

# Report comparing the UTS experience with client surveys using Rodski in 2003 and the LibQUAL+ Survey 2004 for CAUL September 2004

## Summary

Since 2001, UTS has conducted three Library Client Surveys, using the Rodski Behavioural Research Group surveys in 2002 and 2003, and the LibQUAL+ survey in 2004. This report compares experiences with the two products. UTS found that LibQUAL+ provided a better measure of services, a more reliable methodology, and was better value for money. A better response rate was also achieved by using an online survey with a direct email approach.

## About the survey

Rodski is essentially a behavioural research company which develops its own surveys. LibQUAL+ was developed by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in the USA. Both surveys were designed to be conducted by individual institutions and also to have benchmarking capabilities with like institutions. LibQUAL+ must be conducted during a controlled time period. Rodski could be conducted at any time through the year which provides increased flexibility but this lack of time control may introduce seasonal differences in activity levels and service needs which could become significant when using the data for benchmarking with others.

## 1. Categories

- a. Rodski focused on 5 categories:
  - Communication
  - Service Quality
  - Service Delivery
  - Facilities and Equipment
  - Library Staff
- b. LibQUAL+ focused on 3 categories:
  - Affect of Service
  - Information Control
  - Library as Place

## 2. Statements (variables) and scales

Both surveys supplied standard statements with some options for customisation.

- a. Rodski had 38 statements and the option to include up to 15 local service quality assessment statements which clients were asked to rate twice – firstly to measure the **importance** of each of the statements to them, and secondly to measure their impression of the library's **performance** on each statement. These were scaled 1-7, with 7 being the most favourable. There were two comments boxes at the end of the survey – one for general comments and one for “the one area we could improve on to assist you”?
- b. LibQUAL+ had 22 standard statements and the option to select five local service quality assessment statements. For each of which the client was asked to rate three times – for the **minimum**, **desired** and **perceived** levels of service quality. These were all scaled 1-9, with 9 being the most favourable. There was an open ended comments box about library services in general.

*See Appendix 1 for the actual statements used.*

## 3. What did they measure and report on?

### Adequacy

The two surveys measured similar, but subtly different “gaps”. Both surveys measured an adequacy gap. Rodski measured the gap between the importance and the performance score of each variable. It might be claimed that this gap is being calculated between scores on two opposed scales. Something can be very important but respondents might have a much lower expectation of performance. Rodski interpreted (and reported on) gaps of two or above as “significant” on this 7 point scale. (See Alex Byrne's paper to CAUL April 2003 for a fuller critique of Rodski technique). LibQUAL+ measured the gap between the minimum score and the perceived score for each statement.

They did not attempt to interpret the results for each individual institution, but gave general guidelines and some basic aids such as highlighting negative adequacy gaps in red.

#### *Importance*

Rodski flagged items where the importance was greater than 6 out of a possible 7, and listed the top 10. They also reported on the least important.

#### *Performance*

Rodski reported on the top 10 performing variables and the lowest 10 performing variables. They were firstly compared with the previous year's highest and lowest results for the institution (*if the survey has been run more than once*). It was noted if any of these were in the top 10 most important list and then compared with other libraries which have performed the survey and rated them in the "top" or "bottom" 50% of the whole group.

LibQUAL+ did not address these areas specifically but gave overall means and standard deviations for each question. After all the surveys were closed, norms were provided for the three sections – ie affect of service, etc - from all other participants (in the category of "university or college"). Each participant was given access to the notebooks of all other participants in the same period. It was up to the participating institution to extract their own comparisons.

