The 2004 User Survey at the University of Hong Kong Libraries

Helen Woo

An online user survey, with the option to complete in the print format, was conducted between February 9 and February 22, 2004. The aim of the survey was for users to evaluate the performance of the main library and the six branch libraries, to identify any performance gaps, and to find out user preferences for print and electronic materials. A total of 2,564 returns were received. The results showed that 68.8 percent of the respondents prefer to use journals online compared to 31.2 percent who prefer to use print journals; and 71.8 percent of the respondents prefer to use printed books compared to 28.2 percent who prefer to use electronic books. Eighty-eight pages of written comments were received covering a wide array of issues.

The University of Hong Kong (HKU), founded in 1911, is the first tertiary institution in Hong Kong. It has more than 20,300 students (11,700 undergraduates and 8,600 graduates) and 2,250 academic staff. The University of Hong Kong Libraries, founded in 1912, has six branch libraries: Fung Ping Shan Library (1932), Yu Chun Keung Medical Library (1965), Lui Che Woo Law Library (1969), Education Library (1978), Dental Library (1981), and Music Library (1981). Total collections include 2.3 million volumes, 1.5 million reels/pieces of microform, 70,000 audiovisual items as of May 2004 and 25,200 electronic journals, 143,792 electronic books, and 517 databases as of June 2004.

User surveys have been administered on a regular basis since 1995 to measure user satisfaction, to understand user needs with a view to strengthening the depth and breadth of the library collections, and to make improvements in the libraries' facilities, services, and staff. A User Survey Task Force composed of four members from a cross section of the University of Hong Kong Libraries was created in October, 2003, to conduct the current librarywide user survey from February 9 to February 22, 2004.[1] Administration of the survey was subsequently incorporated into Operational Priorities 4, (2003–2004) Strategic Direction 6 of the Libraries' Strategic Plan for 2003–2006 to communicate more effectively internally and externally with the university, Hong Kong, Asian, and international communities in January 2004.[2]

Purpose of the 2004 User Survey

The 2004 user survey was conducted to:

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- provide an opportunity for users to evaluate our performance;
- identify performance gaps and make improvements in the problem areas with large gaps;
- identify information needs, services, and library resources that are most and least important to users;
- study user preferences for print and electronic materials;
- study different information needs of users from different library locations;
- study different information needs from different patron types;
- use the collected data as a management tool for strategic planning.

User Survey Design and Methodology

A literature review was conducted prior to calling the second meeting as well as throughout the design and implementation stage.[3–23] Surveys from a number of libraries, including The University of Newcastle, Australia; the University of California at San Diego; and Rochester Institute of Technology, to name a few, were consulted in order to obtain ideas on attributes to be included and ways to set the questions.

The 2001 main library user survey was reviewed item by item to make decisions on what questions to retain and delete with the goals of the 2004 user survey in mind. A set of brief and clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire was given at the beginning of the questionnaire, and participants were informed that their responses would be kept confidential. Anonymity permits respondents to be more candid. An intensity-scaled choice of 1 to 5 rating items, where 1 is low, 3 is moderate, and 5 is high, and open-ended items that offer respondents the opportunity to give comments and suggestions was used.

The initial draft questionnaire included five categories: (1) service quality; (2) facilities, equipment, and physical environment; (3) resources; (4) electronic resources; and (5) new services implemented by HKU Libraries since 2001.

The focus of the user survey was twofold: first, to identify performance gaps (respondents were asked to assess the importance—and the library's performance—of each attribute in order to identify problem areas with large gaps that could be targeted for improvement); and second, to monitor the library's migration from print to electronic resources.[24]

Demographic questions that could be answered easily were placed at the end of the questionnaire.

The master questionnaire for the main library then was sent to the six branch librarians to make amendments to reflect their libraries' unique resources and services.

