Surveying students at Kingston University

Angela Horrocks & Davina Omar
Kingston University
Impact of the external environment

- February 1993: 1st Kingston University Library User Survey
- Sept 1998: introduction of means-tested tuition fees
- 2004: introduction of top-up fees
- 2009: 1st and 2nd year surveys
- December 1993: Follett report
- 2004: Start of annual Kingston University User Surveys
- 2005: 1st National Student Survey
Unique Selling Point:

- How do students search for information?
- Starting point/location
- Search tools
- Types of sources
- Sets the scene for the rest of questionnaire and service
Q9. What information sources have you used in the last week? (Please select any that apply)

- Blogs
- E-Books
- E-Journals
- Lecture notes
- Previous dissertations
- Print books
- Print journals
- Social networking site
- Theses
- Videos/DVDs/online videos
- Websites
- Wikis
- Information source not listed

Q10. Which of the following do you use to track down information? (Please select any that apply)

- E-mail alerts
- E-Resources page on StudentSpace
- Google
- Different search engine (e.g. Yahoo)
- Google Scholar
- Library catalogue
- Reading List
- RSS feeds
- St George’s web pages
- StudentSpace
- StudySpace (Blackboard)
- 360 search
- None of the above
The growth in technology has complicated the picture.

It would be hard to get this information in any other way.

We have to respond to how the students are searching.
Questionnaire  | Focus groups  | Issues
1-2-1 interviews | Message board | Silent majority
Usability testing | Endless list | Contacting non-users
| | Setting the topics
Commitment to trusting the students

Changing staff preconceptions

- Trust that the priority is a real one
- Further investigation may be needed
- Examine the connection to learning and teaching

(McKnight, 2008)
LRC User Surveys, 1993 - 2009
The first LRC user survey, 1993

Aware that students were experiencing problems finding books and journal articles

Required quantitative statistical evidence that could be presented to the University Executive Team. Information needed to be robust so used an external company, Priority Research.

Required qualitative evidence that we could use as managers to improve library services. Information gathered through Focus Groups

Give the students a voice
Results of the 1993 Survey

Top 10 issues - top 4 were book-related

Satisfaction ratings for library services

Identification of micro communities

Focus Group information
SURVEY RESULTS - AN EXPLANATION OF THE SCATTERPLOT

The diagram below each dot represents one individual respondent. People who are close together on the scatterplot will have similar priorities whilst people widely separated have different priorities.

In order to understand the different prioritised agenda present in the sample population we have taken four groups at each of the extreme ‘poles’ of the scatterplot, right, left, top and bottom.

On the page opposite we have displayed and compared their agenda.
Identification of micro-communities (1993)

SURVEY RESULTS: COMPARISON OF THE OPINIONS OF RESPONDENTS ACROSS THE SURVEYED POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure we have current editions of books in stock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure all books in catalogues are on shelves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have access to some course texts only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers and librarians keep up-to-date books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop points in library for quick return of books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bigger library to accommodate more students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the photocopying facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each subject to have its own area to work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let students access journals on short loan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have work space in the Library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use more current readers/photocopies in short loan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make the library computer catalogue faster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More librarians that know subjects &amp; courses well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure the reservations system always works</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly display notice &amp; action hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow all students to renew books in library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable seated eating area to eat and drink</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More interaction on Library + Library newsletter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make library easier to use, so we can</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make the library more attractive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical staff so need to assist with computers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library staff on call hours to help us</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open even longer hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More to hide - a greater range</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist areas of the Library to be taught to us</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No single item is common to the above groups, each group having their own unique agenda.

If the University only tackles issues appearing in the 'everybody' agenda, this will leave many students with their library needs and aspirations unmet.
What changed as a result?

- Report to Executive requesting additional library funding
- Strengthened commitment to service improvement on the part of all library staff
- Numerous changes made as a result of Focus group comments
## Priorities for the future - 1993

1. Ensure we have current editions of books in stock
2. Make sure all books in catalogue are on shelves
3. More copies of core course text books
4. Teachers and librarians link to ensure right books
5. Drop point in library for quick return of books
6. A bigger library to accommodate more students
7. Improve the photocopying facilities
8. Each subject to have its own area
9. Let students borrow journals on short loan
10. More work space in the library
Priorities for the future, 2009