#### **4. The Reports**

The report from Rodski was 25 pages in length, with a further 263 pages of appendices. The appendices included :

- ❖ Response statistics
- ❖ Overall scores
- ❖ Results by Library – separately for each campus\*
- ❖ Results by Category – separately for each category ie undergraduate, staff etc\*
- ❖ Results by Faculty – separately for each Faculty \*
- ❖ Results by Library visit frequency- separately for daily, monthly etc
- ❖ Results by online visit frequency - separately for daily, monthly etc
- ❖ Results by Campus visit frequency- separately for daily, monthly etc

\* For each of these categories it provided:

- ❖ Mean scores for each question text
- ❖ A table showing priority areas
- ❖ A summary worksheet showing the top 10:
  - Most important factors
  - Highest performing factors
  - Largest gaps
  - Lowest performing factors

Rodski included a considerable amount of interpretation of the results, including the top 10 significant gaps – ie where there was greatest room for improvement. They also included a prioritising tool called a "gap grid" for visual representation. Rodski provided a comparative scorecard for UTS vs the entire Rodski client database, in each of the five categories as mentioned in (1). This enabled a comparison with the highest, lowest and median performers. Rodski also provided a one page "discussion" which summarised their findings for UTS.

The report or "notebook" from LibQUAL+ was available immediately after the survey closed and was printable directly from the webpage by the institution. It was about 95 pages and was of a standard format, simply populated by the survey data. It does not include any interpretation of the results for the individual institution. It provided scores for overall, undergraduate, postgraduate, academic staff, other staff and library staff. For each of these categories it provided:

- ❖ A radar graph – where each axis represents the scores for one question.
- ❖ Mean scores for each question text.
- ❖ Standard deviations for each question text.
- ❖ A graph showing the core dimensions summary
- ❖ A bar graph of Library use

**Table 1 . Additional Client Information**

	<b>LibQUAL+ 2004</b>	<b>Rodski 2003</b>
<b>Frequency of visits</b>	Included in a graph	Rodski provided general information plus a comparison of Top 5 gaps when sorted by Visit frequency category – ie the top 5 gaps for those who visited daily, weekly, rarely etc.
<b>Online visit frequency</b>	Included in a graph	Rodski provided general information plus a comparison of the top 5 gaps when sorted by this categories.
<b>Campus visit frequency</b>	Included in a graph	Rodski provided general information plus a comparison of the top 5 gaps when sorted by this categories.
<b>Demographics</b>	Provided tables on respondent profiles etc	Rodski reported on the top 5 gaps (or “improvement categories”) of each of the demographic groups in the tables, with a detailed analysis in the appendices, ie by campus Library, by course level, by Faculty. They also identified common and unique gaps

### 5. Benchmarking with other institutions

As mentioned in 3.2, Rodski provided a built-in comparison with other libraries who had run the survey. The relativities were given in terms of in the top or bottom 50% or by quadrant.

The LibQUAL+ survey provided access to the other institution notebooks, the norms of the entire survey and an interactive environment for data analysis where institutions could mine institutional data for peer comparisons. (At the time of this report the latter “interactive environment” tool was not yet available for 2004).

### 6. Survey administration

Rodski had the option to be run as an online or paper-based report. UTS ran the Rodski survey as both a paper and online survey but received fewer than 200 online responses each year compared to the much better response to the paper survey. UTS used the Rodski survey in 2002 and 2003 and ran it for a period of one week at each of our three campuses. This involved extra staff resources to hand out the survey and to prepare publicity in the form of posters etc.

LibQUAL+ was designed as an online survey, but there are options to print out paper based versions if the client had a problem accessing it. LibQUAL+ provides a web-based survey management area where institutions can manage our own survey. LibQUAL+ host the survey url, store all the data collected on their servers, analyse the results and provide reports including raw data files (in Excel and SPSS formats) and interactive statistics page on the web site where participants can further manipulate the data and results. UTS used the LibQUAL+ survey in 2004 and ran it as an online survey only. The only staff member involved was the Library Business Manager who took some time to set up the survey customisation, send emails etc. This survey was conducted for a one month period. The only publicity used was via email and on our library webpage. A basic set of FAQ’s was provided by LibQUAL+ for institutions to link to or adjust and put on their own website, to forestall problems. All customisation was done directly on to the website .