Implementation of a Web survey is much more technically involved than that of a print survey. Twenty man-days were spent in the creation of the seven Web surveys.[25] There are many issues related to the technical control that the survey designer needs to address. The work flow has to be revised with each change made to the questionnaire. The coding for each of the seven Web surveys varies according to each library's unique resources and services. Furthermore, all identical questions have to be mapped for comparison purposes, making the checking criteria quite complicated. Considerable time was spent on improving the outlook of the Web surveys also. Respondents initially were required to answer all the questions to avoid missing data before they could successfully submit the user survey. However, it was found that they had to scroll the screen between error messages and questions with the missing answers, which proved to be very tedious. To minimize "abandonment" affecting the

return rate, the User Survey Task Force made the decision to drop forced-choice questions. An e-mail account was created to offer respondents the option of sending inquiries to the task force chairperson.

Pilot Tests

Two pilot tests were conducted to improve reliability and validity. The first was conducted on November 11, 2003, to assess the adequacy of the instructions, the clarity of the format, and whether the time needed to complete the survey was reasonable. Revisions to the user survey were made based on an interview with the pilot respondents.

A second pilot test was conducted on November 21, 2003, and further revisions were made.

User Survey Amendments

To make the length of the user survey more manageable and in the hope of obtaining a higher return, two sections, "Facilities, Equipment & Physical Environment" and "New Services Implemented by the University of Hong Kong Libraries since 2001," were removed.[26] As a result, the time it took to complete the user survey was reduced by five minutes, from fifteen to twenty minutes to ten to fifteen minutes.

The dimensions of the 2004 user survey evolved with each iteration becoming more refined and focused. Fine-tuning was completed on November 24, 2003, after twenty-three iterations.[27]

The draft multi-issue questionnaire was submitted to the libraries' Quality Assurance Team for its review and was endorsed with minor revisions.[28] (See figure 1.)

Sampling Technique

The method adopted for choosing the sample was the nonprobabilistic by convenience. Respondents were drawn from those who were available and willing. As a result, the task force was limited to making inferences to the broader population from those who returned the user surveys. Therefore, it must be stressed that their representativeness in relation to the population could not be completely ascertained.

Data Collection Technique

Patrons had the option of completing one of the seven questionnaires anonymously in the online or print format. Print copies were available for distribution at the reference/circulation counter at the main library and branch libraries. However, effort was expended in encouraging responses via the Web and the conventional mode was used only when necessary. Library staff assisted in data entry for all the print returns, and data from the online returns were captured electronically. The computer program treated missing answers as N/A (not applicable), and they were not used to calculate any statistics.

Promotional Methods

To encourage a higher return rate, the following promotional methods were adopted:
- distribute flyers to users at all libraries;
- affix posters at the entrances of all libraries;
- install pop-ups on the screen savers of all public computers, including those at the Knowledge Navigation Centre in the main library;
- publish announcements on the plasma TVs at the main library and at those branch libraries with plasma TVs;
- publish a bulk-mail announcement at the HKU intranet at the commencement of the user survey, followed by two follow-up announcements;
- display a pop-up of the user survey the first time the libraries' home page is logged on by each user;

FIGURE 1
Main Library Questionnaire

User Survey
The University of Hong Kong Libraries
February 9 - 22, 2004

Please kindly answer the questions by marking an appropriate number in the rating scale, and mark N/A (Not Applicable) if you are not familiar with or have not used that particular service. Survey responses will be kept confidential. If you prefer a print copy, please obtain and return this survey at the Circulation/Reference Counter. Please send enquiry to usersurvey@lib.hku.hk

Which Library do you use most?

