



staff news

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LibQUAL+ Q & A

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Why are we assessing service quality?

SUL is committed to providing expert user services in a highly user-centered environment. To effectively plan and manage our services, we need to engage our users to learn about their service needs.¹ We must also ask our users how well we are performing as information service providers. Since only users can judge the quality of services (that is, how well we are performing), we will use assessment to engage them and to learn how best to serve them.

What is LibQUAL+?

It is a standard survey instrument used to measure service quality across institutions. It is delivered on the Web and offers a comprehensive view of how library users perceive the quality of services offered.

Why use LibQUAL+?

LibQUAL+ has become the de facto standard for measuring the quality of library services. In its 2002 implementation, approximately 160 libraries participated. In 2003, 316 libraries have registered to participate. This important tool provides us with a tested and reliable means of engaging our users on the topic of service quality.

How does it measure service quality?

LibQUAL+ uses a method called "gap measurement." It asks library users what they will accept as minimum levels of service quality at one end, their maximum (desired) levels of quality at the other end, and their perception of where actual service quality lies within that continuum. The distance between minimum and desired levels of service quality is the "zone of tolerance," indicating the range of acceptable quality. The "gap" we seek to identify is the distance between desired and perceived service quality. It is here that we discover how close we come to meeting our user's desired level of service quality. The tool assigns numerical values to levels of service quality for numerous indicators of service activity (reference, stacks maintenance, ILL, public use technology, etc.). Thus, we will be able to measure the quality of services based on the numeric values our users assign to each service.

What measures of service quality are investigated?

LibQUAL+ measures four "dimensions" of service quality: Affect of Service (the human aspects of service interactions), Library as Place (the adequacy of the physical spaces that comprise the library), Personal Control (the ease with which users can independently carry out their information seeking), and Information Access (convenience, comprehensiveness of resources, and ease of acquiring information).

How will the information we learn be used?

The information we learn will help us understand which levels of service quality are important to our users. We can begin to target the desired levels of service quality our users indicate and organize our service activities to meet those quality (performance) goals. We are likely to focus improvement efforts on those service activities where significant "gaps" are discovered. Given the narrow range of values users can assign to their perceptions of service quality (0 to 9), a gap need not be very large to warrant our attention.

How will LibQUAL+ affect SUL?

As part of the user services assessment program we are developing, LibQUAL+ is intended to facilitate effective planning and decision-making. It is likely that some change will occur over time due to the information we learn from our users. The scope and organization of our services will evolve for this reason. We should expect new services to emerge. We should also expect adjustments in scheduling and staffing levels of existing services in order to support new ones and to address shifts in user demand. Rapid developments in information technology and the way library users approach research will continue to influence their needs and perceptions of service quality. If we are to be expert in providing user-centered services, we must work in an environment of continuous change. The changes ahead of us will be more manageable and beneficial to our users with the knowledge we'll obtain from LibQUAL+ and other assessment efforts.

What do we expect to learn about the quality of services in SUL?

We do not expect SUL to perform poorly in the 2003 LibQUAL+ survey. However, we should expect to learn that there is room for improvement in some areas. Among institutions that participated in the 2002 implementation, most scored within the "zone of tolerance" in most categories. Each library has to consider how much it needs to improve based on the "gap" between *perceived* and *desired* service quality. In some instances, that "gap" may be larger than a library should accept if providing high quality service is its goal.

Will SUL staff be able to participate in the survey?

Yes. Library staff is among the user groups that comprise the SU community.

When will LibQUAL+ take place?

The survey will be conducted during three weeks in March or April 2003.

Denise Stephens, AUL for Public Services

1. Context is derived from relevant sections of *Targets for Transformation: A Strategic Plan for the Syracuse University Library 2000-2005*. Rev. 2002.

In Brief

... news about our staff



Jan Fleckenstein, Associate Director of the H. Douglas Barclay Law Library at the College of Law, has been appointed to the American Association of Law Libraries' ABA Standards for Academic Law Libraries Task Force. The task force will review the existing American Bar Association standards for academic law libraries, and recommend appropriate changes that reflect the changing nature of law libraries in the digital age to the ABA Law Libraries Committee of the ABA Section on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar.

The Holiday Spirit

Thanks to a notice in the campus *Hotnews* in late October, and an overwhelming "yes" vote at the division's meeting, the Bibliographic Services Division has participated in the "Holiday Sharing Program" for a local needy family. Through a University-wide organizing committee, any school, college, or department may choose to participate.

