



Policies and Procedures Manual

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This project would never have succeeded without the efforts of Colleen Cook, Executive Associate Dean at Texas A&M University Libraries, who provided not only outstanding research design expertise, but also a profound understanding of libraries as institutions and the importance of the human element in library operations. This project has also enjoyed the support and expertise of two world-renown researchers in qualitative and quantitative methodologies: Yvonna Lincoln, Professor and Program Director of Higher Education, Educational Administration Department, Texas A&M University; and Bruce Thompson, Professor and Distinguished Research Scholar, Department of Educational Psychology, Texas A&M University. Bruce Thompson, in particular, has supported this project by helping all of us focus on the substantive aspects of the vast quantity of data generated by LibQUAL+™.

Finally, in addition to recognizing the efforts of the entire ARL team, we would like to thank Jonathan Sousa, ARL's Technical Applications Development Manager, whose technical expertise and programming skills have greatly contributed to the growing success of the project.

Preface

This manual is a compilation of feedback and comments compiled from past participants during and after the survey process. The LibQUAL+™ project is still in its research and development phase; therefore, we consider this document to be a work in progress.

Introduction

What is LibQUAL+™?

LibQUAL+™ is a research and development project undertaken to define and measure library service quality across institutions and to create useful quality-assessment tools for local planning. The goals of LibQUAL+™ are to:

- establish a library service quality assessment program at ARL;
- develop web-based tools for assessing library service quality;
- develop mechanisms and protocols for evaluating libraries; and
- identify best practices in providing library service.

Service quality has always been a value for libraries; LibQUAL+™ provides a measure of that value. LibQUAL+™ currently tests a tool for measuring library users' perceptions of service quality and identifies gaps between desired, perceived, and minimum expectations of service. The project will continue as an R&D endeavor based at ARL in collaboration with the Texas A&M University Libraries (TAMU) through 2003, by which time LibQUAL+™ will evolve into an ongoing service quality assessment program at ARL.

LibQUAL+™ project origin

There is increasing pressure for libraries to move towards outcome-based assessment, instead of relying merely on input, output, or resource metrics. This pressure comes from funding authorities as well as users themselves. Outcome measures may show how well an organization serves its users: they demonstrate an institution's efficiency and effectiveness. LibQUAL+™ is one of several outcome-based assessment efforts begun under the ARL New Measures Initiative.

The benefit of LibQUAL+™ to library users

Individual libraries participating in LibQUAL+™ can identify where their services need improvement, in the view of their users. They can also compare their service quality with that of peer institutions in an effort to develop benchmarks and understanding of best practices across institutions; for this reason, several library consortia and other peer groups have chosen to participate in LibQUAL+™. Initiating action based on the information they receive from their users and from other LibQUAL+™ participants, libraries can provide services that are more closely aligned with user expectations. As library services are improved, the ultimate goal is to surpass user expectations in search of excellent library services that better help users reach their learning and research objectives and effectively manage information resources.

The Basis of the LibQUAL+™ survey instrument

The LibQUAL+™ survey instrument is adapted from an instrument called SERVQUAL, which is grounded in the “Gap Theory of Service Quality” and was developed by the marketing research team of A. Parasuraman, V. A. Zeithaml, and L. L. Berry. Texas A&M University Libraries and other libraries have used modified SERVQUAL instruments for several years. These applications illustrated the need for a newly adapted SERVQUAL protocol that could be used in a library context; thus LibQUAL+™ was born. The original SERVQUAL instrument was re-grounded based on a series of interviews with library users. The re-grounded instrument, called LibQUAL+™, is being refined with each iteration of the survey through the pilot phase (1999-2003).

Conducting the LibQUAL+™ survey

New technology and the Internet make it possible for libraries to survey their users with minimal local effort. LibQUAL+™ uses a scalable web interface and protocol to ask library users about their library service expectations. Each participating library gathers a random sample of e-mail addresses representative of their user population and sends a message to the sample encouraging recipients to complete the survey on the web. Survey data are transmitted directly from the central LibQUAL+™ server to a database. The data are then analyzed and reports that provide information on how users perceive the quality of their library services are generated for the individual libraries. The reports present information on the gaps between users’ desired, perceived, and minimally acceptable levels of service.

LibQUAL+™ funding

LibQUAL+™ is presently funded through a variety of means: external funding through September 2003 from the U.S. Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), contributed funding from ARL and Texas A&M University, and modest fees from participating libraries to underwrite the production of deliverables. Participating libraries also contribute staff and organizational resources for preparation and administration of the survey instrument.

Additional LibQUAL+™ information

For more information, see the LibQUAL+™ homepage at <<http://www.libqual.org/>>, or send email to <libqual@arl.org>.

LibQUAL+™ Project Staff

Duane Webster – Executive Director, ARL

Works closely with TAMU personnel as a project manager to ensure seamless transfer of administration from TAMU to ARL.

Martha Kyriallidou – Senior Program Officer for Statistics and Measurement, ARL

As a project manager, oversees administration of LibQUAL+™ and analysis of data through the ARL offices.

Jonathan Sousa - Technical Applications Development Manager for New Measures Initiatives, ARL

Leads the technological development of LibQUAL+™ at ARL by recommending, planning, and implementing optimal applications of technology.

Consuella Askew Waller –Program Specialist, ARL

Oversees ARL office coordination of LibQUAL+™ communications and training.

Amy Hoseth – Projects Assistant, ARL

Assists with LibQUAL+™ communications and training at ARL.

Kaylyn Higgs –Editorial and Research Associate, ARL

Provides editorial (print and web) and research support to the project.

Julia Blixrud – Director of Information Services, ARL

Builds community awareness of the LibQUAL+™ project and promotes its use through programmed public relations outlets.

Dru Mogge - Program Officer for Internet Services, ARL

Responsible for the smooth operation of the network connections and the upkeep of the hardware and networked servers at ARL.

Fred Heath – Director, Library Services, Texas A&M University Libraries

As a project manager, oversees the TAMU project activities and conducts qualitative research program in grounding the evaluation instrument and theory through interviews and content analysis in academic library contexts.

Colleen Cook – Executive Associate Dean, Texas A&M University Libraries

As a project manager, conducts mixed-methods, qualitative/quantitative research program in grounding the evaluation instrument and theory through interviews and content analysis in academic library contexts, and through quantitative reliability and

validity analyses until the instrument or instruments are refined and applicable in various academic library contexts.