Main Library ▼

SECTION A: USER SATISFACTION

I. Service Quality

Please tell us how important are the following to you and how well do we perform:

Low		Moderate		High	N/A = Not applicable
1	2	3	4	5	

	Importance to me						Library Performance						
	1	2	3	4	5	|	1	2	3	4	5	| N/A
1. Opening hours meet my needs	○	○	○	○	○	|	○	○	○	○	○	| ○
2. Recommended materials are purchased and processed rapidly for inclusion in the collection	○	○	○	○	○	|	○	○	○	○	○	| ○
3. Books & journals are reshelved quickly	○	○	○	○	○	|	○	○	○	○	○	| ○
4. Prompt action is taken regarding missing books & journals	○	○	○	○	○	|	○	○	○	○	○	| ○
5. InterLibrary Loans (ILL) requests are followed through	○	○	○	○	○	|	○	○	○	○	○	| ○
6. Library staff are readily available to provide assistance and respond in a timely manner	○	○	○	○	○	|	○	○	○	○	○	| ○
7. Library staff are polite and friendly	○	○	○	○	○	|	○	○	○	○	○	| ○
8. Library staff are knowledgeable and answer enquiries accurately and clearly	○	○	○	○	○	|	○	○	○	○	○	| ○
9. Library orientation/ courses/ workshops meet my needs	○	○	○	○	○	|	○	○	○	○	○	| ○
10. Dragon, HKUL Catalogue provides clear and useful information	○	○	○	○	○	|	○	○	○	○	○	| ○

	1	2	3	4	5
Overall performance	○	○	○	○	○

Comments/Suggestions:

FIGURE 1
Main Library Questionnaire (continued)

II. Resources

A. In the last 6 months, how often have you used the following:

	daily	weekly	monthly	a few times	never
1. Printed books	○	○	○	○	○
2. Printed journals	○	○	○	○	○
3. Audio-visual materials	○	○	○	○	○

B. How adequate are the following library collections:

Low		Moderate		High		N/A = Not applicable
1	2	3	4	5		

	Importance to me						Library Performance						N/A
	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5		
1. Books in your discipline	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○		○
2. Journals in your discipline	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○		○
3. Audio-visual materials	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○		○
4. Electronic Databases	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○		○

	1	2	3	4	5
Overall performance	○	○	○	○	○

Comments/Suggestions:

III. Electronic Resources

A. In the last 6 months, how often have you used the following:

	daily	weekly	monthly	a few times	never
1. HKUL homepage	○	○	○	○	○
2. Dragon, HKUL Catalogue	○	○	○	○	○
3. Databases (full-text, abstracts & indexes)	○	○	○	○	○
4. E-journals	○	○	○	○	○
5. E-books	○	○	○	○	○
6. E-news	○	○	○	○	○
7. HKUL Digital Initiatives (e.g. HKU Thesis Online, ExamBase, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○

B. How important are the following to you in your usage of electronic resources and how well do we perform:

FIGURE 1
Main Library Questionnaire (continued)

Low		Moderate		High		N/A = Not applicable
1	2	3	4	5		

	Importance to me	Library Performance	
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	N/A
1. Ease of locating electronic resources	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○
2. Ease of use	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○
3. Extensiveness of databases	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○
4. Well organized HKUL homepage	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○
5. Assistance from librarians	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○
6. Library user education (courses/workshops/orientation)	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○
7. Library printed/online guides	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○
8. Being alerted to new electronic resources by bulk email, *Focus* (HKUL newsletter), etc.	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○
9. Electronic resources is accessible from my home/office	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○	○

C. If both printed and electronic versions are available, which format do you prefer to use?

Journals: ○ Print   ○ Online
Books::   ○ Print   ○ Online

	1	2	3	4	5
Overall performance	○	○	○	○	○

Comments/Suggestions:

SECTION B: USER PROFILE

I. User Category

HKU Faculty
  ○ Architecture   ○ Engineering
  ○ Arts   ○ Law
  ○ Business and Economics ○ Medicine
  ○ Dentistry   ○ Science
  ○ Education   ○ Social Sciences
  ○ Others (please specify) : _____

Status ○ Undergraduate   Year: ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5
        ○ Postgraduate
        ○ Academic Staff
        ○ Non-Academic Staff