### 7. Online communication

The LibQUAL+ survey involved directly emailing clients with a link to the survey. UTS chose to send emails to the entire staff body and the entire student body, rather than try to formulate a representative group and target them only. Once permission was received from the VC and the Registrar to send these emails, 4 emails were sent, spaced over the 4 week period. On the advice of LibQUAL+ users, the first email was a preparatory email. “The Library will be sending you a survey in the next few days...” This also included the aims, approximately how long it would take, and the fact that we would be offering some incentive prizes. We offered \$30 book vouchers. The second, third and fourth emails asked the clients to participate in the survey together with a link to the survey site and apologised nicely if they had already completed it.

The technique of directly emailing to our entire client population resulted in a high number of responses and a good representation of the subsets of the population. Responses from Postgraduate students and Academic staff increased by 500% on the previous survey.

## 8. User comments and feedback

Both surveys provided substantial amounts of qualitative data in the form of comments.

**Table 2 Comparison of responses and comments for UTS**

<b>LibQUAL+ (2004)</b>	<b>Rodski (2003)</b>
3,201 responses	1,553 responses
1400 comments	95 pages of comments
Comments in excel or SPSS	Comments in word
Comments sortable and filterable by campus, faculty, client category, age group, sex.	Comments only sorted by campus. There were no other fields available to sort on. Required considerable massaging to get them into a format suitable for our purposes.

For LibQUAL +, some clients commented on the actual survey. They thought the questions were repetitive and suggested they could do better. [The response from LibQUAL+ on this was that the survey methodology was extremely sound. There are a number of repetitions of similar type questions to verify the reliability of the survey]. A small number of respondents (fewer than 20) reported they could not get on the website to take the survey.

## 9. Problems with online

The LibQUAL+ survey server was located at the Texas A & M University in the USA. For about 36 hours this server was not able to be accessed as they succumbed to the SASSER worm virus, but no other problems with server access occurred.

Another problem which we faced was the lag time as USA was some hours behind and their service desk was not operational when UTS was active. At this time UTS was the only Australian site, but these support issues have been noted and only one instance of service support was needed during our trial.

## 10. Cost

Rodski 2003 cost more than AUD \$9,000 but there is a cheaper option which costs about the same as LibQual+. LibQUAL+ is currently **USD** \$2,250 per institution..

## 11. Overall impressions from UTS

Basically the two surveys measured similar areas, and both provided adequate feedback on Library services for the needs of UTS. Rodski did not do so well in providing useful and useable information for benchmarking with other institutions.

The Rodski survey provided much more interpretation of the results as opposed to LibQUAL+ which provided data plus standard deviations and norms and left the interpretation to the user. As there are many factors to be considered, it is probably of more value to the institution to interpret the data themselves, and being aware of exactly what was being compared.

LibQUAL+ provided a more reliable survey in terms of measuring the gap between performance and delivery on the same scale.

For UTS, LibQUAL+ had the edge in terms of having an extremely user-friendly interface, reasonable cost, comments provided in excel format, and a high response rate for a minimum of staff resources. **The** methodology of LibQUAL+ in using direct emailing was more successful than just having a survey available on a website.

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September 2004

## Appendix 1

**Comparison of questions from Rodski survey 2003 and LibQUAL + 2004 for UTS.** Some questions were customised for UTS in both surveys, so this list may not reflect exactly the same set of questions which other institutions used.

Rodski has 5 categories of questions, as mentioned in 1.1. For the purposes of comparison in this report they have been arbitrarily rearranged into the three LibQUAL+ categories.

