Virtual Focus Group – Free, Easy & Gets Results

Why A Focus Group?
“Focus groups can be very instructive and the results can in fact represent huge swaths of your campus. You collect textured, rich data as opposed to numbers that are hard to parse (I personally have never heard data “speak”).”

Susan Herbst
President, UConn
Inside Higher Ed, June, 2011

Why A Virtual Focus Group?
- No need to gather staff and students in one place at one time.
- Reduces the potential for negative group dynamics.
- Lessens the influence of the moderator.
- Provides opportunities for ongoing idea development.
- Gains a full, written record of all comments.
- Lowers usage of an important asset: Time.

How We Did It:
- All five regional libraries - common set of very focused questions.
- Wordpress software because of blog experience.
- Students were asked to visit the blog to answer each of the five questions and then to revisit later as often as possible to respond to the comments of others.
- We took a very relaxed approach to moderation, attempting to avoid active involvement which might derail or divert discussions.
- Two week project.
- No substantial incentive to participate.
- Online satisfaction survey of participants at the end.

How Did It Turn Out?
(One Library’s Experience)
LibQual+ (2010)
180 Survey Responses
80 comments,
60% of which were "I like the library" or "I like the staff"
Virtual Focus Group (2011)
6 Virtual Focus Group Members
100 comments specific to library use and needs

Did the Virtual Focusers Like It?

Focus Group Satisfaction

Focus Group Preference

In-Person Virtual Either None

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