Dealing with the Noise Problem:
Libraries Improving their LibQUAL Scores on “Quiet Space for Individual Work”

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#pm10
Research conducted by:

Michelle Breen & Ciara McCaffrey
Administration Department
Glucksman Library
University of Limerick
Ireland
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating Mean</th>
<th>Rating SD</th>
<th>Rating CV</th>
<th>Rating Max</th>
<th>Rating Min</th>
<th>Rating Mean of Total Sample</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AS-6 Library staff who deal with users in a caring fashion</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-0.72</td>
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<td>AS-7 Library staff who understand the needs of their users</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>7.76</td>
<td>6.71</td>
<td>0.27</td>
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<td>1.039</td>
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<td>AS-8 Willingness to help users</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>6.91</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>-0.93</td>
<td>1.041</td>
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<td>AS-9 Dependability in handling users' service problems</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>7.77</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>-0.95</td>
<td>0.995</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Information Control</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>IC-1 Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>8.19</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-1.90</td>
<td>1.034</td>
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<td></td>
<td>IC-2 A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>8.03</td>
<td>6.68</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-1.35</td>
<td>1.053</td>
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<td>IC-3 The printed library materials I need for my work</td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>6.21</td>
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<td>IC-4 The electronic information resources I need</td>
<td>6.58</td>
<td>7.96</td>
<td>6.53</td>
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<td>-1.44</td>
<td>1.038</td>
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<td>IC-5 Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>8.17</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>-1.54</td>
<td>1.040</td>
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<td>IC-6 Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>8.02</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-1.36</td>
<td>1.042</td>
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<td>IC-7 Making information easily accessible for independent use</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>7.98</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-1.31</td>
<td>1.033</td>
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<td>IC-8 Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>-1.67</td>
<td>0.997</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Library as Place</strong></td>
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<td>LP-1 Library space that inspires study and learning</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>8.02</td>
<td>5.74</td>
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<td>LP-2 Quiet space for individual work</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>7.98</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>-1.15</td>
<td>-2.56</td>
<td>1.016</td>
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<td>LP-3 A comfortable and inviting location</td>
<td>6.31</td>
<td>7.78</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>-1.13</td>
<td>1.043</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LP-4 A haven for study, learning, or research</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>7.97</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>-0.46</td>
<td>-1.99</td>
<td>1.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LP-5 Space for group learning and group study</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>7.31</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-1.37</td>
<td>0.956</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>7.85</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-1.35</td>
<td>1.063</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A familiar story?

Comments relating to noise:

• I basically use the library to study, so when other people are talking or making noise it is very distracting. Maybe there should be someone walking around once in a while to make sure everyone is staying quiet.

• Please put "Please be quiet" signs around the library. The library is way too noisy! Thanks!

• There should be more tables (where possible). Other than that, the library is a great place to study, especially on the second floor where it's usually, and supposed to be, quiet.
WE ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS

http://theresurgence.com/2013/02/11/we-are-not-alone-in-this
WE CANNOT SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS WITH THE SAME THINKING WE USED WHEN WE CREATED THEM

Albert Einstein
literature
lit reviews
references
scholarly
theses
dissertations
reviews
articles
citations
2012 = -0.39

2007 = -1.15
# Zoning is in place in the Library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZONE</th>
<th>Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOYER</strong></td>
<td>Please proceed quickly through this area to minimise disturbances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SILENT ZONES</strong></td>
<td>Silent zones are on floors 1 and 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Absolute silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No talking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Silent phone use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No noise from headphones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No eating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>•Laptops on silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>QUIET ZONES</strong></td>
<td>Quiet zones are on all floors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Short whispered communication only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Silent phone use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No noise from headphones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No hot food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>•Laptops on silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No congregating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GROUP STUDY ZONES</strong></td>
<td>Group study zones are on the ground floor. Individual group study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rooms may be booked at security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quiet conversations only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Silent phone use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No hot food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHONE ZONES</strong></td>
<td>Phone zones are in the toilets, photocopy room and back stairwells.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You may have quiet phone conversations here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each zone is clearly marked by signs entering the area. Desks signs are also in place to mark the different zones.
Floor 2
Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, Education

