there is not sufficient seating, broken down study stations, dirty carpet and depressing surroundings...”\(^2\)

“The North Campus Library needs to be updated. It is a throw-back [sic] to the 80’s. It looks like the furniture was picked up at different garage sales.”\(^3\)

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\(^2\) Comment by a 31-45 year old female staff member who is a frequent user of Green Library.

\(^3\) Comment by a 31-45 year old female Masters student in Social Sciences/Psychology who is a frequent user of Hubert Library.
“I use the North Miami BBC lib. The people are very helpful. The building carpet, is dirty & ugly.”

“H.L. needs a make-over!”

These comments are very self-explanatory and are unfortunately representative of many of the comments pertaining to the HL building and facilities.

Quiet Spaces

As noted previously, the library is a high traffic area and for most students it is still the place of choice to engage in either individual or group study. Unfortunately, the excessive noise and other disturbances have deterred a number of students and faculty from using the library. One respondent writes,

“The Library needs more quiet study areas ... These spaces are completely filled so often that I don’t even try to go there anymore, which is a shame. The library is where I did most of my studying at Penn State.”

Others lament,

“The noise level and crowded areas of the Green Library are awful. Way too many students make the library an area for socializing, which results in noise levels that are too high (even on so-called quiet floors) and tables/work areas taken up by socializing students when other students (such as myself) would like to use them for work. For this reason, I avoid the library as much as possible when I want to work and only go there to check out materials. This year is even worse than last. Looking for a place to do quiet work in the library is a frustrating experience even before the search begins.”

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4 Comment by a 46-65 year old female Graduate student in Humanities who is a frequent user of Hubert Library.
5 Comment by a 31-45 year old female Library Staff member who is a frequent user of Hubert Library.
6 Comment by a 31-45 years old female Doctoral student in Science/Math who is a frequent user of Green Library.
7 Comment by a 31-45 years old male Master’s level student in the Humanities who is a frequent user of Green Library.
“…we need more study space. It is not fun sitting in the library and studying anymore when there is no room. Some people general[sic] do not know how to use the library.”

“The library is too loud. It does not provide a good place to study.”

There is a strong sense of shared frustration concerning the lack of quiet study spaces. However, used the opportunity to help the Libraries by offering solutions as to how to better utilize library space. For example,

“Don’t mix group study areas with individual study areas. A table with more than 1 chair is an open invitation for unfocused undergraduates to socialize and make noise. Give them their own space with lots of tables & chairs, but NOT on the quiet floors. Limit quiet floors to single seating spaces. This will promote QUIET.”

There was also a call by students and teaching faculty for policy enforcement by library staff that would result in some sort of consequence. One undergraduate student writes,

“I would like to see loud students on quiet floors be escorted off the floor by library staff…”

Another student expresses,

“The rules of quiet floors need to be implemented more. Too often I am depending on the quiet floors to give me a place to focus on my school work but I am forced to get up and move because groups of people are carried away chatting and creating a distraction.”

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8 Comment by an 18-22 year old female third year student in Business who is a frequent user of Green Library.
9 Comment by a 23 – 30 year old female doctoral student in Agriculture/Environmental Studies who is a frequent user of Green Library.
10 Comment by a 46-65 year old male doctoral student in the Humanities who is a frequent user of Green Library.
11 Comment by a 23-30 year old female fourth year student in Science/Math who frequents the Green Library.
12 Comment by an 18-22 year old female second year student in Science/Math who frequents the Green Library.
There essence of these comments and more were requests for “a more strict policy” concerning the quiet study floors, because as one respondent states, “the few noisy people ruin it for everyone.”

Although students tend to be the first and foremost consideration for us when it comes to working or studying conditions in the library, faculty should not be left out of this user population as well. It seems that faculty share the same perceptions. One faculty member shares why he does not use the library and his thoughts about establishing a “culture of quiet” in the library,

“... The ... biggest obstacles for my use of the library is the noise on practically every floor... I don't know whose responsibility it ought to be to create a culture of quiet, but it needs to be done to make the library an effective place of study.”

