

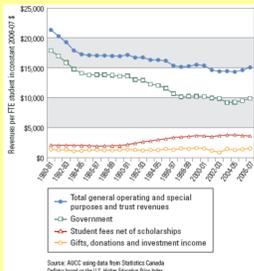
DESCRIBING THE POOL

University of Lethbridge...

- One of four publicly funded universities in Alberta, Canada
- Student population c. 8000 FTE, across three campuses
- Liberal education background; relatively new and growing graduate focus
- Medium sized urban setting, local agricultural economy
- Has the only academic research library in Southern Alberta

OFF THE BOARD

Declining Funding → Accountability → Performance Indicators



"The role, purpose, and value of academic library assessment must be "anchored" in an organization's purpose. Intended outcomes ... are best considered within the context of developments in the last 20 years or so, during which two important trends have had an impact on higher education: assessment and, relatedly, accountability." (Matthews, 2007)

Breakdown of funding sources per Canadian university student, 1980/81 to 2006/07 (AUCC, 2008)

Changing Information Environment → User Concerns

"Libraries have moved from an environment where they had a virtual monopoly on information access to one where databases, Web resources and vendors are plentiful and customers have choices... This has led to a need for the development of a formal and extensive capacity to listen to our customers and to become listening organizations." (Phipps, 2001)

TAKING THE PLUNGE

LibQUAL+™ 2005 → Identified 3 Main Issues

Focus Groups & Detailed Analysis → 12 Recommendations

"A 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)

MAKING A SPLASH

Positive Feedback

Presentation Opportunities

Improved Conversations with University Community

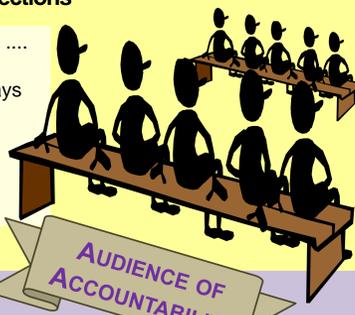
Reinforcement for Projects Underway

Budgetary Justification

Articulating Initial Performance Indicators

Opportunities to set Future Directions

"...traditional input and output data ... are meaningful 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." (Covey, 2005)



FURTHER RIPPLES

Space Use Studies

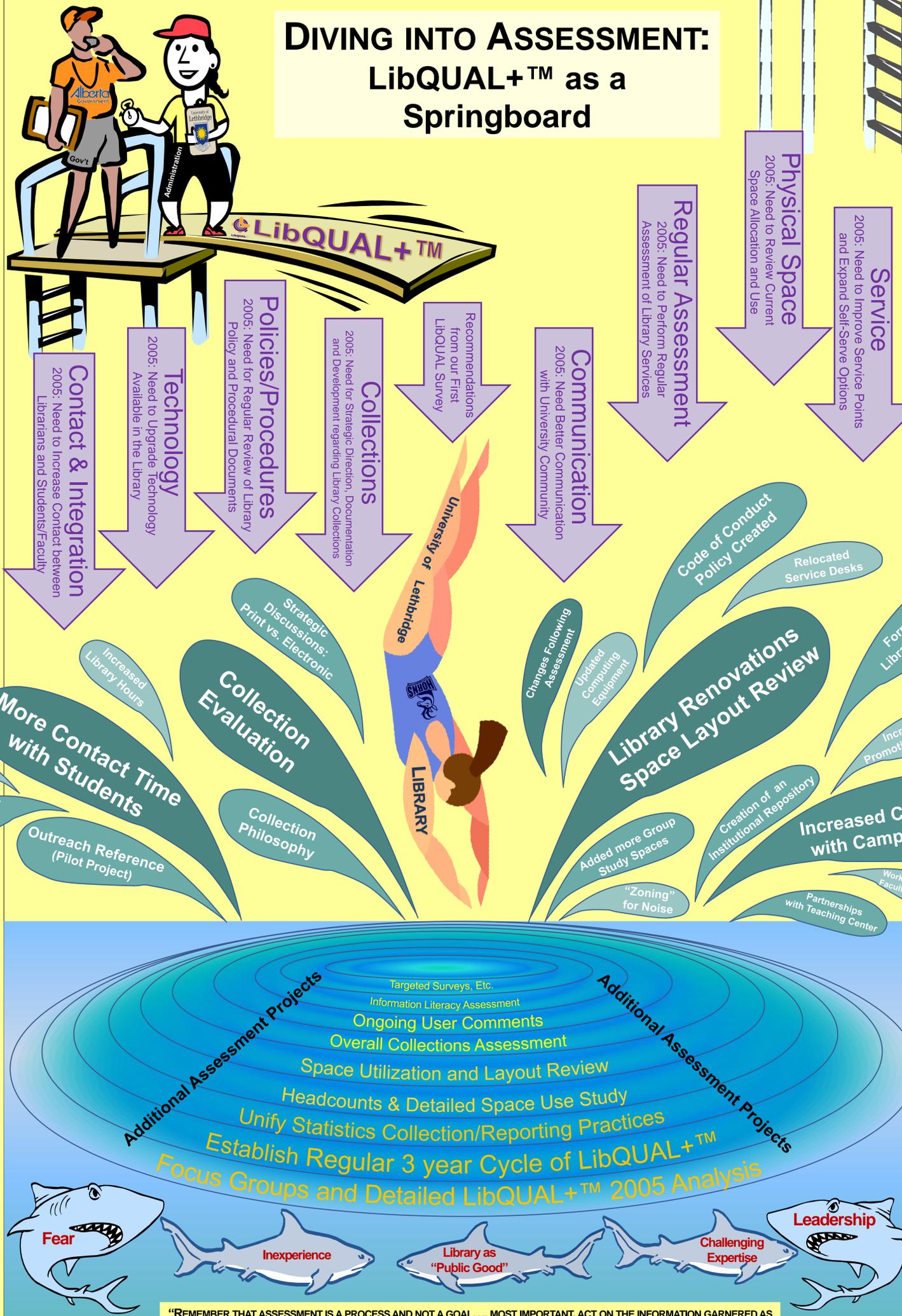
Overall Collection Evaluation

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)

DIVING INTO ASSESSMENT: LibQUAL+™ as a Springboard



BWARE THE SHARKS!

Library as a "public good"

"There is a deeply 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. ... It is 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 focused 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)

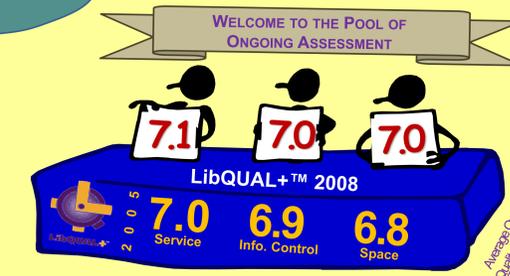
"For assessment and evaluation to succeed an open working environment is needed. This is usually impossible in an organization that manifests turf wars and personal distrust." (Lakos & Phipps, 2004)

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 dialog within the organization ... develop incentive programs that support cultural change." (Lakos & Phipps, 2004)



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Phipps, S. (2001). Beyond measuring service quality: learning from the voices of the customer, the staff, the processes, and the organization. *Library Trends*, 49(4), 635-661.



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