100 Philosophy
150 Psychology
200 Religion
300 Social Sciences
310 Statistics
320 Politics
327 International Affairs
330 Economics
340 Law
350 Public Administration
360 Social Policy
368 Insurance
370 Education
400 Language
650 Business
657 Accountancy
658 Management
700 Art
720 Architecture
780 Music
790 Recreational & Performing Arts
800 Literature & Writing
910 Geography
930 Archaeology
940 History
SILENT DESKS

- Absolute silence
- No talking
- Silent phone use
- No noise from headphones

- No eating
- Laptops on silent
- No group work

Report excessive noise to security or library staff
Postgraduate Area
Shush! Library noise monitor hired

Even in the run up to exams the Glucksman Library in UL will be a haven of peace and tranquillity for stu-

Donal O’Reagan

UL students won’t have any studying to be done to exams as a library noise monitor will ensure silence it

The Glucksman Library received over 20 applications in their job advert looking to recruit a monitor to help manage noise.

More students busy talking, texting or tweeting instead of taking their studies seriously?

On the contrary, says Mairead Reen, library administrator.

Mr Reen says a noise monitor is one of many interventions that UL Library has introduced over the years to improve customer satisfaction with noise levels.

The library becomes a hive of activity coming up to Christmas and summer exams. Students are extremely busy and serious demand.

Library staff and security staff patrol the library to ensure that students are complying

with our noise policy.

“We are introducing a distinctive blue tablet that identifies him as the noise monitor and he gets very good co-operation from students.”

“Different noise monitors are used in other libraries internationally and the idea is based on the principle of student peers managing their own noise levels,” said Ms Reen.

When the pressure is on and you are cramming for exams these are few things as annoying as a person chatting on their phone.

One of the monitors’ roles is to ensure mobile phones are set to silent mode and that there is no talking on phones.

The Glucksman Library is one of the most busy used spaces on campus. Almost one million people enter the library every year.

With 15,000 UL students the library has a diverse range of users with many different needs. Students come to the library to borrow books, go on-line, complete assignments, do group work and study silently when they need to.

“Virtually all modern libraries have faced the challenge of providing different spaces for different types of accommodation and large numbers, while providing quiet spots for those who want it,” explained Ms Reen.

She and her colleagues have made a number of improvements in recent years including installing lighting, installing desks for students and relaxing service desks away from waiting areas to the already busy ground floor.

“Most recently we opened two new spaces in the building according to the students’ needs people make of libraries,” she explains,

“Almost 1 million people enter the library every year.”

SILENT DESKS

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research

1. serious study to discover new facts or new ideas; the process of investigating a subject, that is, doing research into a subject.

student, lab, information, research.
In reverse order, from least to most common

- Penalise noise offenders, i.e. mobile phone fines, loss of library privileges (2/13)
- Create a post graduate reading room (3/13)
- Noise texting/emailing service (3/13)
- Study carrels/study rooms for individual use (4/13)
- Have noise patrollers (staff or student) (3 of 4 are student patroller) (4/13)
- Staff badges that facilitate patrolling, shushing (4/13)
- Rearrange zones, furniture, collections, service points to make best use of naturally quiet/noisy areas (5/13)
In reverse order, from least to most common

- Run noise campaigns to raise awareness (6/13)
- Structural / fixtures alterations e.g. glassing off, installing doors, carpeting, acoustics, access control, etc. (6/13)
- Highlight importance of quiet to library staff +/- issue guidelines +/- provide training (7/13)
- Increase noise-specific signage (7/13)
- Policies on noise, zones, rules, phones (create/update/publish) (11/13)
- Have designated silent AND group areas (11/13)
“to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield”

Alfred Tennyson
Acknowledgements:

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Thank you to you Martha & Gary for the ARL data.

Glucksman Library images courtesy of the UL Digital Library.
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