University Libraries
Annual User Survey
2012

Prepared by Ursula Scholz and the Assessment Committee
The university libraries’ annual user survey was open from March 19th to April 9th. It was advertised in several ways, from posters in the libraries, to digital signage, to a link on the university’s home page. The total number of completed responses was 450, down from 793 the previous spring. Given that the promotion of the survey was the same as it has been in previous years (including a drawing for one of three Visa gift cards) it is difficult to say why fewer people completed the survey. One possible explanation might be survey fatigue.

Despite the small response rate, the distribution of responses among different user groups was good. Compared with 2011 a greater number of undergraduates and fewer graduate students participated. A greater percentage of respondents indicated that they use Lewis primarily last year, and more said they use the Information Commons this year. The departmental distribution was also more heavily skewed towards the social sciences in 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>15.56%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Students</td>
<td>24.67%</td>
<td>41.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Students</td>
<td>55.78%</td>
<td>37.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff/Other</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses Cudahy Library most</td>
<td>41.78%</td>
<td>35.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses the IC most</td>
<td>28.44%</td>
<td>23.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses Lewis most</td>
<td>22.67%</td>
<td>34.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online only/Other</td>
<td>7.11%</td>
<td>6.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>19.78%</td>
<td>19.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>24.44%</td>
<td>20.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>45.78%</td>
<td>54.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Undecided</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>6.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared with the 2011 results, more people visit the library on a daily or weekly basis (74.22% in 2012 and 69.86% in 2011). Slightly fewer use library resources on the website daily or weekly (60.66% in 2012 and 64.55% in 2011). Use of the library’s social media outlets is up from 15% to 20%, as is use of the mobile site, from 13% last year to 25% this year. Undergraduates are more likely to use the library’s social media sites, whereas usage of the mobile site is very consistent across different patron groups. This year was the first time we asked about patrons’ usage of QR codes, and they are not yet widely popular, with 90% of respondents saying that they’ve never used one, either in the library or elsewhere.
Quantitative Questions: Analysis
The survey included 18 quantitative questions, which were scored on a scale of 1 to 4, with “not applicable” as an alternative option. As we have seen in previous surveys, questions related to library staff are scored highly by patrons, while they are more negative about the website and collections. This year, library hours are also a top-scored item, perhaps due to the new 24/5 hours at the Information Commons. (See appendices for complete data.)

Top five, based on average score:

- Staff at the library are helpful in locating and obtaining the books, articles, and other materials I need. (3.66)
- Staff at the library are courteous. (3.65)
- Staff at the library are able to help me resolve problems I have while visiting the library. (3.64)
- Staff at the library are adept at helping me with my research. (3.61)
- The library hours are sufficient for my study and research. (3.52)

Bottom five, based on average score:

- The ebook collection is sufficient for my study and research. (2.87)
- Visual design and layout of the library’s website. (3.08)
- The print journal collection is sufficient for my study and research. (3.1)
- The print book collection is sufficient for my study and research. (3.14)
- (tie) The quiet study space is sufficient for my study and research. (3.15)
- (tie) Rate the ease of finding information on your own using the library’s website. (3.15)

Five most relevant to users, based on lower percentage of “not applicable” responses

- Overall usability of the library’s website. (2.26% N/A)
- Visual design and layout of the library’s website. (2.71% N/A)
- Navigating through menus and pages on the library’s website. (2.93% N/A)
- Staff at the library are courteous. (3.35% N/A)
- Rate the ease of finding information on your own using the library’s website. (3.39% N/A)

Five least relevant to users, based on higher percentage of “not applicable” responses

- The ebook collection is sufficient for my study and research (29.5% N/A)
- The print journal collection is sufficient for my study and research. (27.64% N/A)
- Rate the ease of using library online help. (24.26% N/A)
- Staff at the library are adept at helping me with my research. (21.21% N/A)
- The group study space is sufficient for my study and research. (17.12% N/A)
Overall ratings are similar between the different patron groups, with the average score for all numeric questions ranging from 3.32 for undergraduates, to 3.25 for graduate students and 3.27 for faculty. All three groups assign high scores to the helpfulness and courteousness of staff. Also consistent across all three groups are the low scores given to the ebook collection.