Bruce Thompson – Professor and Distinguished Research Scholar, Department of Educational Psychology, Texas A&M University

Serves as the LibQUAL+™ quantitative consultant and educates the ARL staff in the data analysis techniques. Responsible for the evaluation of the LibQUAL+™ instrument, along with Yvonna Lincoln.

Yvonna Lincoln – Professor and Program Director of Higher Education, Educational Administration Department, Texas A&M University

Serves as the LibQUAL+™ qualitative consultant and educates the ARL staff in data analysis techniques. Along with Bruce Thompson, is responsible for the LibQUAL+™ instrument.

LibQUAL+™

Survey Participants' Timeline

The following timeline is presented as a checklist of steps that will guide participating institutions through the LibQUAL+™ survey process. A more detailed description of the survey process is provided in the following sections of this manual.

August/September 2002:

- Subscribe to ARL-QUALITY listserv (an open forum). To subscribe, send the following e-mail message to <listproc@arl.org> (leave subject line blank):
subscribe ARL-QUALITY your full name. Information is also available online at <http://www.libqual.org/about/faq/index.cfm>.

- Register for the following ARL-sponsored, LibQUAL+(TM)-related workshops (optional):

"Measuring Service Quality" OLMS Online Lyceum workshop, <<http://www.arl.org/training/quality.html>>; \$500 ARL members and LibQUAL+(TM) participating libraries. June 24 – August 2, or October 7 – November 15, 2002.

"Creating a Culture of Assessment" <<http://www.arl.org/workshops.html>>; \$350 ARL members and participating LibQUAL+(TM) libraries. September 19-20, 2002.

"New Ways of Listening to Library Users: Tools for Measuring Service Quality" <<http://www.arl.org/workshops.html>>; \$500 ARL members and LibQUAL+(TM) participating libraries. September 27-28, 2002.

- New library types and consortia should establish a relationship with ARL personnel if they are interested in participating in the coming spring.
- Identify and initiate steps needed to obtain clearance for human subjects research at your institution.

October/November:

- Identify appropriate data source to provide the most valid e-mail addresses for selected sample populations (e.g., campus computing, or library patron database).

November/December:

- Register online for 2003 survey. Two automated e-mail messages will be generated: (1) a confirmation of your registration, and (2) an invoice for the participation fee.

Note: Library directors and other contacts listed on the survey sign-up form will automatically be subscribed to the LibQUAL+™ listserv, which is a closed forum for LibQUAL+™ participants only.

January:

- The online Survey Preferences area and the Demographic Questionnaire will be made available via the LibQUAL+™ Survey Management Center.
- International libraries should register for the following ARL-sponsored, LibQUAL+™ training workshop:

“LibQUAL+™ International Workshop in the U.K.” An ARL workshop, <http://db.arl.org/uk/>; free for SCONUL LibQUAL+™ participating libraries, £170 non-pilot SCONUL libraries, 250 USD non-SCONUL international libraries. January 7-8, 2003, Bristol, England.

- Libraries need to have human subjects research clearance from their institution by mid-January. ARL does not need to be informed of this approval.
- January 26-27, 2003: training session for participating 2003 libraries will be held at ALA Midwinter conference. Attendance by first-time participating libraries is strongly encouraged. <http://db.ala.org/lqala03/>.

February:

- LibQUAL+™ preview survey will be available for participants to pre-test within their libraries. This allows participants to make sure that the survey looks correct before it goes live.
- Complete nominations for 2003 Service Quality Evaluation Academy, an ARL institute, to be held May 12-16, 2003. <<http://www.libqual.org/Events/index.cfm>> Nominations are due by February 14, 2003.
- Draw final e-mail samples after institution’s spring enrollment process is complete. For more information, see the section on “Random Sampling.”
- The LibQUAL+™ 2003 survey opens to the public.
- Register for the following LibQUAL+™-related Online Lyceum course (optional):

“Measuring Service Quality” OLMS Online Lyceum workshop, <<http://www.arl.org/training/quality.html>>; \$500 ARL members and LibQUAL+™ participating libraries. February 24-April 4, 2003.

March/April:

- Using a mock e-mail account, send a personalized e-mail message from the director announcing the upcoming LibQUAL+™ survey to sample groups. See Appendix B for a sample survey notification.
- Make the necessary adjustments to the sample groups (i.e., replacing invalid e-mail addresses with valid e-mail addresses).
- Register for the following LibQUAL+™-related workshop (optional):

“Culture of Assessment Institute”

<<http://www.arl.org/training/institutes/culture.html>>; \$350 ARL members and LibQUAL+™ participating libraries. 11-12 March 2003.

- Register for the following LibQUAL+™-related workshop (optional):

“New Ways of Listening to Library Users: LibQUAL+™” an ACRL preconference workshop, <http://db.arl.org/lq0303/>; \$175 ARL/ACRL members, \$215 ALA members, \$235 non-members of ARL, ACRL, or ALA. April 10, 2003.

Three to five days after your pre-test:

- Send e-mail inviting participation in survey. See Appendix C for sample survey invitations.

***Recommendation:** Past experience has proven that the best time to send the initial invitation is on either a Monday or Tuesday morning.*

After sending out your survey invitation:

- Send 2-3 reminder e-mail messages out at three- to five-day intervals after the invitation to take the survey. See Appendix D for sample survey reminders..

May:

- Survey closed to the public and participating libraries.

- **Service Quality Evaluation Academy**
<<http://www.libqual.org/Events/index.cfm>> held at the Texas Engineering Extension Service, South Central Texas Regional Training Center in San Antonio, Texas. May 12-16, 2003.

June:

- Survey results presented to project participants at ALA Annual Conference on Saturday, June 21, 2003, from 9:00 am – 12:00 p.m. in Toronto, Canada. Attendance is strongly encouraged.
- Register for the following LibQUAL+™-related Online Lyceum course (optional):
“Measuring Service Quality” OLMS Online Lyceum workshop,
<<http://www.arl.org/training/quality.html>>; \$500 ARL members and LibQUAL+™ participating libraries. June 23 – August 4, 2003.