The people in BSD took on a family of five: a young mother and her four children. Food was collected to provide a holiday meal. They also provided extra food and pantry items, paper products, and toiletries. In mid-November, BSD was also given a gift wish list for each family member, and bought clothing for the mother, and toys and clothing for each of the children. Some people bought the gifts themselves, and others contributed money, so that holiday elves could go out and buy-buy-buy. Rumors have it that certain elves had great fun getting the toys.

Everything was picked up in mid-December for delivery to the families in time for the "Big Day." Thus the true meaning of the holidays, that of giving, has been fulfilled, and all BSD staff feel really good about that. Perhaps your department will want to participate next year and get the same good feelings.

Frank Forward, Bibliographic Services Division

United Way Raffle Winners

Congratulations to the following Library United Way pledge card donors whose names were drawn in a recent University-wide United Way raffle:

Mary Hess: Gift certificate for a decorated half-sheet cake from the campus bakeshop

Gurnek Singh: Set of four sandstone coasters

Barbara Opar: Maureen Waters' book *Crossing Highbridge, A Memoir of Irish America*

Peter Graham: A Tennity ice skating pass and free skate rental

Mary Decarlo: \$5 gift certificate for Carrier Dome concessions

The following people received 2 tickets to SU basketball games: Lydia Wasylenko, Barbara Jackson, Kelly Lasher, August Teska, Ann Horan, Mamie Procks, Terry Belzak, Martha Hanson, Carol Cavalluzzi, Isabella Arezzo, Carolyn Davis, Robert Wagner, Nicole Morrissette, and Natasha Cooper.

Thanks, again, to all SUL staff who made a pledge this year in support of United Way. And a special thanks to those who contributed in many other ways throughout the campaign!

Cynthia Needham, Reference Department



Brian McLaughlin, BSD, approaches the front of the 1916 Room to accept his 30-year service pin and the University Librarian's congratulations.

Staff Honored at Annual Holiday Party

On Thursday, December 19 in the 1916 Room, staff members celebrated the holiday season and congratulated fellow employees for their milestone years of University service. Through the efforts of Special Events Committee members Carol Cavalluzzi, Gloria McGarry, Ann McDonald, Cynthia Needham, and especially Nancy Cohen, staff members enjoyed the celebration tremendously.

The following staff members received service pins, although a few were unable to attend the party:

5 Years

Dawn Havill
Barbara Jackson
Abby Kasowitz-Scheer
Suzanne Preate
Elizabeth Wallace
Yuxin Yang

15 Years

Tom House
Kim Thompson

25 Years

David Jensen
Peg Leonard
Mark Weimer

10 Years

David Balfourt

30 Years

Brian McLaughlin

Personnel News

Jennifer Packard began in the Media Services Department on December 3 as a library assistant.

On January 2, **Bonnie Ryan** returned to the Reference Department from a leave of absence.

Marie Swearingen left SUL on November 20 to take a position with the library at Vanderbilt University.

Reference Department Says Farewell to Two Members

On Wednesday, December 18 in the 1916 Room, the Reference Department held their holiday party and said one final goodbye and good luck to both Darle Doran and Diane Holbert. In the two following articles, Darle and Diane express their feelings at moving on.

A Different Work Environment at SUL Brings New Challenges

Seven years ago in October, as a burnt-out veteran of the Migrant Educational Outreach Program, I joined the Circulation staff here at ES Bird Library, working 4 to midnight. I was an academic-year employee, which means that, in the summer, I kept working by cleaning student apartments on South Campus. After finishing my first summer cleaning, I took the first full-year position that opened up, which happened to be in Reserves and Current Periodicals.

Always intellectually curious, and frustrated teacher that I was (my degree is in secondary education), reference work really appealed to me. So in April 1998, I joined Reference when Anastasia Tarmann went on maternity leave and manned the Reference Desk evenings for more than four years.

While late night reference has been challenging and very gratifying, making the move to MGI works for me in some very important ways. I've studied government information sources and legal resources, and MGI offers an opportunity to grow and develop my skills. Also, the mix of job duties will be valuable to me in the future. Finally, I've worked the late shift for 6 of the last 7 years, and I need a more normal life.