### Highest scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
<th>Undergraduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff at the library are courteous. (3.85)</td>
<td>Staff at the library are helpful in locating and obtaining the books, articles, and other materials I need. (3.69)</td>
<td>Staff at the library are able to help me resolve problems I have while visiting the library. (3.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff at the library are helpful in locating and obtaining the books, articles, and other materials I need. (3.67)</td>
<td>Staff at the library are courteous. (3.58)</td>
<td>Staff at the library are courteous. (3.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The library hours are sufficient for my study and research. (3.79)</td>
<td>Staff at the library are able to help me resolve problems I have while visiting the library. (3.67)</td>
<td>Staff at the library are helpful in locating and obtaining the books, articles, and other materials I need. (3.58)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lowest scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
<th>Undergraduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ebook collection is sufficient for my study and research. (2.68)</td>
<td>The ebook collection is sufficient for my study and research. (2.62)</td>
<td>The ebook collection is sufficient for my study and research. (2.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual design and layout of the library website. (2.81)</td>
<td>The print journal collection is sufficient for my study and research (2.99)</td>
<td>The quiet study space is sufficient for my study and research. (3.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The print journal collection is sufficient for my study and research. (2.91)</td>
<td>The print book collection is sufficient for my study and research (3.0)</td>
<td>Rate the ease of finding information on your own using the library’s website. (3.15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not all of the quantitative questions that were asked in 2012 duplicated questions from our previous survey in 2011, but of those that did, there was little change. On average, scores increased but only by three hundredths of a point. These scores had the largest differences:

- “The online journal collection is sufficient for my study and research.” – decreased 0.22 points.
- “Staff at the library are helpful in locating and obtaining the books, articles, and other materials I need.” – increased 0.12 points
- “Staff at the library are adept at helping me with my research.” – increased 0.12 points.
Building use:
When asked what space they use most often, there is a relatively even distribution among the different choices. Most frequently selected as the space used most often was Cudahy stacks, with 19.86% of the total respondents. The IC 1st or 2nd floor was selected by 16.82%, and the IC 3rd floor by another 16.12%. Undergraduates are relatively more likely to say they use one of the IC spaces, and graduate students choose Lewis spaces more than other groups. Many faculty chose “other”, but of those who named a space, the Cudahy stacks was most often chosen. When perusing the reasons patrons give for preferring one space over the others, clear patterns emerge:

- Those who choose Cudahy Stacks list quiet and proximity to books as reasons.
  - “It’s wonderful and quiet and I’m surrounded by books.”
  - “It feels academic and it is usually quieter than other areas. I also like being close to the books so I can easily grab them when necessary.”
- Those who choose the IC 1st/2nd floor mention preferring a noisier environment, as well as computer access, comfortable furniture, and the lake view.
  - “It’s comfortable and not too quiet. I like the view and there’s a good amount of computers to use and printer”
  - “I appreciate the comfort and noise level. I have trouble working in areas that are too quiet or stifling. I feel much more relaxed studying on the 1st or second levels of the IC because there is a cheery, awake feel, not to mention the wonderful view. It prevents me from feeling to gloomy/pathetic when I’m studying.”
- Those who prefer the IC 3rd floor overwhelmingly say they enjoy the quiet and the view.
  - “The third floor is quiet and the view is nice.”
- Lewis 6th floor users mention convenience most often.
  - “It’s easy to access and has enough computers for all.”
- Users of the Lewis 8th floor say they choose it for the quiet, seclusion, and proximity to collections.
  - “It is quiet and usually not crowded”
- Cudahy 1st floor users mention that it’s quiet but not silent, and that the lighting is better.
  - “It is quiet, but not dead silent. Rather there is the pitter patter of other students writing and typing on computers which encourages productivity in me, unlike the fright I experience when I zip open my bag in the stacks and the one decibel is a deafeningly loud by comparison. Also it has comfortable seating and computers available.”
- Those who use the Donovan Reading Room mention the silence and the visual appeal of the space.
  - “It’s very quiet and I think the room itself is beautiful, I enjoy reading there and am productive.”