July:

- Complete LibQUAL+™ Post-Hoc Questionnaire. Each participating library must submit a Post-Hoc Questionnaire.
- Complete LibQUAL+™ Evaluation Questionnaire. All individual survey liaisons and contacts must complete an Evaluation Questionnaire.
- **5th Northumbria Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services, “Library Measures to Fill the Void: Assessing Outcomes.”**
<http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/faculties/art/information_studies/imri/PM5/PM5.htm>; July 28-31, 2003, Durham, UK.

Fees

Throughout the period of the FIPSE grant (2000-03), each participating institution will be charged a \$2,000 fee to participate in the survey. For the spring 2003 survey, libraries will be invoiced upon registration. If individual libraries within institutions wish to distinguish their findings by requesting separate handling and disparate deliverables then the fee will be \$2,000 per unit of analysis.

Registering your library for the LibQUAL+™ survey indicates a financial commitment on your part. Once you have registered online, you have authorized ARL to charge your library the full participation fee. No refunds will be issued. This information is also included on the online registration page.

A business plan for the price structure and ongoing implementation of LibQUAL+™ will be put in place beyond 2003.

Registration and other communications with the LibQUAL+™ Team

Each participating library must register by completing the LibQUAL+™ online registration form at <<http://www.libqual.org/Register/index.cfm>>.

Communications and Survey Management Center

Survey liaisons and contacts will be automatically subscribed to the LibQUAL+™ list upon registering. LIBQUAL-L, is a private e-mail list comprised of current survey participants. This list will be used to post important announcements, requests for data, and as a vehicle for institutions to share information and ask questions regarding the survey.

There is also a public list, ARL-QUALITY, to which participating and interested institutions may subscribe. Visit the following web page for instructions on how to subscribe to the ARL-QUALITY list:

< During the 2002 survey year the LibQUAL+™ site was enhanced to include an online Survey Management Center <<http://www.libqual.org/Manage/index.cfm>>, which was created to provide participants and the LibQUAL+™ team with a means of more efficiently disseminating data to and collecting data from participants during the survey process. This password-protected area is available only to participating libraries. Examples of documents and information that are provided via the Survey Management Center include:

- Library survey liaison contact information
- Institutional profile information
- Demographics questionnaire
- Links to preview surveys
- Downloadable print versions of the survey
- Real time data on survey run
- List of local incentive prizewinners
- Post-hoc and evaluation surveys

Participants are able to manage their own data by updating their institutional profile and contact information as needed, making the online Survey Management Center the central source of information about LibQUAL+™ participants.

Survey Liaison

In addition to the library director, one person at each institution should be designated as survey liaison. The liaison's responsibilities include:

- Preparing his/her institution and colleagues for the survey administration
- Corresponding with the LibQUAL+™ team

- Responding to user feedback regarding the survey (note that user complaints are an opportunity to improve patron relations)
- Working with local IT or academic computing contacts and/or the LibQUAL+™ team to resolve technical issues

After you invite your sample to complete the survey, and throughout the survey period, responding to feedback will become an important responsibility for the survey liaison, and will provide an additional opportunity to provide quality service. Therefore, it is critical that the liaison (or a designated surrogate with intimate knowledge of the survey process) be available the entire duration of the survey run to respond to questions or comments from users.

Consortium Participation

A number of consortial groups have participated in the LibQUAL+™ survey, including groups from OhioLINK, AAHSL, and NY3Rs. Consortia wishing to take part in LibQUAL+™ should contact ARL in advance of registration by sending an e-mail to <libqual@arl.org>. The LibQUAL+™ team can work with you on the specifics of your group's participation.

Participating consortia receive a number of benefits, including:

- An aggregate notebook containing data from consortium members
- The ability to add five additional local questions to the LibQUAL+™ survey
- Local training and results meetings, depending on the size of the consortium and the availability of the LibQUAL+™ team

ARL and Texas A&M University have created memorandums of understanding (MOUs) for participating library consortia on a case-by-case basis. The LibQUAL+™ interface for 2003 currently supports 10 different types of libraries and eight different consortia for implementation in American English, British English, and French, across four different countries – Canada, the Netherlands, the U.K., and the U.S. Discussions are underway to support other types of libraries, such as special, national, and hospital libraries.

If you would like to pilot LibQUAL+™ in a new library setting or develop a translation for a new language/country implementation, please contact Martha Kyrillidou <martha@arl.org>.

University Logos

Each institution's logo will appear at the top of their survey web page to help establish "ownership" of the survey application. Participants will be asked to upload their logo when filling out the demographics questionnaire. To ensure image quality, the following criteria have been set:

1. The image should be similar in color and design to the images available on your institution's library web page.

2. The image size should be at minimum 50 pixels high by 500 pixels long (need not be exact), but no larger than 100 by 600 pixels. By following this criterion your image should be oriented like a rectangle.
3. The image resolution should be 72 pixels per inch.
4. The image file should be in GIF or JPG format.

Human Subjects Review

Human Subjects Research Approval

Before launching the LibQUAL+™ survey, it is important to contact your campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) to determine if prior approval is needed to conduct the survey. Although at most institutions this approval is sought from the IRB, this department may also be known as the “Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects,” the “Committee for Human Subjects Research,” or the “Office of Sponsored Programs.” The IRB committee may meet infrequently throughout the year, so this step should be initiated well ahead of the projected survey launch date.

Many of the past participants’ IRBs required this approval because the survey will use human subjects for research. Others did not, stating that the participating institution was covered under the clearance obtained by Texas A&M Libraries, which is a co-sponsor of the LibQUAL+™ project. A copy of the Texas A&M Libraries IRB approval form is on file at the ARL offices. ARL has also an official policy for Protecting Human Subjects: <<http://www.arl.org/stats/privacy.html>>.

Be sure to provide your IRB with information about any incentives that may be offered to survey respondents and indicate whether or not your library plans to participate in the LibQUAL+™ project’s prize drawing. Your IRB should also be made aware that the results of the LibQUAL+™ project will be shared among participating institutions. IRB approval is handled entirely at the local level; ARL does not require proof of your institution’s IRB status.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

In order for the project to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act, be prepared to make special arrangements for any respondents with disabilities. The web survey form has been tested with JAWS software. Print copies of the survey are made available via the Survey Management Center. Participants will also want to address the need for the provision of special assistance at the local level, if necessary.

Confidentiality of Data

The LibQUAL+™ approach to confidentiality is guided by the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association (see <<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code.html>>, note section 5). The research team members are committed to the highest ethical behavior and will take every measure possible to protect the privacy of individual participants. The researchers cannot and will not release information about participants without their permission.