Because of the extreme difference in traffic patterns, the majority of the comments concerned Green Library but Hubert Library shares some of the same challenges although perhaps not from the same population of library users, as one student notes,

“...Too many homeless people are around. People talk too loud on cell phones and there are no signs advising against talking on cell phones.”

The following comment summarizes quite nicely, the issue of space in general at both libraries even though it is focused on the Green Library,

“Wonderful staff and modern building. The problem is that we keep getting more students at FIU, and the library isn't getting any bigger.

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13 Comment by an 18-22 year old male third year student in Science/Math who frequents the Green Library.
14 Comment by a 31 – 45 year old male faculty lecturer in Social Sciences/Psychology who frequents the Green Library.
15 Comment by an 18-22 female fourth year student in the Health Sciences who frequents the Hubert Library.
At any given day during peak hours, I need to wander through several floors just to find a seat. The chances of that seat having an outlet nearby are very slim indeed. I recommend doing a study to compare Green library usage with the norm across universities in the US. I think you’ll find that our library has usage well above the second standard deviation. Too many people, not enough space.”

The observation of “too many people, not enough space” also has implications for the safety of the building occupants as is pointed out by the following respondents who state,

“The library feels cramped all the time. Whenever I have been at the library during a fire drill, it has taken me 20 minutes to get out because of all the people in the small stairwells…”

Another respondent raises a concern about the safety of students who study in the library into the late night hours. She points out there is no other facility on campus besides the library that is open late and provides students with a safe space to study.

“…our campus lacks a study area for students that is open 24 hours a day. Although it is unreasonable to request the library open 24-hours, I do think it would be feasible to keep the first floor open for those who need to study overnight. I often find myself working at school until the early hours of the morning. To be honest, I don't feel safe. I know many people in the same position and realize how necessary it is for students to have somewhere to go at that time.”

The need to address the timely evacuation of people from Green Library in an emergency situation is especially acute. It is particularly challenging when there are emergency fire drills during peak service hours when the library is bursting at the seams. The library faculty and staff members evacuating the floors find it difficult to effectively

16 Comment by 23-30 year old male third year student in Social Sciences/Psychology who is a frequent user of Green Library.
17 Comment by a 23-30 year old male Masters student in Education who is a frequent user of Green Library.
18 Comment by an 18-22 year old female fifth year student in Social Sciences/Psychology who is a frequent user of Green Library.
and efficiently disburse students who are reluctant to vacate the building. The crowding into the main stairwells, as people rush to these familiar points of exits forgoing all other exit stairwells tends to result in throngs of people clogging the main stairwells slowing down the exiting from the building.

**Furniture**

As previously noted by one of the respondents, the type and placement of furniture can make a significance difference in the use of space. Experience and now our users have taught us that by cloistering single student study carrels in specific areas of our floors leads to a sense of quiet study in that particular area. Placing tables in a particular section of the library floor tends to facilitate a sense of group or collaborative study. More often than not, the comments pertaining to furniture was accompanied comments about the need for quiet or group study, the lack of available seating in the library and to the respondents’ sense of comfort and aesthetics. The following drive home this point,

“...the last few weeks of school, I can never find any free space in the library. Sometimes many students including me have to sit on the floor of the library since there is no space available. If this could be solved by either providing more study desks or opening a new library or study area on the main campus it would be great!”

“...More tables, desks, carrels etc. Too often the only time to find a place to sit and study is during off hours. Usually have to wander the different floors before getting lucky and finding a place to sit.”

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19 Comment by 23-30 year old female fourth year student in Humanities who is frequent user of Green Library.

20 Comment by a 31-45 year old female Masters student in Humanities who is a frequent user of Green Library.
“Need more comfy chairs. That[sic] all! 😊”21

“Please put more seats for students!”22

“More study tables would be great!”23

However, it is not simply tables and chairs that the students ask for, but that these pieces of furniture be situated near outlets.

Outlets

Many of the comments regarding furniture lamented the lack of outlets on the various floors of Green Library. We circulate quite a number of electronics including laptops, iPads, ereaders, etc., which require a power source once the battery has drained. Providing more outlets in a building requires the consideration of various infrastructure factors, such as sufficient electrical capacity on each floor in the building to accommodate the usage and expanding electrical capacity by adding a new transformer which is costly.