**Table 3. Comparison of questions**

### 1. Affect of Service

RODSKI 2003*	LibQUAL+ 2004
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. C Library staff describe clearly the services on offer.</li> <li>2. C Library staff provide clear &amp; useful feedback on my enquiries</li> <li>3. C Library staff acknowledge and handle problems in a professional manner.</li> <li>4. C Telephone calls are answered politely and in a timely manner.</li>   <li>5. SQ Requests for information are followed through.</li> <li>6. SQ Library staff do what they say they will do for me.</li> <li>7. SQ Library staff act on my suggestions and ideas.</li> <li>8. SQ Library staff provide the services I need.</li> <li>9. SQ Library staff provide accurate answers.</li> <li>10. SQ Library staff keep developing new services.</li> <li>11. SQ Library staff display initiative in their dealings with me.</li>   <li>12. SD Library staff are readily available to assist me.</li> <li>13. SD Library staff are customer-focused.</li> <li>14. SD Service desk staff respond in a timely manner.</li> <li>15. SD Library staff give my enquiries appropriate time and attention.</li> <li>16. SD Library staff help me at the computer workstation.</li>   <li>17. LS Library staff display professionalism</li> <li>18. LS Library staff are friendly</li> <li>19. LS Library staff treat me fairly and without discrimination.</li> <li>20. LS Library staff take an interest in me and my needs.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Library staff who instill confidence in users.</li> <li>2. Giving users individual attention.</li> <li>3. Library staff who are consistently courteous.</li> <li>4. Readiness to respond to users' enquiries.</li> <li>5. Library staff who have the knowledge to answer user questions.</li> <li>6. Library staff who deal with users in a caring fashion.</li> <li>7. Library staff who understand the needs of their users.</li> <li>8. Willingness to help users.</li> <li>9. Dependability in handling users' service problems.</li> </ol>

## 2. Information control

<b>RODSKI 2003*</b>	<b>LibQUAL+ 2004</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. C.Access to electronic databases is easily available.</li> <li>2. C Information resources (books, electronic, etc) are easily accessed.</li> <li>3. C The Library keeps me informed about new services and resources.</li> <li>4. SD Materials are processed rapidly for inclusion in the collection</li> <li>5. SD Prompt corrective action is taken regarding missing books and journals.</li> <li>6. SD Books and journals are reshelved quickly.</li> <li>7. SD Library catalogue provides clear and useful information.</li> <li>8. SD Requests for items from other libraries are followed through promptly.</li> <li>9. SD The Library collection is adequate to my needs.</li> <li>10. SD I can access the electronic journals and databases I need.</li> <li>11. SD The Library provides the self-service options I want in the Library.</li> <li>12. SD The Library provides the online and remote self-service options I want.</li> <li>13. SD Library web pages provide clear and useful information.</li> <li>14. FE Resources and services are accessible for people with a disability.</li> <li>15. FE Adequate signage exists within the Library.</li> <li>16. FE Computer facilities/electronic equipment work well.</li> <li>17. FE Number of computer workstations is adequate.</li> <li>18. FE Photocopying facilities are adequate.</li> <li>19. FE Printing facilities are adequate.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office.</li> <li>2. A library web site enabling me to locate material on my own.</li> <li>3. The printed library materials I need for my work.</li> <li>4. The electronic information resources I need.</li> <li>5. Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information.</li> <li>6. Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own.</li> <li>7. Making information easily accessible for independent use.</li> <li>8. Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work.</li> <li>2. Extra - Availability of online help when using my library's electronic resources.</li> <li>3. Extra – Personalization features in the electronic library.</li> <li>4. Extra – Teaching me how to access, evaluate and use information.</li> <li>5. Extra – Library keeping me informed about all of its services.</li> </ol>

## 3. Library as place

<b>RODSKI 2003*</b>	<b>LibQUAL+ 2004</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SD 17 Opening hours meet my needs.</li> <li>2. FE Group study facilities are adequate</li> <li>3. FE Lounge seating is adequate.</li> <li>4. FE Quiet study areas are adequate.</li> <li>5. FE Library is a safe and secure place to study.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Library space that inspires study and learning.</li> <li>2. Quiet space for individual work.</li> <li>3. A comfortable and inviting location.</li> <li>4. A haven for study, learning, or research</li> <li>5. Space for group learning and group study.</li> <li>6. Extra – a secure and safe place.</li> </ol>

### **\*Key to Rodski question categories coding**

C= Communication

SQ= Service Quality

SD= Service Delivery

FE = Facilities and Equipment

LS = Library Staff