Although some information is captured from respondents, such as their network address and e-mail address, the respondent’s privacy is protected in two ways. First, only very indirect information is captured, which would be difficult to trace back to an individual.

Second, everything possible is done to separate personal information from survey responses. E-mail addresses are not saved with the responses, and once they are saved there is no way to link an individual's responses to their e-mail address, thus ensuring their confidentiality when entering the incentive drawings.

Data Security

The survey data is stored on a server at Texas A&M University (TAMU), which exists behind a firewall. When the questionnaire data is sent to the database, the respondents' answers are separated from their e-mail address before it is stored, to ensure confidentiality. Currently, the collected data is archived at TAMU and only the LibQUAL+™ research team has access to it.

Informed Consent

Because this is a web-based survey, the respondents consent to participate by electing to fill out the survey questionnaire. It will be the participating library's responsibility to provide an explanation of the survey and information pertaining to its confidentiality (see Appendix B for an example of how this has been achieved using the survey notification letter).

Administering the Survey

Sample Size

The *minimum* recommended sampling figures for *large* library systems are as follows:

900 Undergraduate students

600 Graduate students

600 Faculty

600 Non-library University Staff (optional)

All Library Staff (optional)

Smaller institutions may choose to survey their entire population. If your population groups are smaller than the recommended sample size, you should survey your entire population. Including university staff and library staff in the survey is optional.

***NOTE:** When selecting a sample population from more specific groups on your campus, please footnote the method of selection determination. You will be asked to describe your sampling methodology in the post-hoc survey.*

Random Sampling

A total population survey will not necessarily provide more useful information than a random sampling. Therefore, a random sampling of the population is encouraged if your library system is large enough. Keep in mind that your library's survey liaison may need to respond personally to approximately ten percent of the total sample population. Make sure the person responsible for responding to these inquiries is well qualified to address the issues raised by library users.

The LibQUAL+™ survey liaison will assume the responsibility for determining the initial sample sizes (see activities for October in timeline). The LibQUAL+™ liaison will also closely oversee the sampling process, making sure the e-mail addresses are drawn from the appropriate database. Double check the random sample to make sure that the e-mail addresses drawn are proportionately representative of undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and/or staff.

In anticipation of faulty e-mail addresses, over-sampling is encouraged. For example, instead of sampling 900 undergraduate students, start with 1,200 and use the extra 300 to fill in as needed.

Each library is responsible for selecting their sample and sending e-mail messages to that sample population. If it is decided that the library's patron database will not be used to draw a random sample, the library survey liaison may need to contact and work with

someone in the academic computing, human resources, or information systems departments in order to get assistance with obtaining campus-wide random samples of students, faculty, and staff. The survey liaison must also work closely with these departments to make sure they are using the correct databases. The integrity of the e-mail database will determine the quality of the sample.

You should contact your information systems people early in the survey process to determine if separation of sample groups is possible, and to find out how much time is necessary for them to create those sample groups. The actual sampling process should take place after your institution's spring enrollment process is complete to ensure the accuracy of your e-mail addresses.

Survey Announcements

Each library is responsible for sending out a survey invitation to their sample groups. To add a personalized touch, it is recommended that the invitation come from the library director. The best approach is to establish a mock e-mail account for the director that will be used during the survey implementation.

The invitation should address the purpose of the study, the issue of confidentiality, what will be done with the results, and any incentives offered for participants. See Appendix C for sample invitations. In addition to the invitation letter, prior participants have also placed announcements in the school newspaper, posted printed flyers around campus, placed tent cards on computers and tabletops, and placed a web link on the library's home page. Some libraries have created their own FAQ pages to address common questions and problems that users may encounter while taking the survey. This may help reduce the number of contacts received from users. The main LibQUAL+™ FAQ is available online at <<http://www.libqual.org/Information/FAQ/index.cfm>>.

Preparing alternative ways of reaching user populations by using surface mail, announcements in your school newspaper, printed flyers, and other means is strongly encouraged.

According to the literature, the number of contacts is the single highest predictor of the response rate for a web-based survey across the disciplines.¹ Therefore, plan on sending at least three to five notices:

- 1 Invitation to participate in survey
- 1 Announcement with survey URL embedded
- 2-3 Follow-up reminders

Timing of survey announcement: Past experience has proven that Monday morning is the best time to send out your survey announcement letter and Friday afternoon is the worst.

¹ Cook, C., Heath, F., Thompson, R.L. & Thompson, B. (2001). Score reliability in Web- or Internet-based surveys: Unnumbered graphic rating scales versus Likert-type scales. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 61, 697-706.

To best handle communications with sample groups, a separate e-mail mailing list should be set up for each constituent group (e.g., faculty, undergraduates, graduate students, etc.). The mailing lists will enable libraries to keep account of bounced e-mail messages for each group, so that valid addresses can be easily substituted to maintain sample size. For each group, record the initial sample size number, the number of bounced messages, and the final sample size number; this information will be captured in the post hoc survey.

Using the library director's mock e-mail account to send the messages adds a personalized touch that will positively impact your response rate. The dummy e-mail account will alleviate the problem of compromising the director's regular e-mail account with feedback and responses from survey respondents during the survey run. All comments and feedback received from respondents should be saved. At the end of the data collection process, the research team will request this information.

Survey Preview

Access to your library's preview survey link will be made available in advance of the survey going public. During this time, pre-testing the web-based survey form is required. There are no known technical problems with the survey. The behind-the-scenes programming has been written for maximum efficiency, stability, and compatibility, and the survey does not rely on erratically supported features such as JavaScript and cookies. There are, inescapably, minor quirks with certain combinations of browsers and platforms, but none of these should impede the users' ability to take the survey. We are continuing to refine the usability of the survey.

***Testing the survey before launch:** Liaisons should make sure that they thoroughly test the survey, completing the entire survey on their own desktop before launch.*

If you encounter problems that your local technical support cannot resolve, report them to the LibQUAL+™ staff at <libqual@arl.org>.

Web-based Response Rates

Web-based surveys have low response rates (around 15-20 percent) as research indicates. However, the improved technical interface and refined survey instrument are yielding strong results for LibQUAL+™ and the data are generalizable to the population, as indicated by an institutional analysis of response rates. Evidence also indicates that institution e-mail lists are generally becoming more accurate, and respondents are more likely to have seen or taken web surveys.