Overall

- More copies of core texts: 44.4
- More computers: 33.5
- More efficient printers: 21.0
- Quick access computers: 0.7
- 24hr opening in October for PRld LRC/NC: 7.5
- Ensure study zones are respected: 3.6
- More group study rooms: -16.7
- One system for printing and photocopying: -22.8
- Specialist software available in LRCs: -28.7
- Discourage social use of computers: -49.4

Q5. Part-time

- More copies of core texts: 53.6
- Ensure study zones are respected: 24.5
- More computers: 21.9
- Quick access computers: 9.9
- More efficient printers: -1.3
- 24hr opening in October for PRld LRC/NC: -4.6
- One system for printing and photocopying: -5.3
- More group study rooms: -14.6
- Specialist software available in LRCs: -31.1
- Discourage social use of computers: -50.3
More computers / a quiet computer study area

Adicional computers have been installed in the silent area on the 1st floor of the Kingston Hill LRC. The extension at Kingston Hill, which will open in September 2007, will provide an additional 300 study places and over 150 additional PCs. The third floor of Penrhyn Rd LRC which contains a number of networked computers, has now been redesignated a silent area in response to student requests.

Self-service borrowing and return

Self-service loans and returns which have been installed in Penrhyn Rd and Knights Park LRCs and will be installed in the rear foyers at Roehampton Vale and Kingston Hill. Books can now be borrowed and returned throughout the day and night without the need to queue.

Open 24 hours at all sites / Longer opening hours at weekends

We are currently open 24 hours opening at the two largest LRCs and we are looking at ways in which we can incorporate additional service at these locations for students based at other campuses. We are considering ways in which we can provide specialist software, copies of core texts and access to digitised material via Blackboard.

We are looking at the pattern of weekend opening and will see whether any adjustments are required to meet student needs.

Improved photocopying and printing facilities

We have reviewed our printing and photocopying facilities and plan to upgrade them as soon as possible.

"Thank you to everyone who helped with this survey"...
One to one interviews

Attempt to contact non-users

Same questions as the focus groups

Over 100 1-2-1 interviews took place in 2009

Comments received on a wide variety of topic areas
Space and building

• Like ground floor new look
• More group space (x2)
• I think it would be useful to have group rooms separated from the computers area
• Turn group study area on 2nd floor into quiet study
• Seminar rooms should be available after 9pm (during 24hr opening)
• ........need more silent zones

Even from a sample of 25 at one campus, there are obvious micro communities
Why do you use the LRC?

Silent area for revision, group areas for group work, books and computers

Get books at start of module, for group work, to pick up the River

Studying, socialise

Research, studying, group work. Only fun thing on campus, only place to go, easy meeting place

Peaceful work environment, wireless network, computers, printing

Books, staying overnight, printing

Printing, video library, vending machine
The use of surveys such as these are extremely encouraging as it ensures students' voices are heard. However, as far as the LRC is concerned...

I would like to see more copies of textbooks and 24 hour opening to take place in October!!!!

No comments I’m happy with the friendly atmosphere in Kingston hill
Themes

Gather a lot of information about a unique area

Compare with national initiatives

Stability of questions vs new areas
Review
Review

Success stories
- Substantial improvements to services and resources
- 15% increase in satisfaction ratings from 2004 to 2009
- Information on students’ use of LRCs and learning tools
- Closer working with Faculties and central departments

Challenges
- Improving quality? improving satisfaction?
- How representative are surveys?
- Limited opportunities to benchmark
- Survey fatigue
Improvements to service

- Substantial increase to stockfund budget over last 5 years
- Introduction of 24-hour opening
- Self-service issue and return
- ‘Environmental’ improvements to all 4 campus LRCs
- Increased number of PCs
- Improvements to printing and photocopying
Satisfaction rates 2004 - 2009

Satisfaction rate

- 2004
- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009

Kingston University London
Students use of learning technology

- Own a laptop (%)
- Visit LRC more than once a week (%)
- Use LRC to find books (%)

Help us improve our services and resources

By completing this survey you will be helping Information Services to identify priorities for improvement in our services and resources for students and staff in the LRCs. This questionnaire includes 32 short questions and will take about 10 minutes to complete and the information you provide tells us what is most important to you, helping us to shape and develop our environments, services and support to meet your needs.

Please complete the questionnaire by the end of March

This survey is entirely anonymous. No personal data is gathered. Any information you give will be used purely for statistical purposes in order to plan our future services.

enter
Contact details

Davina Omar - Information Services, Kingston University
d.omar@kingston.ac.uk

Angela Horrocks - Information Services, Kingston University
a.horrocks@kingston.ac.uk