SPACE   ○ Student

FIGURE 1
Main Library Questionnaire (continued)

○ Staff

Others
    ○ Alumni
    ○ Circle of Friends
    ○ Others (please specify) : [   ]

II. Library Usage

1. How often do you visit the Main Library?

  ○ Very frequently (Daily)   ○ Frequently (Over 2 visits/week)
  ○ Occasionally (A few times a month)   ○ Rarely (A few times a semester)
  ○ Never

2. How often do you remotely access the HKUL electronic resources?

  ○ Very frequently (Daily)   ○ Frequently (Over 2 visits/week)
  ○ Occasionally (A few times a month)   ○ Rarely (A few times a semester)
  ○ Never

Other Comments / Suggestions:

[   ]

Thank you for completing this survey !

[Submit]

- award a souvenir notepad, compliment of a database vendor, as an incentive to every user who has completed the survey successfully;
- mount an announcement about the user survey with a direct link to the Web survey on the "Spotlight Section" of the libraries' home page;
- affix user survey flyers on the monitors of each public monitor to alert users;
- display the souvenir notepad and flyer on service counters to draw the attention of users.

User Survey Results

Results from the data captured electronically were compiled. Tables and figures from the ratings assigned by respondents were generated.[29] A total of 2,564 returns were received, and the main library accounted for almost two-thirds (61.6%) of the total return. (See table 1.)

The Music Library received relatively few returns in the first week. It was speculated that the few returns were possibly due to the way the first question was

framed (Which library do you use most?). The Department of Music has relatively few music major students, but many part-time students taking one course in music. The latter students probably designated the main library as the library they frequented most and completed the main library survey. Music Library users therefore were invited to complete a print survey commencing the second week, and the number of returns was then much improved.

User Survey Returns by Faculty

The students and staff of HKU's School of Professional and Continuing Education (HKU SPACE) accounted for one-quarter (25.6%) of the total returns, alumni for 12.9 percent, and the Faculty of Arts for 10.1 percent. (See table 2.)

User Survey Returns by Patron Type

Undergraduates accounted for one-third (33.5%) of the total returns, HKU SPACE students for almost one-quarter (23.1%), and postgraduates for 15.7 percent. (See table 3.)

Composite Results

Scores for each of the thirty attributes from all 2,564 respondents were compiled and tabulated.

Ranked Performance versus Importance

Table 4 shows the relationship between the libraries' performance in each of the thirty attributes ranked from 1 to 30 with their corresponding importance ranking. The greater the difference between the two translates into more significant gaps. The three highest performance areas are (1) library staff are polite and friendly (4.06 out of 5, or 81.2%), (2) library staff are readily available to provide assistance and respond in a timely manner (4.04), and (3) Dragon, HKU Libraries catalogue, provides clear and useful information (3.99). The three lowest performance areas are (1) prompt action is taken regarding missing books and journals (3.31 out of 5, or 66.2%), (2) scores (3.33), and (3) audiovisual materials (3.37), a range of 15 percent between the top- and bottommost performance ranking.

Ranked Importance versus Performance

Table 5 demonstrates the relationship between respondents' perceived importance in each of the thirty attributes ranked from 1 to 30 with their corresponding performance ranking. The greater the difference between the two translates into more significant gaps. The three most important areas are (1) books in your discipline (4.55 out of 5, or 91%), (2) Dragon,

TABLE 1					
2004 User Survey Returns by Libraries					
Name of Library	Print	Online	Total	Percentage	Souvenirs Distributed
Main library	3	1,579	1,582	61.6	152
Medical library	0	327	327	12.8	91
Education library	0	207	207	8.1	178
Law library	10	181	191	7.4	127
Music library	67	66	133	5.2	129
Dental library	0	89	89	3.5	29
Fung Ping Shan Library	1	34	35	1.4	With Main Library
Total	81	2,483	2,564	100.00	706