The LibQUAL+™ team is working with libraries that have reported particularly high response rates in order to gather information on best practices that can be shared with all participants. Libraries that achieve response rates above 30 percent are considered libraries with high response rates for web-based surveys.

LibQUAL+™ Survey Instrument

The LibQUAL+™ instrument has undergone revision after each iteration of the survey. The survey instrument consists of 25 core questions that address four dimensions found to be valid in previous testing: affect of service, library as place, personal control, and access to information.

Response Time

A typical response time for the completion of the 25 questions, 3-scale version of the spring 2002 survey was eight minutes. The average completion time was 13:25 minutes although to some web users it may seem longer!

Entering Print Survey Data

Print versions of the survey for various institution types will be available via the online Survey Management Center. If an institution receives print copies of the survey from participants, the survey liaison should enter all print survey data into the library's web survey form and keep a running tally of the number of forms entered by hand. Print survey data can only be entered during the time the survey is available to the public. Once the survey period has ended and the survey link has been closed to the public, print survey data can no longer be entered.

ARL recommends that all print surveys be coded (numbered consecutively), in order for libraries to track the number of print surveys that are distributed and returned. A good source of information about print survey protocol is *The Survey Kit*, edited by Arlene Fink.²

This procedure for print surveys still preserves confidentiality. The paper copy bears no name or information that would identify the respondent once the results are published. LibQUAL+™ liaisons, as well as the rest of the research team, have an obligation not to release any information about the participants without their permission. Even if an e-mail address is provided on the form, it would be nearly impossible to match that electronic address with the individual's survey responses once they have been entered via the web form.

To insure the respondent's feeling of confidentiality, set up a drop box in the library to collect completed print survey forms. Doing so should help the response/return rate. If your library offers the option to mail in the survey, the completed survey should be returned to the library and respondents should include in the address, "Attention: LibQUAL+™ Liaison." Doing so will ensure that when the form is mailed back to the library it will be routed to the correct person. Some respondents may prefer to hand-deliver the completed form; thus, the need for a drop box.

² Arlene Fink, ed, *The Survey Kit*. 2d ed. 10 vols. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003).

Demographics

The survey collects basic demographic information from respondents (e.g., age, sex, discipline, position) to enable analysis of the results by category and to check the representativeness of the responding population. Past experience has shown that some respondents are averse to completing surveys that request this information. However, because representativeness of response is critical in order to look for response bias, these questions will remain part of the survey.

The American Psychological Association – and, therefore, most Human Subjects Research boards, as well – requires that basic sex and age demographics be assimilated in order to ensure that studies are truly comprehensive. This also addresses empirical concerns, such as representativeness of response.

One obvious bias that is carefully considered is gender. There is a concern that web-based surveys may be inherently biased, inadvertently affected by gender-based differences in approaches to technology. However, gender has not been found to be an issue when the LibQUAL+™ survey has been run at institutions of higher education.

Disciplines

In order to provide a more general categorization of disciplines with which all of the participating institutions can identify, the general discipline categories used in the LibQUAL+™ survey are adapted from those used by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for U.S. institutions of higher education, based on the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP). The discipline categories used on the survey may or may not be an exact representation of the discipline areas represented on any one specific campus.

Additional demographic variables may be created for new types of libraries, to ensure that the survey is targeted to their user population.

Technical Assistance

Each participating library will be responsible for providing its own local technical assistance for the survey. There will be designated personnel made available at Texas A&M and/or ARL to use as a resource. The behind-the-scenes programming has been completely rewritten for maximum efficiency, stability, and compatibility, and the survey does not rely on erratically supported features such as JavaScript and cookies. On rare occasions, respondents have encountered problems with the web survey. The causes of these problems vary (e.g. proxy server connections, firewalls, browser caching) and most can be resolved locally through contact with your local network administrator. Others can be attributed to the idiosyncratic nature of the web itself, and do not reoccur. A few may require our intervention. In those cases where these problems cannot be resolved locally, we welcome your direct contact at <libqual@arl.org>.

Incentives (Prize Drawings)

The LibQUAL+™ program offers a project incentive. All survey respondents have the opportunity to enter the drawing to win the prize donated by the program. Some libraries may elect to provide local incentives as well. If your library decides to offer incentives, this information should be relayed to the LibQUAL+™ team and included in your survey invitation letter. Examples of local prizes awarded by schools in the past include gift certificates to the university bookstore, “copy cards,” and school-themed merchandise.

The random sampling of e-mail addresses for the project and local drawings will be performed by ARL. Twenty-five randomly selected e-mail addresses will be drawn for local incentive prizes and sent to each institution one week after the last participating library completes the survey process. The project prizewinner will be drawn at the same time and the home institution of the winner will be contacted. That home institution will ultimately be responsible for notifying the project winner.

The project prize drawing rules are as follows:

1. Drawing entries will be collected during the stated survey launch period.
2. It is the responsibility of the survey respondent to enter their e-mail address in the drawing. Participation is voluntary. After completing the survey, participants will be asked to enter their e-mail address if they wish to enter the drawing.
3. Limit one (1) entry per e-mail address. If multiple entries are received from any e-mail address, all such subsequent entries will be disqualified.
4. One week after the last participating library closes their survey, one e-mail address will be selected at random from eligible entries. The winner will receive the designated LibQUAL+™ project prize and will be notified by their home institution.
5. General conditions: Prizewinner must claim their prizes within one week (7 days) after receipt of prize notification. If the selected winner cannot be contacted, or fails to claim a prize, the selected winner will forfeit his/her prize and an alternate winner will be selected. This contest is valid in all states except where prohibited by law.
6. The project incentive is sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries.

An official version of the spring 2003 project incentive drawing rules can be found at the following URL:

<<http://www.libqual.org/Information/FAQ/index.cfm>>

In order to preserve the confidentiality and ethics of a research endeavor such as this, the project team will not alter the e-mail address data in any way. As with the rest of the data

collected, the e-mail address data will be screened to eliminate obviously invalid or duplicate addresses.