The outlets and electrical issues are more acute in Green Library than Hubert Library at this point. A recent window upgrade and building construction project included the installation of additional outlets along the outer walls of the 2nd and 3rd floors of the Hubert Library. Therefore, the comments regarding outlets were mainly from respondents who used the Green Library.

“ There are not enough tables and chairs. I always have a hard time finding long tables to study on. I also hate that there are not enough outlets...”24

21 Comment by an 18-22 year old fourth year female student in Business who is a frequent user of Green Library.
22 Comment by an 18-22 year old second year female student in Business who is a frequent user of Green Library
23 Comment by an 18-22 year old third year female student in Business who is a frequent user of Green Library.
“Need more electrical outlets.”

“There aren’t enough supplied electrical outlets to support all students in the building, regardless of floor and occupation.”

“An update of furniture is also definitely in order, as well as additional power outlets.”

“I wish there were more power outlets or longer extensions cords.”

This last comment refers to the extension cords that the libraries circulate, so that students can plug into a nearby outlet from a short distance. This service has resulted in many students daisy chaining extension cords as they take advantage of the nearest wall based power source from a distance.

The participants made their feelings quite clear about the need for renovating and upgrading the Hubert Library as well as making more space available at Green Library. Both libraries have limited seating, but the need for available seating is more severe at Green Library, since it also houses tenants from external academic programs and departments on its various floors. Finding a seat seems to be extremely challenging for our students and faculty at the Green Library and has deterred many would-be frequent library from using the library as a result.

Compounding the space issue is the noise generated by the numerous students who study in the library. Currently, as one respondent observed our

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24 Comment by a 23 – 30 year old female third year student in Business who is a frequent user of Green Library.
25 Comment by a 23 – 30 year old female fifth year+ student in Health Sciences who is a frequent user of Green Library.
26 Comment by an 18 – 22 year old male first year student in Social Sciences/Psychology who is a frequent user of Green Library.
27 Comment by a 31 – 45 year old female fifth year+ student in Social Sciences/Psychology who is a frequent user of Green Library.
28 Comment by an 18 – 22 year old female first year student in Science/Math who is a frequent user of Green Library.
mixture of quiet study and group study furniture has exacerbated noise problems on the quiet floors. This is something that can easily be remedied by replacing the tables on the quiet floors with study carrels as much as possible. With this done, the library may experience a marked decrease of student complaints about noise on our quiet floors.

**Affect of Service**

Perhaps the single most determinant of a users’ perception of the quality of service they received is the attitude and manner with which the library staff member responds to their needs. The respondents’ comments regarding their expectations and perceptions of service indicated their overall satisfaction with the Libraries’ service quality in this area. However, the data surfaces suggestions for additional services, as well as a strong interest in having the Libraries promote more awareness of their services and collections.

The prevailing sentiment seemed to be that the respondents were satisfied with the service they received from the library staff.

“The people are great....”29

“I think the FIU library and its staff are splendid...”30

“I really like going to the front counter (lib ref). They provide a great deal of information and show me how to access sources online...”31

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29 Comment by a 46-65 year old female Masters student in Education who is a frequent user of Green Library.
30 Comment by a 65+ year old female faculty member in Social Sciences/Psychology who is a frequent user of Green Library.
31 Comment by a 23-30 year old female fourth year student in Education who is a frequent user of Green Library.
There were a number of compliments regarding the helpfulness and friendliness of the Hubert Library staff.

“All the BBC staff are wonderfully helpful and knowledgable[sic].”32

“The BBC library compared to the south campuses[sic] library caters to my needs more. The staff at BBC are more friendlier & willing to help.”33

“I love the BBC Library...”34

Despite the general acknowledgements regarding the attentiveness and helpfulness of the staff at BBC, one user considered how the difference in the usage level impacted the perception of service between the two libraries by saying,

“In general, service at the Hubert Library is better than at MMC but that seems to be primarily a function of the greater workload that MMC staff are dealing with....”35

This respondent makes a very salient point and it is should serve as the basis of any discussion that compares the levels of service quality and customer service between the various libraries, specifically between HL and GL. That being said, there seemed to be some concerns about the service provided by our student workers. The need to improve the customer service skills of student workers at Green Library was indicated in a few comments, such as the following.

