

On November 4, 2002, I attended the **NY3Rs Libqual+ Orientation Session**, an all-day event at the NYS Museum in Albany, NY. Attendance was mandatory because our Library had chosen to participate in the nationwide Spring 2003 LibQual+ Survey, which will be administered here via the World Wide Web, beginning in April. The meeting was wholly devoted to discussion of the Survey's history, design and implementation.

This survey instrument derives from a Servqual survey that was designed to assess customer satisfaction with businesses. It was developed at Texas A&M and has already been performed at hundreds of libraries around the country. The survey randomly targets about 900 undergrads, 600 grad students and 600 faculty (n a campus of our size), notifies them by e-mail and follow-ups, and directs them to a proprietary website, where a fairly short survey asking about levels of user satisfaction with collections and services is posted. The survey, though standardized, also allows individual institutions to create a few questions tailored to its own interests. Most institutions offer an incentive random drawing prize as well. Data are then collected and analyzed at Texas A&M and reported back to individual institutions, as well as combined in various aggregate analyses. The LibQual+ survey has already become a small industry within the library profession and is possibly the most standardized, technologized and vastly applied library survey ever done. There are even week-long workshops devoted to the design of the survey and the statistical analysis of its data; over 70 papers and entire journal issues have been written about the survey results, analyses and implications for the future.

At the meeting, several slide/PowerPoint shows were presented by leading LibQual researchers, such as Colleen Cook, including sample surveys and historical information. Implementation tips were given, such as the best time to notify potential respondents by e-mail (Mondays, around 11 am), or what subject headings would most likely be read in an unsolicited e-mail. The necessity and procedures for getting permissions from campus IRB (institutional review board) administrators regarding issues of safeguarding privacy was emphasized. Past experiences and problems of administering the survey were also discussed. The general problem of mastering beaurocratic obstacles to implementing this test in a multilayered institution proved to be a popular topic. Workbooks and timetables were handed out and much encouragement and positive reinforcement for completing the sometimes tedious process of setting up the survey were dispensed with good cheer, sandwiches and bottled water.

Paul B. Wiener
Anglo-American Literature,
Video Collections, Film Studies, Art,
Reference and Promotional Services
631-632-7253
FAX: 631-632-7116