LibQUAL + TM Survey Results

Deliverables

All participating institutions receive online access to summary results for each current year participating institution in addition to their own data. All institutions are encouraged to share what they learned and how they are using their survey data via the LibQUAL+TM and the ARL-QUALITY mailing lists. The survey results should not be seen as a measure or comparison of one library's performance versus another's, but rather as a means to compare perceptions of service delivery against expectations. LibQUAL+TM is establishing a dialogue among libraries, out of which a set of best practices for library service will emerge. Most importantly, LibQUAL+TM should be viewed as one tool amongst a host of others to use when assessing service quality.

The deliverables are being refined with each implementation. Participating institutions can expect to receive:

- A notebook providing aggregate data for all participating libraries and including at least four custom radar graphs, each representing a major constituency group (undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and staff).
- A notebook with an individual, customized summary for their institution, including statistics for all variables.

The survey results will also be made available to all participants on the World Wide Web via a password-protected site. Participants can also request a copy of their raw data file for local analysis.

Data Archiving and Additional Analysis

ARL will become the official archiver of the data. Additional custom analysis of an institution's results may be available depending on the needs and demands of the project and the availability of the LibQUAL+TM team. Such additional analysis will be arranged on a consultancy basis for a fee.

Dissemination of LibQUAL+TM Results

Institutions may share their own data within their institutions in any way they see appropriate for promoting and improving library services. Some institutions have created and devoted pages on their web sites as a means of sharing their survey results with their academic community, while others have published articles in their school newspaper. Institutions should NOT use other libraries' data IN ANY WAY that would compromise or harm the reputation of other institutions. Institutions may use other libraries' data in a confidential manner without disclosing the institutional identity. Access to the password-protected environment where the results from LibQUAL+TM are posted should be controlled by the director or the designated liaison of the participating library.

In a “New Measures” environment, if we are to learn from one another and improve academic and research libraries in North America, we will need to refrain from comparisons that suggest that some institutions are better than others.

LibQUAL+™ allows institutions to compare user perceptions of service delivery against expectations; a library may assert that it is doing a better job of meeting user expectations (based on gap scores) than another, but it is not useful to assert that a library is better than another. Libraries may compare their results with those of peer institutions for identifying best practices and emulation in meeting user expectations and in managing user perceptions. However, perceptions and attitudes can change rapidly as a result of local circumstances; rank ordering is not useful in this context. LibQUAL+™ attempts to serve as a tool for local diagnostic purposes and cross-institutional comparisons in order for institutions to learn from one another.

LibQUAL+™ is only one of multiple methods an institution may adopt in evaluating their services regularly and systematically to ensure that they are meeting the needs of their users. ARL will continue to offer opportunities for libraries to share their experiences and data usage so that libraries can learn how to better meet user expectations from an exemplar and identify best practices in the area of meeting user expectations and managing user perceptions.

Publishing articles using LibQUAL+™ data

Professionals publishing articles using data collected via LibQUAL+™ must comply with the following statement:

*“The authors grant ARL **the non-exclusive right** to reproduce, distribute, post on the web and disseminate for educational use any articles published in scholarly and other commercial journals as long as the source, author, issue, and page numbers are acknowledged.”*

This allows ARL to more effectively disseminate results and research literature related to LibQUAL+™.

Past participants meetings

ARL will organize participants meetings where there will be opportunities for people to share what worked for them versus what needs to be improved, both in terms of the LibQUAL+™ measurement process and in terms of improving local services or recognizing best practices. Typically these meetings will take place during the American Library Association’s Midwinter or Annual Conference. Information pertaining to the date, time, and location of the meetings will be made available on the ARL web site <<http://www.arl.org>> and on the LibQUAL+™ web site <<http://www.libqual.org/Events>>.

Appendices

Appendix A: Sample IRB Forms

Sample Forms for IRB Clearance – Cover Letter

TAMU #

Texas A&M University
Form I
Summary Cover Sheet
Protocol for Human Subjects in Research

Please check off or provide details on the following (enter N/A if not applicable): Exemption Requested
See Page 2

Principal Investigator Name Fred M. Heath Faculty Graduate Student*

College/Dept Texas A&M General Libraries Mail Stop 5000 Phone 845-8111

Project Title Association of Research Libraries LibQUAL+ Project: Service Quality Measures

Subjective Estimate of Risk to Subject: Low Moderate High None

Gender of subjects: Male Female Both Age(s): 18-75 Total Participants (est.): 10,000

Source of Subjects:

- Psychology Subject Pool
- Other TAMU Students
- Community
- Posted Notices**
- Prisons

Subject Recruitment:

- Direct Person-to person contact
- Telephone Solicitation
- Newspaper Ad
- Letter**
- Other (Please describe) e-mail communication

Other (Please specify) Secondary data from participating universities

Compensation*** Yes No

Deception† Yes No

Location of Experiment: participating universities

Invasive or Sensitive Procedures: Yes No

- Blood Samples
- Physical Measurements (electrodes, etc.)
- Psychological Inventory
- rDNA
- Urine Samples
- Stress Exercise
- Review of Medical Records
- Other (Specify)

Sensitive Subject Matter: Yes No

- Alcohol, Drugs, Sex
- Depression/Suicide
- Learning Disability
- Other (Specify)

Use of Video **or Audio tapes** (please indicate)

Retained Yes No

Retained/Length of Time

Destroy/Erase Yes No

Other (explain)

Use specified in consent form? Yes No

Use/Access to tapes:

Provisions for Confidentiality/Anonymity

- Replies Coded
- Secure Storage
- Anonymous Response
- Confidential Response

Exact Location Where Signed Consent Forms Will be Filed:
(Must be kept on file for 3 years after the completion of the project).

* Must include signature of committee chair on protocol

** Please attach
*** Please attach conditions, schedule of payment.
† If yes, attach a debriefing form

Page 1 of 2

REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION from full IRB review

Some research projects involving human subjects are exempt from full review by the IRB. See the attached sheet on research categories exempt from full IRB review.

Basis for Exemption [Please refer to attached "Categories Exempt From Full IRB Review."]

- Established Educational Settings/Normal Educational Practices(**a letter of approval from a school official must be obtained before the study can be conducted; send copy to the IRB**)
- Use of educational anonymous tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, advancement; **attach copy**).
- Survey or interview procedures, [**unless** subjects might be identified, put at legal or personal risk, and unless survey or procedures deal with sensitive matters of personal behavior]
- Observations of public behavior [**unless** subjects might be identified, put at legal or personal risk, and unless observations deal with sensitive matters of personal behavior]
- Anonymous collection or study of existing documents, records, pathological or diagnostic specimens.
- Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies.

