

Introduction

As a public, metropolitan university with a student population of approximately 13,000, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock has accepted a leadership role in the community and is committed to improving and enhancing the livelihood, viability and progress of Little Rock, Central Arkansas and particularly the University District (i.e. the neighborhoods surrounding the university). As a participant in the University's outreach efforts, the Ottenheimer Library has extended generous library privileges to members of community. Privileges include Internet access, the ability to borrow items (in all formats) from the circulating collection, as well as use electronic resources, reference materials, and other non-circulating materials within the library.

This presentation reports on a recent study of the Library's community users. Quantitative measures include an examination of data from the Library's integrated library system and print management system. Qualitative measures include data collected from a survey of community user needs and expectations. The results of this study have provided a clearer understanding of who the community users are and how to best meet their needs while not diminishing resources for the Library's primary clientele.



Community Users - Definition

"Individuals who have no affiliation with the institution as students, faculty, alumni or members of the governing board and individuals affiliated with an institution through a consortium agreement for reciprocal borrowing" (Russell, 1992).

Methodology

Community User Demographics

Quantitative measures include an examination of data from the library's integrated library system, print management system and donor list.

Patron records were examined for 811 community users, including 424 community computer users and 387 community borrowers.

Survey Summary

Qualitative measures include an examination of data collected from a survey of community user needs and expectations.

E-mail link to Survey Monkey survey sent to 465 current users. Response rate was low – 9%

Challenges

E-mail surveys generally have a low response rate; surveys with little salience have low response rates

Incomplete data on patrons – 13% had no e-mail addresses on file; 11% had inaccurate or inactive e-mail addresses

Assessing Community Users in an Academic Library

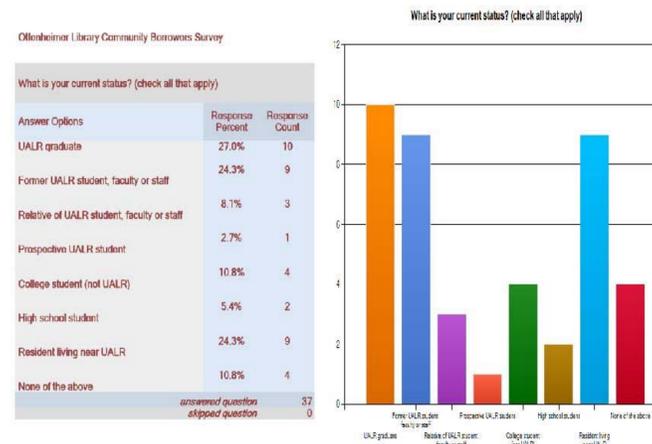


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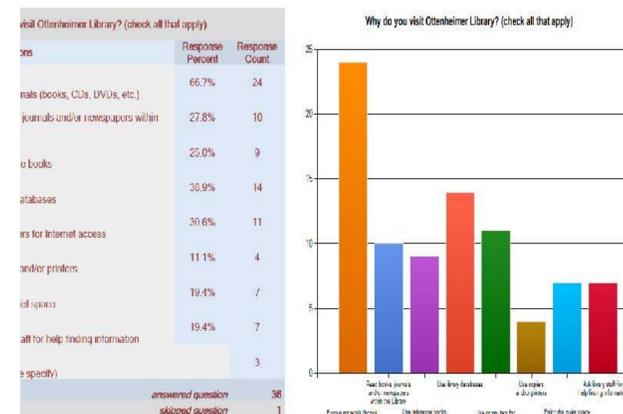


UALR Community User Survey Results

Current Status of Users



Collections/Services Used



Demographics

Approximately 500 active community users at any given time.

Two groups of users: Borrowers and Computer Users

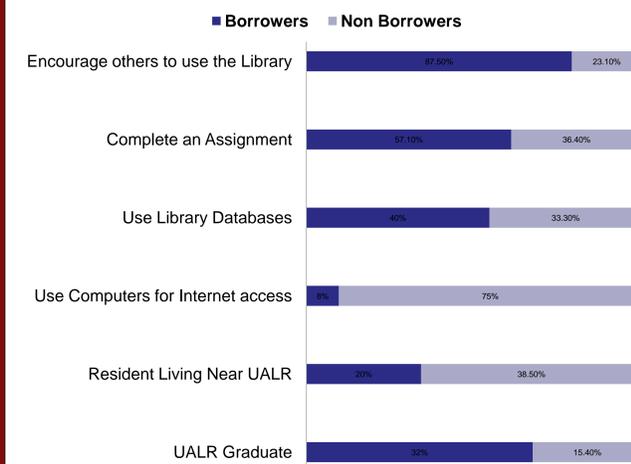
- Only 15 % overlap between the two groups
- No overlap between community users and donors

Borrowers

- 58% female; 42% male
- Median age =35; male =34; female =36
- Make up 8% of library circulation
- 1/3 of borrowers were 1 time users

Computer Users

- 49% female; 51% male
- Median age =33; male =35; female =30



User Requests

- More computers and longer times
- Additional software
- Remote access to databases
- Interlibrary loan
- Improvements to collection

Conclusions

-Offering library services to unaffiliated users has been an important contribution to local community

- Overall financial impact has been low
- *Few if any financial gifts from community users
- *Costs and losses relatively small

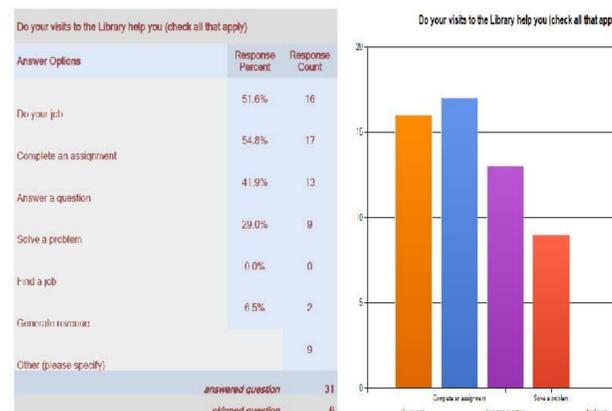
-“Good Will” benefits exist but are hard to quantify

Bibliography

Dole, Wanda V. and J. B. Hill. (forthcoming) “Community Users in Academic Libraries: Who They Are, What They Want, How Much They Cost and What is the ROI?”

Russell, E. *et al.* (1992) “External user access to academic libraries in urban/metropolitan areas”, in *Academic Libraries in Urban and Metropolitan Areas: A Management Handbook*, ed. by G. McCabe. Greenwood Press, New York. (pp. 27-32).

Tasks Accomplished



Good Will Generated

