Washington & Lee University Library
Student Survey: Summary Overview

Conducted during May & June, 2008

One hundred sixty-four undergraduates, who were fairly evenly distributed among the four classes, responded to the survey. The overall mean satisfaction score[1] for Leyburn Library was 4.12. The score for the Telford Science Library was 4.52. On average, the class of 2008 was the most satisfied of Leyburn's users.

Eighty-three percent stated that Leyburn was their primary library. Seventy-five percent of all respondents claimed to have used one of the library's resources on a least a monthly basis. Forty-one percent reported using the library on a weekly basis. Telford users tended to spend more time in the library. The largest percentage of respondents (37%) reported spending between 1 to 5 hours per week in the library. 17% of the students spent over 10 hours per week, while 24% spent less than 1 hour.

Of the fourteen percent of the respondents who had borrowed a library laptop, seventy-four percent reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the process.

The top three methods students used to learn about the library were the Website, circulation staff, and other students.

Students vastly preferred using reference materials and journals in electronic over print formats, but they preferred reading books on paper. The split between electronic vs. print preference for reference items was 70.37% electronic to 18.52% print. The journal preferences were also robust, 63.58% preferred electronic format to 21.60% print. The strongest preference, however, was for books in print. 77.78% preferred to read printed books as opposed to 12.35% who opted for the electronic format.

Books were the most frequently used library resource, followed by electronic journals and videos. This runs counter to what is generally assumed; obviously students still use books and don't simply rely on journal articles and the Web.

As expected, Leyburn users had a somewhat lower mean satisfaction score for library facilities than Telford Science Library users (3.40 vs. 3.52.) Leyburn users were least satisfied with the carrels and seating, and the most satisfied with wireless access. Telford users, on the other hand, were dissatisfied with the computers in that library. They were satisfied with the wireless access, but less so than Leyburn users.

Users of Leyburn and Telford had similar levels of satisfaction with their primary library's circulation and reserve services. Students were the most satisfied with the process of checking out library materials and using Inter-library loan and the least satisfied with the appropriateness of fines and staff follow-up on locating missing library materials.

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[1] Satisfaction ratings were on a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied); a separate category was provided to indicate that the respondent did not use the product or service.

Students were satisfied with the Annie, the library catalog. The mean scores for the ease of using the catalog ranged from a high of 4.45 for renewing items to 4.07 for using the catalog to find items.

The library's Website received lower mean satisfaction scores. The survey was conducted before the Library launched its new Website in August of this year. The highest mean score was 4.01 for using the Website to find resources, while the lowest was 3.76 for using Webbridge to link to articles. WebBridge also had the largest percentage of students reporting that they did not use it (37%) which suggest this is an issue requiring more attention in classes and training materials.

The top four improvements students who primarily use Leyburn would like to see were:

1   More power outlets

2   Improved wireless access

3   More computers

4   More/redesigned study tables

The top four improvements Telford users would like to see were/are:

1   More power outlets

2   Personal study carrels

3   Improved wireless access

4   More/redesigned study tables

The ten changes/improvements in ranked order for both Leyburn and Telford users:

1   More Power outlets

2   Personal study carrels

3   Improved wireless access

4   More/redesigned study tables

5   Group study spaces

6   New study carrels

7   More computers

8   Lockers

9   More hardwired network access

10   Increased night & weekend staffing.