The U.S. population is becoming increasingly culturally, linguistically, economically, and ethnically diverse. The research needs to make a concerted effort to ensure that research subjects reflect the population demographically, including these groups who have been traditionally underrepresented. However, it is recognized that the available pool of subjects may preclude having a balanced population. If you cannot use a diverse population in your research, you must justify why not.

Principal Investigator Signature and Date

Graduate Committee Chair Signature and Date

Department Head Signature and Date

Institutional Review Board Signature and Date

Sample Detailed Form

Texas A&M University
Form II
Protocol Format for Use of Human Subjects in Research

Part A

Project Title: Association of Research Libraries LibQUAL+ Project: Service Quality Measures

Principal Investigator: Fred M. Heath, Dean of Texas A&M General Libraries
845-8111
fax: 845-6238
e-mail: fheath@tamu.edu

Sponsor/Source of Funds: Association of Research Libraries is the sponsor

Participating university libraries: University of Arizona, Arizona State University, University of Arkansas, Baylor University, Brigham Young University, Clemson University, University of Colorado, Colorado State University, Emory University, University of Guelph, University of Houston, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Iowa State University, Linda Hall Library, Miami University of Ohio, Michigan State University, University of Mississippi, University of Missouri, University of Nebraska, University of New Mexico, Northwestern University Medical School, Ohio University, Oklahoma State University, University of Oregon, Oregon State University, University of Pittsburgh, Southern Illinois University, University of Texas, Texas A&M University, Texas Tech University, University of Utah, Utah State University, Virginia Tech University, Washburn University, University of Washington, Washington State University, University of Waterloo

The project costs are funded by the Texas A&M General Libraries, the Association of Research Libraries, a grant from the U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, and by the project participants.

Part B

I have read the Belmont Report, 'Ethical Procedures and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research' and subscribe to the principles it contains. In light of this Declaration, I present for the Board's consideration the following information which will be explained to the subjects about the research activity

SELECTION AND SOURCES OF SUBJECTS

Texas A&M University is working with data from the institutions named above. As background, each university will (a) ask approximately 2,000 members of its community (900 undergraduates, 600 graduates, and 600 faculty) (b) who have in the interest of diversity been randomly selected to respond to a web survey about issues of library service quality. As the sample is randomly

drawn, it is anticipated that (c) the ages will reflect the university range and will be generally from 18 to 75. There will be (d) no compensation. Each survey will take place (e) in March 2001 from workstations on the campuses of the participating institutions. The data will be collected (f) on secure servers located in the Texas A&M Main Library, and reported back to the participants as aggregate mean score data. Individual responses of participants will be wholly confidential.

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

In March, each respondent will be invited to log onto the web form created by the participating institution and respond to a customer satisfaction survey. The survey, LibQUAL+, is a large-scale, user-based assessment of library service effectiveness that is being developed by the Association of Research Libraries in collaboration with Texas A&M. LibQUAL+ was patterned after the SERVQUAL instrument developed by Leonard L. Berry (Distinguished Professor, Texas A&M University), A. Parasuraman, and Valarie A. Zeithaml. The LibQUAL+ survey takes about fifteen minutes to complete. The questionnaire is straightforward and involves no deception or coercion. Potential respondents may elect not to proceed with the survey after reading the guarantees of confidentiality and privacy.

RISKS AND BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS

(a) There are no risks to the respondents other than the ordinary risks of daily life and chosen occupation. Respondents are free to decline to participate in the survey and can elect to leave the survey incomplete.

(b) The benefits to the respondents are those to the universities generally. For the first time, North American academic libraries will be able to assess the returns on their annual investment in terms of user evaluations of service quality. Strengths and weaknesses across the several dimensions defining service quality will be identified; best practices among participating universities will also surface, allowing libraries to work collegially with other institutions to improve local practices.

SIGNATURE

Fred M. Heath
Dean, Texas A&M General Libraries and Holder of the Sterling C. Evans Endowed Chair

DATE

February 15, 2001

Sample 2002 Survey

Library Service Quality Survey

Important instructions:

Please rate the following statements by selecting your choices from the pull-down menus to indicate:

- **Minimum** -- the number that represents the *minimum* level of service that you would find acceptable.
- **Desired** -- the number that represents the level of service that *you personally want*.
- **Perceived** -- the number that represents the level of service that *you believe* our library currently provides.

You must EITHER rate all three columns OR Identify the item as N/A.

When it comes to...	My Minimum Service Level Is <i>low</i> <i>high</i>	My Desired Service Level Is <i>low</i> <i>high</i>	Perceived Service Performance Is <i>low</i> <i>high</i>	N/A
1) Willingness to help users	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
2) Space that facilitates quiet study	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
3) Complete runs of journal titles	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
4) Employees who are consistently courteous	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
5) Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
6) Modern equipment that lets me easily access the information I need	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
7) A library website enabling me to locate information on my own	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
8) Timely document delivery/interlibrary loan	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
9) Interdisciplinary library needs being addressed	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
10) A haven for quiet and solitude	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
11) Dependability in handling users' service problems	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A

12)	Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
13)	A place for reflection and creativity	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
14)	Giving users individual attention	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
15)	Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
16)	Making information easily accessible for independent use	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
17)	Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
When it comes to...		My Minimum Service Level Is <i>low</i> <i>high</i>	My Desired Service Level Is <i>low</i> <i>high</i>	Perceived Service Performance Is <i>low</i> <i>high</i>	N/A
18)	Readiness to respond to users' questions	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
19)	Convenient business hours	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
20)	Employees who instill confidence in users	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
21)	A comfortable and inviting location	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
22)	Comprehensive print collections	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
23)	A contemplative environment	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
24)	Employees who understand the needs of their users	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A
25)	Convenient access to library collections	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	N/A

Appendix B: Sample Survey Notification

Sample Survey Notification
Fred Heath, Texas A & M University

[Today's date]

TO: [faculty, staff, or student's name]

FROM: [dean, director, or university librarian]

SUBJECT: LIBRARY WEB SURVEY

Your opinion counts!

It certainly means a lot to [this university library].

