



Using Gimlet Desk Statistics to Improve Library Services

susan gardner | loyola marymount university

introduction

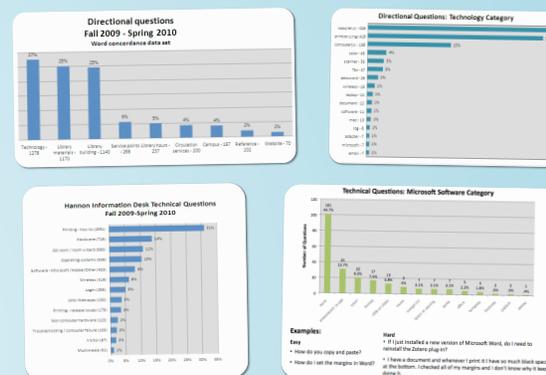
Gimlet is a web-based tool for recording statistics and information about encounters at the Information Desk. It helps keep track of the number and kinds of questions you are answering, and create reports that help you analyze the data. A monthly fee of \$10 per Gimlet site includes unlimited staff user accounts and a searchable knowledge base of all your data.

The Gimlet form contains six pre-set categories requiring a multiple choice answer: duration, type of question, status of the questioner, format, location, and difficulty. There is a free text Question and Answer box, along with the option to “tag” questions and a place for the service provider’s initials. Time and date is automatically stamped for each question.

design

- A total of 12,408 questions was included: all Gimlet data logged by all Information Desk workers in the Fall semester of 2009 (August – December 2009) and the Spring semester of 2010 (January–May 2010).
- Automatic reports were generated to get overall totals and specified cross-tabs; all data was dumped into an Excel file for further analysis.
- All questions were sorted by day and time in Excel for each semester, and the totals for each hour were recorded on a chart.
- All directional and technical questions were converted into text files and fed into the Simple Concordance Program to create word lists sorted by frequency. A “stoplist” was applied. All remaining, meaningful words were categorized. Content analysis was achieved by looking at all directional and technical categories and the specific word counts within each one for context.

results



conclusions

- The data mining led to several advancements in staffing and service.
- Directional question data improved signage and provided evidence to acquire “asked for” items such as a color printer.
- Time of day and day of the week data gave us optimal staffing patterns for the Desk, and resulted in partial evidence used to go from 24/7 to 24/5.
- Technical question data presented to IT Dept. highlighted problem areas and led to improved staff/student worker technology training.
- Questions searched by initials helped evaluate student worker knowledge. Tags sorted by frequency helped us begin building FAQ knowledge base for the public.

The screenshot shows the 'Gimlet Info Desk Statistics' web application. It features a navigation bar with 'Add question', 'Search', 'Reports', and 'My account'. Below this are several dropdown menus for 'Duration', 'Question type', 'Asked by', 'Format', and 'Location'. There are also text input fields for 'Question' and 'Answer'. A 'Tags' section lists various categories like 'Business Campus', 'Circulation', etc. At the bottom, there are fields for 'Time of question' and 'Initials'.

results

Time of Day/Day of Week Stats for Fall 2009

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
12am-1am	12	2	10	21	3	1	2
1am-2am	21	1	8	3	0	1	1
2am-3am	9	7	8	6	0	2	4
3am-4am	2	5	1	5	2	2	1
4am-5am	5	3	2	5	1	0	2
5am-6am	4	3	3	1	0	0	1
6am-7am	3	0	1	2	2	0	0
7am-8am	8	11	6	7	1	0	0
8am-9am	6	10	9	8	3	4	0
9am-10am	67	84	68	68	37	11	5
10am-11am	86	97	104	95	72	25	37
11am-12pm	108	83	104	62	102	1	1
12pm-1pm	65	147	139	93	110	47	41
1pm-2pm	73	115	107	84	71	121	37
2pm-3pm	115	119	102	59	71	61	46
3pm-4pm	144	142	96	75	77	64	88
4pm-5pm	189	140	94	120	88	75	61
5pm-6pm	84	107	81	88	37	28	67
6pm-7pm	77	119	55	66	9	4	61
7pm-8pm	55	87	97	57	13	19	45
8pm-9pm	38	67	31	46	15	15	58
9pm-10pm	30	36	18	25	11	14	38
10pm-11pm	21	23	17	10	6	9	34
11pm-12am	10	27	3	12	4	8	30