Diving Into Assessment: LibQUAL+(TM) as a Springboard

Harris, Lorelei


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Challenging GOAL analyzing where and why the process falls short of those expectations

Author.

Student population c. 8000 FTE, across three campuses

L&Phipps, 2004

Medium sized urban setting, local agricultural economy

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Has the only academic research library in Southern Alberta

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Ongoing Analysis of User Comments

Statistics (Review and Reworking)

Overall Collection Evaluation

Space Use Studies

Articulating Initial Performance Indicators

Focus Groups & Detailed Analysis

12 Recommendations

“Successful process improvement study depends, in large part, on:

- discovering customer expectations
- analyzing where and why the process falls short of those expectations
- creating and implementing solutions so the process will meet or exceed customer expectations.” (Phipps, 2001)

Taking the Plunge

LibQUAL+™ 2005 Identified 3 Main Issues

Focus Groups & Detailed Analysis 12 Recommendations

“...traditional input and output data ... are meaningless data, but the more purposeful, effective data these days are outcomes and performance measures that show what good libraries do and how they perform given their human and financial resources.” (Cocvey, 2005)

Further Ripples

Space Use Studies

Overall Collection Evaluation

Statistics (Review and Reworking)

Ongoing Analysis of User Comments

“...it will be critical to construct and apply additional methods for informing the summary data from LibQUAL+® surveys... LibQUAL+® points a finger in the direction that needs further research.” (Phipps, 2001)

References


Presented by Lorelei Harris, Leona Jacobs, Donna Seyed Mahmoud University of LETHBRIDGE LIBRARY

Beware the Sharks!

Library as a “public good”

“There is a deep held and tacit assumption that the “good” is widely recognized and that the value of the library service is universally appreciated. ... this deeply held value results in resistance to change and resistance to continuous assessment. The recognition of the threat to organizational survival is almost non-existent in certain sectors of librarianship.” (Lakos & Phipps, 2004)

Challenging our Expertise

“...seeking data that allow questioning of deeply held assumptions that shape current views, biases, and internal perceptions... can keep libraries in touch with reality. ... is it important to attain this grasp of reality in order to learn how to change with and for customers.” (Phipps, 2001)

“Some staff think that by utilizing new measures that are customer-focused, libraries will be driven to “just do what the customers say” or be driven by a business model led on competition and the bottom line”. ... Research libraries have a shared vision... Listening to this vision should inform what is learned from customers.” (Phipps, 2001)

Fear, Suspicion and Lack of Trust

“There is an underlying fear that expectations may develop that cannot be met.” (Phipps, 2001)

“Measurement should not be feared as a potential tool for blame and punishment but should be embraced as a means of demonstrating success or learning of the need to change strategies.” (Lakos & Phipps, 2004)

Inexperience with Evaluation Methods

“Assessment cannot be seen as a separate management activity but must be appreciated and valued by all members of the culture and assumed to be part of their regular work. ... If organizations are serious about change, they need to invest in the development of new skills to sustain it.” (Lakos & Phipps, 2004)

Leadership

“Leadership is essential for assessment work to succeed. Leaders must have a clear performance ethic... be visibly and continuously committed to assessment work... understand its importance to the success of the organization... show evidence of utilizing assessment and evaluation data... need to encourage risk-taking... continuously articulate the organization’s purpose... engage in meaningful strategic planning within the organization... develop incentive programs that support cultural change.” (Lakos & Phipps, 2004)