As we plan for the future of [this university library], it is important that we understand our users' perceptions and expectations so that we can provide the services you need. In a few days, you will receive an email providing you with a link to a library service quality survey. By responding to the survey, you will provide essential information for us to use in planning our future. The survey is part of a North American effort led by the Association of Research Libraries to measure library service quality and identify best practices. We would greatly appreciate your help. When you receive this email, please take the time to go to the web survey and complete it. Thank you for your participation.

Appendix C: Sample Survey Invitations

Sample Survey Invitation A Faculty, Staff and Students Fred Heath, Texas A & M University

[Today's date]

TO: Faculty, Staff and Students of [this university]

FROM: [dean, director, or university librarian]

SUBJECT: LIBRARY WEB SURVEY

Our university libraries, as you may be aware, are in the process of measuring the effectiveness of their services to you. The assessment will be done by a web-based survey, using the LibQUAL+™ instrument that is being piloted by the Association of Research Libraries in an effort to develop tools to measure library service quality and identify best practices. A sample of the academic community has been selected to help us identify how well you think your libraries meet your expectations of service. You have been selected and I ask you to contribute a few minutes of your time to help us toward our goal.

We will use the data we collect to identify what the library is doing right and what we need to improve upon. This information is very important to us because only you can tell us how well we are providing library services. Several other universities are also participating in this important initiative, and we anticipate surfacing important best practices information at other research libraries that will further assist us in improving the quality of our own services.

It is now time to proceed with collecting that information. Please double click on the following website to complete the survey:

[URL varies by institution]

We ask that you complete the survey within the next few days, and respond NO LATER THAN [10 days after this e-mail is sent].

Please be advised that you will need to be running Windows 95 or later, or Macintosh OS 8 or later, and a release 4.x browser. If you have any difficulty in accessing or taking the survey, please contact [the name of a local liaison at the pilot university][....phone # and e-mail.]

Thank you for taking this opportunity to assist us in better serving you. Please note that interested respondents may elect to enter, ENTIRELY AT YOUR OPTION, a drawing for [local and/or project prizes] by keying in your e-mail address at the end of the survey.

Sample Survey Invitation B
Library Faculty and Staff
Fred Heath, Texas A & M University

[Today's date]

TO: Library Faculty and Staff
FROM: [dean, director, or university librarian]
SUBJECT: LIBRARY WEB SURVEY

Our university libraries, as you may be aware, are in the process of measuring the effectiveness of their services to our community. The assessment will be done by a web-based survey, using the LibQUAL+™ instrument that is being piloted by the Association of Research Libraries in an effort to develop tools to measure library service quality and identify best practices. A sample of the academic community has been selected to help us identify how well they think our libraries meet their expectations of service.

We would like you to also respond to the survey, placing yourself in the frame of mind of the constituency you serve, and ANSWER THE SURVEY IN THE WAY YOU THINK THAT USERS WOULD RESPOND.

We will use the data we collect to identify what the library is doing right and what we need to improve upon. This information is very important to us because only our community can tell us how well we are providing library services. Several other universities are also participating in this important initiative, and we anticipate surfacing important best practices information at other research libraries that will further assist us in improving the quality of our own services.

It is now time to proceed with collecting that information. Please double click on the following website to complete the survey:

[URL varies by institution]

We ask that you complete the survey within the next few days, and respond NO LATER THAN [10 days after this e-mail message is sent].

Please be advised that you will need to be running Windows 95 or later, or Macintosh OS 8 or later, and a release 4.x browser. If you have any difficulty in accessing or taking the survey, please contact [the name of a local liaison at the pilot university][.....phone # and e-mail.]

Thank you for taking this opportunity to assist us in better serving you. Please note that interested respondents may elect to enter, ENTIRELY AT YOUR OPTION, a drawing for [local and/or project prizes] by keying in your e-mail address at the end of the survey.

Sample Survey Invitation C
More Personal Invitation
Eileen Hitchingham, Virginia Tech

^^

This is from Eileen Hitchingham
Dean of Libraries at Virginia Tech

^^

April, 2000

Please help us.

You can really contribute to my having a better understanding of what our user community thinks about Virginia Tech library services by participating in a very important electronic survey. Sample responses indicate it takes an average of 13 minutes to complete the form. Your investment of a bit of time now to respond will be greatly appreciated.

Virginia Tech is one of [number of project participants] academic libraries especially selected to pilot a library survey on services. This survey is important because it will:

- Help us better understand how the VT community rates library services
- Allow us to benchmark VT results against other libraries to determine best practices
- Let us know where we can concentrate service improvements for VT users

I am contacting you because you are part of the random sample chosen to represent all Virginia Tech students and faculty. When a sample survey is done it is very important to get good participation so I hope you will choose to respond. Let me assure you that if you participate, your responses will be held in confidence. No identifying links between responses and the individual responding will be retained. Combined data only will be reported.

I would certainly appreciate it if you would complete the online survey at [URL varies by institution] right now, or within the next few days.

We are able to provide a small incentive for your participation. If you choose, you can enter a drawing for [incentive] by keying in your e-mail address at the end of survey. If you have any difficulty in accessing or taking the survey, please contact Don Kenney, Associate Dean University Libraries at libs@vt.edu or 231-9257

Many thanks for helping us out with this important project.

Eileen

Eileen E. Hitchingham
Dean of Libraries
Virginia Tech

Appendix D: Sample Survey Reminders

Sample Survey Reminder A Fred Heath, Texas A & M Libraries

[Today's date]

TO: [faculty, staff, or student's name]
FROM: [dean, director, or university librarian]
SUBJECT: LIBRARY WEB SURVEY

[This reminder message should go out three times at three- to five-day intervals after the original message was sent.]

A few days ago you received an e-mail message asking you to assist us in assessing the quality of our library services by filling out a web-based survey.

If you have filled out the survey, thank you! If not, we ask you to take a few minutes to go to the URL below and help us in this important endeavor by taking the survey. Only you can tell us how well we are serving your library needs.

[URL varies by institution]

Please complete the survey no later than [the original date requested].
If you have any difficulty accessing or taking the survey, please contact [the name of a local liaison at the pilot university] [...phone # and e-mail].

Don't forget to key in your e-mail address at the end of the survey if you want to enter the drawing for [local and/or project prizes].

Thank you for your assistance.

Appendix E: Memorandums of Understanding

Memoranda of Understanding for Consortia

The Association of Research Libraries and Texas A&M University create Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) for consortial library groups on a case-by-case basis. The MOUs are created to address the particular needs and interests of these library groups.