Respondents were also asked, “What would make the library more inviting and comfortable?” and asked to choose all that applied from a multiple choice list and to specify “what else?” if desired. The multiple choice response was striking, with more outlets being the most frequent response for respondents from all three libraries. Other choices, more individual study desks, more large study tables, and more soft seating, all had their constituents. Undergraduate students selected these in approximately equal number, graduate students favored individual study desks and soft seating over
large tables, and faculty favored soft seating as highly as they favored outlets. Many respondents did make suggestions to the “what else?” query, often to amplify their multiple choice response (“More outlets!!”). In addition, there were many other comments about the difficulty finding the desired kind of study space, whether group or individual, the desire for more comfortable chairs, and the need to improve the condition of furnishings such as chairs, lighting, and carpet.

The responses to this question echo comments in other sections of the survey, particularly in the building and facilities section and suggest that improved or increased space for both quiet and collaborative study would be welcome, as well as any improvements in the buildings and furnishing. The response also reinforces the need to support a variety of learning and social styles in the libraries.
Information Commons 24/5

The new extended hours at the Information Commons are used by a fairly high percentage of survey respondents. Overall, slightly more than half of respondents say that they never use the extended hours, but among undergraduates, that drops to 32%. Three percent of undergraduates use the extended hours daily; 19% use them weekly; 14% monthly, and 32% use the extended hours a few times per semester. Those who use the building overnight are disproportionately science majors. Students in the humanities are the least likely to visit the IC overnight. The most common reason why patrons do not use the extended hours is, “I don’t study during overnight hours.”

![Undergraduate Use of the IC Extended Hours](image)

Library Equipment Borrowed
Two hundred and nineteen people responded to the question: “Which of the following equipment have you borrowed from the library?” The survey question listed six categories of equipment, and respondents were asked to check all equipment types that they had borrowed. As indicated by the chart below, laptops were the item that was most popular among the six categories, accounting for nearly 40% of all items borrowed. Dry-erase markers and headphones combined made up nearly 50% of all items borrowed. The remaining three categories - extension cords, calculators, and power strips - combined to make up the remaining responses. These patterns were consistent across all patron categories.
Comments related to equipment and supplies

Fifty six people (12.5% of the total respondents) provided free text comments to the question, “What other equipment or supplies would you like to be able to check out of the library survey respondents about other equipment and supplies they’d like to check out of the library?” Given that this is a small sample, it’s not surprising that the comments varied widely. Only two significant categories stood out:

- **Chargers:** Thirteen people suggested “chargers.” Five people would like phone chargers, three would like to borrow MacBook laptop chargers, one person wanted an iPad charger, and four simply said “chargers” without clarifying a type.

- **Items already available at the libraries:** Close to a third of the comments were requests for items the library currently loans, such as iPads/tablets (five people mentioned these), cameras, a DSLR camera, camcorders, laptop computers, a Mac computer, projectors, presentation remotes, and movies. One undergraduate suggested an “iPad or tablet of course, that’s what all the cool schools are doing!”

Three respondents suggested e-readers (two specifically identified Kindles), and three mentioned flash drives. Other items, each mentioned once, include hardware (such things as an iPad keyboard, a digital drawing tablet, a document camera, a monitor that could be used with a laptop, a wireless mouse, and an “older TI 83” calculator), and office supplies (note cards, pens, and staplers – the two individuals mentioning a stapler stated that they would borrow one). Other comments mentioned materials that would not fit the category of equipment or supplies (such as Blu-ray DVDs or Rosetta Stone programs). Someone at WTC wants Lewis to provide “coffee vending and Rambler cards that work...get the color printer fixed.” A faculty member mentioned “slides,” with no additional details.
Five people, primarily faculty and graduate students, indicated that they were not aware that the library loaned equipment. One graduate student commented that "I didn’t realize I could check these out! I am super excited!"