			Valid	Cumulative
TABLE 2				
2004 User Survey Returns by Faculty				
Faculty	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
HKU SPACE	657	25.6	25.6	25.6
Alumni	330	12.9	12.9	38.5
Arts	259	10.1	10.1	48.6
Medicine	246	9.6	9.6	58.2
Science	193	7.5	7.5	65.7
Social Sciences	170	6.6	6.6	72.3
Engineering	148	5.8	5.8	78.1
Education	138	5.4	5.4	83.5
Law	112	4.4	4.4	87.9
Business and Economics	84	3.3	3.3	91.2
Circle of Friends & others	83	3.2	3.2	94.4
Architecture	72	2.8	2.8	97.2
Others	44	1.7	1.7	98.9
Dentistry	28	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	2,564	100.0	100.0	

HKU Libraries' catalogue, provides clear and useful information (4.54), and (3) electronic resources are accessible from my home/office (4.49). The three least important areas are (1) library user education (3.34 out of 5, or 66.8%), (2) library orientation/courses/workshops meet my needs (3.40), and (3) audiovisual materials (3.42), a range of 24.2 percent between the most and least important ranking.

Ranked Gap Analysis
The gap analysis survey provided insights into the gap between the im-

| TABLE 3 | | | | |
| 2004 User Survey Returns by Patron Type | | | | |
Patron Type	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Undergraduate	859	33.5	33.5	33.5
HKU SPACE student	593	23.1	23.1	65.6
Postgraduate	404	15.7	15.7	72.3
Alumni	330	12.9	12.9	85.2
Academic Staff	145	5.7	5.7	90.9
Nonacademic Staff	86	3.4	3.4	94.3
Circle of Friends & others	83	3.2	3.2	97.5
HKU SPACE Staff	64	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	2,564	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 4 Ranked Performance versus Importance				
Question	Mean Performance	Rank P	Mean Importance	Rank I
1. Library staff are polite and friendly	4.06	1	4.14	15
2. Library staff are readily available to provide assistance and respond in a timely manner	4.04	2	4.24	9
3. Dragon, HKUL catalogue, provides clear and useful information	3.9901	3	4.54	2
4. Library staff are knowledgeable and answer inquiries accurately and clearly	3.9900	4	4.23	10
5. Well-organized Medical Library home page	3.89	5	4.13	16
6. Well-organized HKUL home page	3.87	6	4.18	13
7. Opening hours meet my needs	3.85	7	4.37	4
8. Well-organized Education Library home page	3.804	8	4.02	19
9. Assistance from librarians	3.798	9	3.92	24
10. Well-organized Law Library home page	3.78	10	4.09	18
11. Electronic resources is accessible from my home/office	3.74	11	4.49	3
12. Books in your discipline	3.72	12	4.54	1
13. Well-organized Music Library home page	3.71	13	3.94	22
14. Journals in your discipline	3.6824	14	4.26	8
15. Electronic databases	3.6815	15	4.23	11
16. Well-organized Fung Ping Shan Library home page	3.68	16	4.21	12
17. Ease of use	3.67	17	4.36	5
18. Ease of locating electronic resources	3.657	18	4.34	6
19. Extensiveness of databases	3.656	19	4.29	7
20. Being alerted to new electronic resources by bulk e-mail, Focus (HKUL newsletter), etc.	3.65	20	3.43	27
21. Interlibrary loans (ILL) requests are followed through	3.64	21	3.94	23
22. Books & journals are reshelved quickly	3.62	22	4.15	14
23. Library user education (courses/workshops/orientation)	3.59	23	3.34	30
24. Well-organized Dental Library home page	3.574	24	3.76	25
25. Library orientation/ courses/ workshops meet my needs	3.571	25	3.40	29

TABLE 4 Ranked Performance versus Importance				
Question	Mean Performance	Rank P	Mean Importance	Rank I
26. Library printed/online guides	3.49	26	3.54	26
27. Recommended materials are purchased and processed rapidly for inclusion in the collection	3.46	27	4.11	17
28. Audiovisual materials	3.37	28	3.42	28
29. Scores	3.33	29	3.95	21
30. Prompt action is taken regarding missing books & journals	3.31	30	3.96	20

portance of the service or collection to the respondents and the libraries' performance as perceived by respondents. These bivariate data analyses assess the association between two variables at a time.