Darle Doran, Maps and Government Information Department

SUL - A Stepping Stone to Fulfilling a Strong Vocational Call

Some of life's endeavors are long lasting, others we remember by their brevity. After only eight months at SUL – barely an initiation period for such a big and complex working environment – I was just beginning to really get to know some of you folks around here, and was beginning to grow quite fond of some of you! I also started my graduate work here in Library and Information Science. Then suddenly, as God would have it, I was offered a position at a place that has been near and dear to my heart for seven years – Cayuga Community College. My position at CCC will be “Instructional Assistant” in the Learning Resources Center. At the LRC, the library staff, the coordinator of services for students with disabilities, the technology staff, and various faculty members work as a collaborative team to provide support and options for students with special needs.

My new station will be at the Fulton Center, the regional extension of the main campus in Auburn. Regional campuses represent the American community college's mission to reach every person who dreams of a college education. Regional campuses grew out of the community college vision to be a source of empowerment for an untapped potential student body that would attend classes only if they were available in their home districts.

I think it is fair to say that the millions of students who have had to deal with serious life challenges would not have been granted equal access to education had it not been for the dedicated mission of the American community college. The community college provides educational opportunities for people from all walks of life, even those who cannot afford to pay tuition.

If I were to guess what the single most important social value for a community college student might be, I would say “upward mobility.” It is the privilege and the awesome responsibility of the community college staff and faculty to promote social and economic justice by advocating for challenged and disadvantaged students on a daily basis. Higher education has come to recognize not only the potential, but also the actual positive results of a community college education through the life-changing experiences of community college students. At CCC, I get to join forces with educators and librarians who empower students to go forth and realize their dreams.

It is with mixed feelings that I say “So long” to the many wonderful people I have met here, as I look forward to becoming a community college librarian. Thanks to all who have been an encouragement to me and made me feel welcomed here.

Diane Holbert, Reference Department



Diane Holbert, left, and Darle Doran, right, enjoy the luncheon and the farewells provided for them at the Reference Department's holiday party.

Below, Suzanne Preate, another dedicated Reference staff member, worked as she partied.



Syracuse University Library Receives Funding for Map Conservation

Syracuse University Library recently received word that 300 deteriorating United States Geographical Survey (USGS) 1:62,500 (15') topographic maps from the Library's Department of Maps and Government Information will be conserved. The conservation of these maps is made possible by a cooperative preservation grant project (2002-2004) funded by the Coordinated Grant Program of the New York State Program for the Conservation/Preservation of Library Research Materials.

Sponsored by Columbia University Library, project participants include the libraries at Cornell, SUNY at Buffalo, SUNY at Stony Brook, Syracuse University, and the University of Rochester. Syracuse University Library will receive approximately \$20,646 of the total \$137,640 funded by the state.

John Olson, Maps/GIS Librarian, will serve as the on-site manager for Syracuse, and will select, organize, and oversee the preparation of the maps for shipping, and will provide a visual quality review for the maps upon their return. In addition, John will increase access to our state level series maps by providing cataloging at the sheet level. His cataloging effort will be a substantial national contribution to sheet level cataloging of the USGS 1:62,500 (15') topographic maps for New York State, since very few (less than 1%) have been cataloged on OCLC.

Please contact John Olson (jaolson/x4818) or Marty Hanson (mjhanson/x1947) if you would like additional information about this important project.

Marty Hanson, Preservation Department

Sci Tech Averts Damage



Right, Donia Conn compresses a waterlogged book during the disaster workshop held in the Hillyer Room in December. John Olson, MGI, and Angela Williams, MLK Library, complete their preservation attempts also. Above is an example of the prepared disaster supplies that were pressed into service when the New Year brought major water leaks at the Science and Technology Library. Thanks to the quick actions of a team well prepared to handle such calamities, major damage was averted. SUL extends special thanks to Susan Berteaux, Elizabeth Wallace, Bevan Angier, Caroline Liquori, Marty Hanson and Peter Verheyen, who proved once again that practice makes perfect.



Access to two of *Congressional Quarterly's* core public affairs resources expanded this fall, with the addition of online access to the *CQ Researcher* database and *CQ Weekly*. Both services are now accessible on and off-campus via SUL's Databases Main Menu.

CQ Researcher is a public policy encyclopedia that issues over 44 wide-ranging topical reports each year. *CQ Weekly* provides a week-by-week nonpartisan view of events in the U.S. Congress. For instance, visit *CQ Weekly* to track the status of major legislation or review floor votes. Turn to *CQ Researcher* for in-depth, encyclopedia-style overviews, organizational contacts, and pro/con commentary touching on diverse policy disputes. Recent coverage includes: Confronting Iraq, The Future of Amtrak, Living Wage Movements, Teaching Math, and Science and Food Safety.

Michael Pasqualoni, Reference Department



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