**Collections: satisfaction by department**

In the section of the survey that related to our collections, patrons overall express the greatest degree of satisfaction with the library’s research databases, followed by the online journal collection. Less well received are the ebook collection and the print journal collection. Breaking down scores by the user’s departmental affiliation, though, shows that people in the humanities are the least satisfied overall, while those in the sciences give the highest scores. The greatest difference is in satisfaction with ebooks and print journals, while scores for research databases are more consistent.
Comments related to online resources:
When asked, “What other research databases should the library offer?” 15 people replied with 17 specific recommendations listed below. Thirty-four people commented that the library should offer additional online resources, either in general or in their own field of study, but did not offer specific suggestions. Twenty-three respondents (5 faculty, 4 graduate students, and 14 undergraduates) expressed satisfaction with the library’s current offerings.

The question also elicited 13 comments about the difficulty of navigating through the library’s website and electronic resources. For example, “Google scholar has been doing a better job than the library in terms of getting articles to my screen efficiently. There are too many things to click through,” and, “It is not that the library doesn’t carry the research databases I need, it’s that accessing articles within the system can be a frustrating and irksome task.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requested database</th>
<th>Highly relevant for</th>
<th>Requestor area and level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Archives</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>History faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archives Unbound</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>History graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Abstracts</td>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>Fine Arts faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge Structural Database (now subscribed)</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Chemistry faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynda.com</td>
<td>General (software training)</td>
<td>Business graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mintel Reports—expanded access</td>
<td>Business administration</td>
<td>Business graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Nineteenth Century Collections Online</td>
<td>English, history</td>
<td>English graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford Bibliographies Online</td>
<td>Relevant modules</td>
<td>Theology graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProQuest Sanborn Maps for Illinois</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>History graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questia</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>English undergraduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaxys (now subscribed)</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Chemistry faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosetta Stone</td>
<td>Modern languages</td>
<td>English undergraduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scopus</td>
<td>Sciences, math</td>
<td>Psychology graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slavery and Antislavery: A Transnational Archive</td>
<td>History, black world studies</td>
<td>History graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</td>
<td>Theology, history, philosophy</td>
<td>History graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomson Reuters</td>
<td>Business administration</td>
<td>Business graduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfram Alpha Pro</td>
<td>Sciences, math</td>
<td>Unspecified, graduate student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Nineteenth Century Collections Online was recently acquired by the library.*
Comments related to library services:
One hundred and fifty six people replied to the question, “How could the people working in the library help you better?” One half (79) left a generally positive response, such as “they are great” or “I like them how they are.” Of those who had criticisms or suggestions, 22 commented on staff approachability and friendliness. Typical comments in this vein were, “They never seem happy. They make me feel stupid for asking questions,” and, “The staff at the checkout could be a bit more engaging and friendly.” Another 18 felt that library staff lack knowledge or are poorly trained. Some examples of these: “Some of the student staff could be better trained. I have had multiple instances recently of not being able to have questions answered and having to have them go to someone else.” Or, “Be more aware of how to fix computer problems on the IC computers.” 10 people requested that staff be more proactive in seeking to help people. Comments included “If they see you wondering around or look confused, offer their help instead of waiting for the person to ask for help.” Five people asked for more publicity about what services the library offers. There were also five complaints about specific library policies, five general suggestions, and finally twelve miscellaneous and off-topic comments about things ranging from electrical outlets to the Cudahy doors.

General comments:
One hundred and eighty four people replied to the question, “What could we do to improve your library experience?” The most frequently mentioned requests related to the facilities (54 comments). Most of the facilities comments (23) requested more study space, often specifying quiet space but occasionally group space as well. Typical comments are, “MORE SEATING! Walking into the library and searching and searching for a seat is monotonous and a waste of time. I realize it is hard to avoid, but I feel a few more seats can be added!” Another such comment: “I think that having more comfortable seating (and more
seating in general) in Lewis Library would help students at the downtown campus especially during Finals.” There were also 10 comments about furniture, either the specific type of furniture desired, or the quality of existing furniture. Some examples are, “1) The group study rooms [in the IC] get incredibly stuffy during the summer time. Is there any way to improve the circulation? 2) A lot of the chairs and tables in the group study rooms are falling apart or incredibly wobbly. I don’t know if they need to be replaced, but they should at least be looked at by maintenance to see if the problem can be fixed by a turn of a screw” and “Make the chairs at the large tables and individual desks a little softer on the bottom. Add some cushion on the seat. Please.” Other facilities comments focused on climate control and cleanliness.