“...A lot of the students who work in the Green Library do not care about their follow students and often give an attitude (or says [sic]

32 Comment by a 46-65 year old male faculty member in Business who is a frequent user of the Hubert Library.
33 Comment by a 18-22 year old female Masters student in Health Sciences who is a frequent user of the Hubert Library.
34 Comment by a 23-30 year old female third year student in “Other” discipline who is a frequent user of the Hubert Library.
35 Comment by a 31-65 year old female faculty member in Humanities who is a frequent user of the Hubert Library.
they just don’t know what you’re talking about) when someone asks them for help”\textsuperscript{36}

Most noteworthy was the respondents’ ability to put their expectations in perspective with what they perceived to be the Libraries’ operational constraints (e.g., budget).

“I have always been, and continue to be, impressed by the helpful competence of all library staff members encountered. I am aware of funding limitations on collection strength, but feel the library is pretty strong...”\textsuperscript{37}

“ I believe that employees make the effort to provide a high quality service, but the infrastructure of the library does not allow that in some areas this is not the best, and requires a level of investment that is not available to the employees.”\textsuperscript{38}

The majority of the respondents seemed to be appreciative of the services provided by library staff. Many provided the names of the staff members whom they felt provided them with outstanding service. Likewise, they had no problems with naming – or, as in one case describing - library staff members whom they felt needed additional customer service training. Because no one person was mentioned more than once it can be said that these were isolated incidents and should not be generalized to that person's overall service behavior.

It is important to take away from these comments that not only is providing accurate and timely information important, but providing it in a manner that is respectful and to recognize that some perceptions of library services are beyond the

\textsuperscript{36} Comment by an 18-22 year old female fourth year student in Performing & Fine Arts who is a frequent user of Green Library.

\textsuperscript{37} Comment by a 65+ year old male faculty member in Science/Math who is a frequent user of Green Library.

\textsuperscript{38} Comment by a 46 – 65 year old female Library staff member in Green Library.
scope of any individual employee and sometimes beyond that of the library or university administration as well.

New Services

The beauty of qualitative data is that it can spark new ideas or provide solutions to unresolved or unknown issues. The comments by the respondents served as a vehicle for gleaning ideas about new services or tweaking old ones to better meet their needs. For example, the following faculty members express their displeasure with the acquisitions process and provided something in the way of suggestions for improvement

“...the acquisitions strategies place far too much of the onus on the teaching faculty to request materials, rather than allowing us to tailor an acquisitions strategy and rely on the libraries to see it through.”

“Every time I've requested a new text (for acquisition), I get an auto-reply email response saying they've received the request. In my three years here I've never received, not once, a follow-up that the book was purchased or even investigated.”

Other library users offer the following ideas,

“Area with a PC are [sic] terribly deployed...they should have servers running virtual machines. The stations with screen acces[sic] NEVER WORK, and the instructions are POORLY put together. Since they are being run using a Mac...why not airplay?...”

“I think the library should collaborate with [sic] more with doctoral students, find out their areas of study and forward articles related to

39 Comment by a 31 – 45 year old male faculty member in the Humanities who frequents the Green Library.
40 Comment by a 31 – 45 year old female faculty member in Social Sciences/Psychology who frequents the Green Library.
41 Comment by a 31 – 45 year old male staff member designated “Other” who frequents the Green Library.
their areas of study to their e-mail. Not sure if this is asking too much ... 42

These suggestions offer the Libraries an opportunity to provide user informed services that are practical but ultimately serve to increase the efficiency of library operations.