The next largest grouping was 30 comments expressing general satisfaction with library services. Some sample comments are: “I think it is a great library that goes out of its way to be user-friendly,” and, “Not much. It’s beautiful and offers many options of both quiet and loud places to study. Both are good for different times. A time for everything under the sun, and all that good stuff from Ecclesiastes. This plethora of options vastly enhances my study experience. Keep up the great work!” Nineteen comments related to our collections. The most frequently mentioned material were books, but the comments range from requesting more collections in certain subject areas, to requests for particular journal titles, to desiring more recent material. A couple of sample comments are, “Get more books, choose different lighting for Cudahy and please get Starbucks off our campus,” and “Would love more resources (print, journals, etc.) on emerging crimes such as white-collar and cyber crime, to the extent available.” Another 17 people said that they would like more direct access to Cudahy Library. A typical comment on this topic: “Re-open the entrance to Cudahy. The trip through the IC is too inconvenient.” Fifteen people mentioned wanting longer hours, either at Lewis or on weekends, or for Cudahy Library. Twelve people complained about noise, eleven want more computers or specific software, and eleven find the library website confusing or difficult to use.
Appendix A: Average scores for all quantitative questions

1. Staff at the library are courteous.
2. Staff at the library are adept at helping me with my research.
3. Staff at the library are helpful in locating and obtaining the books, articles, and other materials I need for my research and study.
4. Staff at the library are able to help me resolve problems I have while visiting the library.
5. Rate the ease of finding information on your own using the library’s website.
6. Rate the ease of using library online help.
7. Finding information about the library on the library’s website.
8. Navigating through menus and pages on the library’s website.
9. Visual design and layout of the library’s website.
10. Overall usability of the library’s website.
11. The print collection is sufficient for my study and research.
12. The ebook collection is sufficient for my study and research.
13. The print journal collection is sufficient for my study and research.
14. The online journal collection is sufficient for my study and research.
15. The library provides sufficient research databases for my study and research (e.g. Academic Search Premier, LexisNexis, PsycINFO...).
16. The group study space is sufficient for my study and research.
17. The quiet study space is sufficient for my study and research.
18. The library hours are sufficient for my study and research.
Appendix B: N/A percentages for all quantitative questions

1. Staff at the library are courteous.
2. Staff at the library are adept at helping me with my research.
3. Staff at the library are helpful in locating and obtaining the books, articles, and other materials I need for my research and study.
4. Staff at the library are able to help me resolve problems I have while visiting the library.
5. Rate the ease of finding information on your own using the library’s website.
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12. The ebook collection is sufficient for my study and research.
13. The print journal collection is sufficient for my study and research.
14. The online journal collection is sufficient for my study and research.
15. The library provides sufficient research databases for my study and research (e.g. Academic Search Premier, LexisNexis, PsycINFO...).
16. The group study space is sufficient for my study and research.
17. The quiet study space is sufficient for my study and research.
18. The library hours are sufficient for my study and research.
Appendix C: Comparison 2012 to 2011

*Note: questions 16, 17, and 18 were not asked in 2011 so no comparative data is available.

1. Staff at the library are courteous.
2. Staff at the library are adept at helping me with my research.
3. Staff at the library are helpful in locating and obtaining the books, articles, and other materials I need for my research and study.
4. Staff at the library are able to help me resolve problems I have while visiting the library.
5. Rate the ease of finding information on your own using the library’s website.
6. Rate the ease of using library online help.
7. Finding information about the library on the library’s website.
8. Navigating through menus and pages on the library’s website.
9. Visual design and layout of the library’s website.
10. Overall usability of the library’s website.
11. The print collection is sufficient for my study and research.
12. The ebook collection is sufficient for my study and research.
13. The print journal collection is sufficient for my study and research.
14. The online journal collection is sufficient for my study and research.
15. The library provides sufficient research databases for my study and research (e.g. Academic Search Premier, LexisNexis, PsycINFO...).