*External Units in Libraries and Libraries Building*

There still remains some confusion as to what units are a part of the Libraries, and which are simply housed in the library building. This was illustrated by comments pertaining to the UTS presence in the library proper (2nd floor and above) and other units housed on the 1st floor of the library building (1st floor). For some, if the unit was housed in the library it was seen as a library service, for example

“ My biggest recommendation for improvement has to do [sic] the Faculty Resource Center, GL 150. It is cold and uninviting. That resource could be vastly improved. The CAT center, next door, is a 180 difference. There seems to be zero connection between the two, which is odd.” 43

Having a separate UTS service desk in the library proper and close to other library service points can present additional service perception challenges, such as the one recounted below.

“The print station at the computer lab on the second floor which is intended to be strictly print was not working...All [sic] other computers were taken up and I asked if one of three people who worked at the library could help. They said they did not know what was wrong with it and suggested I wait for a computer...They said I

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42 Comment by a 31 – 45 year old female staff Doctoral student in Health Sciences who frequents the Green Library.

43 Comment by a 31-45 year old female faculty member in Social Sciences/Psychology who is a frequent user of the Green Library.
had to wait for a computer. I found this to be very poor service as my issue was left up to me to resolve...”

This respondent thinks that the UTS desk support staff are library staff and because of this misperception his opinion of the library staff and services has been colored by his experience with UTS.

While these comments indicate that the respondents’ perceptions about the library staff and services are grounded in realistic expectations based on the context of the overall university, they indicate that additional work is necessary in order for us to meet their desired service quality expectations. The take away is that the quality of our face-to-face interactions need to be enhanced, we need to address service issues provided by non-library unites that have a presence in the library, such as UTS and we need to have a better handle on patrons’ service needs

*Marketing and Publicity*

A number of respondents indicated that the Libraries needed to do a better job of marketing and publicizing its services and collections in multiple formats, so that users would be more aware of what the Libraries had to offer. The following comments represent the overarching sentiment.

“The library could communicate more its news and initiatives. Individual staff could take turns writing social media posts about items [sic] and reviews in the library. Librarian could work with academics [sic] produce exhibits and increase collections. More talk and conferences could be given and staged [sic] at the library. Alumni and local authors could give talks.”

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44 Comment by a 23 – 30 year old male Masters student designated “Other” who frequents the Green Library.
45 Comment by a 31 – 45 year old male Doctoral student Social Sciences/Psychology who frequents the Green Library.
“...I also wish that all the services are listed on a poster board or something. I don’t always go online so I don’t become aware of everything offered in the library.”46

“Please give us more resource awareness!! Yay FIU!”47

Certainly, the Libraries could do a better job in promoting their services and resources – including its subject experts. Although we use Twitter, Facebook and a library blog to disseminate information, this is clearly not enough. Additional efforts have included the “Ask Us” marketing campaign implemented by the Information & Research Services Department. Despite these efforts, these comments suggest that the Libraries need to review and reconsider its marketing and publicity approaches incorporating not only the new wave social networking tools, but the old fashioned print efforts (i.e., student newspaper, posters, flyers, etc.) as well.

**Information Control**

The participants identified several obstacles that impacted their perceptions of the level of service within the dimension of information control. The dimension of information control includes such things as web site navigation/usability, convenient hours, access to information sources, comprehensive collections, etc. all of which were repeated to varying extents in the comments.

**Access to Resources**

In today’s information age, one would be hard pressed to find a library with online collections that totally satisfy its users’ insatiable need to have access to full-

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46 Comment by a 23 – 30 year old female fourth year student in Education frequents the Green Library.
47 Unidentified respondent. No demographic data provided.
text information. FIU Libraries’ users proved to be no different. One FIU respondent states, “as a researcher I would like limitless access to all journals...”48 There were multiple comments indicating gaps in our collections, which were more often than not offset by the respondents’ acknowledgement of successfully using ILL services to obtain the information needed.

Most often faculty respondents provided more detailed information about their information needs, or advocated for resources.

“There are several journals I would like to see make [sic] available that are currently only available for the past 15 years. I would like to see them available since inception – Contemporary Accounting Research and Accounting Organizations and Society.”49

“We need to continue to get electronic access to the major science journals such as Nature Chemical Biology.”50

Again respondents show their sensitivity concerning the budgetary challenges facing the library and the university. In the following comment, a faculty member self manages his expectations concerning electronic journal access given his knowledge of the university’s fiscal affairs.

“Given the budgetary situation, the Library is doing the best it can. Increased access to electronic journals is desirable, but not realistic at the moment.”51

48 Comment by a 46-65 year old female faculty member in Science/Math who frequents the Green Library.
49 Comment by a 31 – 45 year old female faculty member in Business who frequents the Green Library.
50 Comment by a 65+ year old male faculty member in Science/Math who frequents the Green Library.
51 Comment by a 46-65 year old male faculty member in Health Sciences who frequents the Green Library.
It was observed that students in the areas of Humanities and Science/Math tended to mention gaps in the collections for their respective disciplines most often.

*Technology*

As more and more information becomes available either digitally or electronically, emerging technologies have enabled us to expand how we disseminate information to our users. However, like electronic journals, there is never enough technology to satisfy our users.

“Need more computers...”52

“...we need more scanners...”54

“Air printing, more advanced equipments [sic] and more facilities are needed. Thanks.”55

A couple of noteworthy trends that were stranded throughout the technology comments were: a) the respondents typically referred to the circulation of equipment such as laptops and iPads as “rentals” and b) there were repeated comments about the poor “hygiene” of the equipment that they checked out. The former indicates that perhaps students look at the check out of a piece of equipment as similar to a commercial transaction. Many also indicated that a 3-hour loan

52 Comment by a 23 – 30 year old male Doctoral student Science/Math who frequents the Green Library.
53 Comment by an 18-22 year old female third year Engineering/ Computer Science who frequents the Green Library.
54 Comment by a 31-45 year old female Doctoral student Social Sciences/Psychology who frequents the Green Library.
55 Comment by a 23 – 30 year old female Masters student Science/Math who frequents the Green Library.
period for our circulating laptops was not enough time and suggested a 24-hour loan period instead, which may be more in alignment with a commercial transaction. The latter indicates that in addition to checking the condition of the equipment there is also a need to wipe each piece of equipment upon return as well.

**Library Website**

In the past few months, the Libraries have undergone a transition from one content management system to another (Drupal). In the process, the site has also been redesigned in an attempt to make it more intuitive to use when looking for information. From the comments of the participants, it seems the outcome of this process has made it even more difficult to access information using the Web site.

“The new library website is difficult to navigate and is not user friendly...”\(^{56}\)

“The website can be difficult to navigate. For example, renewing books online...to get to one’s personal account to do so...I’ve had to call a few times to figure out how to get there. It’s difficult.”\(^{57}\)

“I find the updated library webpage to be more difficult to navigate than the original site...”\(^{58}\)

Change is often difficult for people and a number of users wondered why the change to the library web site. This question prompted the thought that perhaps we could have done a better job of introducing the changeover in CMS and alerted our users of the upcoming changes in the site.

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\(^{56}\) Comment by a 46 – 65 year old female faculty in Health Sciences who is a frequent user of Green Library.

\(^{57}\) Comment by a 46 – 65 year old female adjunct faculty in Health Sciences who is a frequent user of Green Library.

\(^{58}\) Comment by a 31 – 45 year old female doctoral student in Social Sciences/Psychology who is a frequent user of Green Library.
The comments pertaining to technology can be viewed as justifying potential tweaks in our already robust offering of available technology.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It should be kept in mind that this interpretation of the qualitative data is totally separate from the quantitative survey data. Therefore it is hard to predict whether or not the quantitative data will have impact on what has been revealed thus far. There is still much more to explore with this data such as correlating the comments with age group, discipline area and status/affiliation. One could also approach the data is by correlating frequently used library by age group and comments. The results of this qualitative data do not surface any new concerns for the Libraries.

This data does substantiate the needs that the library administration has been advocating for in recent years, such as more space to accommodate additional seating and study areas for students, more faculty and staff to facilitate the information control that our users seek, and a review of library operations to address our workflows so that we can maximize the efforts of the staff for the service benefit of our users. If these needs were to be addressed before the next iteration of the survey, we might see a huge increase in our users’ perceived service quality average.