As seen in table 6, the three areas with the more significant gaps between user expectations and service quality for the thirty attributes are (1) books in your discipline (gap score of 0.84, with an importance ranking of 1/30), (2) electronic resources are accessible from my home/office (gap score of 0.76, with importance ranking of 3/30), and (3) ease of use of electronic resources (gap score of 0.71, with an importance ranking of 5/30). Remedial action is needed in these areas to increase user satisfaction.

The three areas with the smallest gaps between user expectations and service quality for the thirty attributes are (1) library user education (gap score of -0.22, with an importance ranking of 30/30), (2) being alerted to new electronic resources by bulk e-mail, Focus (HKU Libraries newsletter), etc. (gap score of -0.21, with an importance ranking of 27/30), and (3) library orientation/courses/workshops meet my needs (gap score of -0.16, with an importance ranking of 29/30).

Ranked performance versus importance, ranked importance versus perform-

ance, and ranked gap analysis data were compiled and tabulated for each of the six branch libraries and nine patron types, similar to the composite results, to compare their similarities and differences.

Composite Preference for Print versus Electronic Resources
Results demonstrated that an overwhelming 68.8 percent of the respondents prefer to use journals online compared to 31.2 percent who prefer to use print; and 71.8 percent prefer to use printed books compared to 28.2 percent who prefer using electronic books. (See figure 2.)

Preference for Print versus Electronic Resources by Patron Type
Preference for online journals by patron type varies from a high of 79.5 percent for others, 79.0 percent for postgraduates, and 78.6 percent for academic staff to a low of 63.4 percent for HKU SPACE students, 63.6 percent for Circle of Friends members, and 65.1 percent for undergraduates.

Preference for online books by patron type varies from a high of 41.0 percent for others, 35.5 percent for alumni, and 32.8 percent for HKU SPACE staff to a low of 20.9 percent for nonacademic staff, 22.1 percent for academic staff, and 25.5 percent for undergraduates. (See table 7.)

TABLE 5 Ranked Important versus Performance				
Question	**Mean Importance**	**Rank I**	**Mean Performance**	**Rank P**
1. Books in your discipline	4.55	1	3.72	12
2. Dragon, HKUL catalogue, provides clear and useful information	4.54	2	3.99	3
3. Electronic resources is accessible from my home/office	4.49	3	3.74	11
4. Opening hours meet my needs	4.37	4	3.85	7
5. Ease of use	4.36	5	3.67	17
6. Ease of locating electronic resources	4.34	6	3.657	18
7. Extensiveness of databases	4.29	7	3.656	19
8. Journals in your discipline	4.26	8	3.68	14
9. Library staff are readily available to provide assistance and respond in a timely manner	4.24	9	4.04	2
10. Library staff are knowledgeable and answer inquiries accurately and clearly	4.234	10	3.99	4
11. Electronic databases	4.225	11	3.69	15
12. Well-organized Fung Ping Shan Library home page	4.21	12	3.68	16
13. Well-organized HKUL home page	4.18	13	3.87	6
14. Books & journals are reshelved quickly	4.15	14	3.62	22
15. Library staff are polite and friendly	4.14	15	4.06	1
16. Well-organized Medical Library home page	4.13	16	3.89	5
17. Recommended materials are purchased and processed rapidly for inclusion in the collection	4.11	17	3.46	27
18. Well-organized Law Library home page	4.09	18	3.78	10
19. Well-organized Education Library home page	4.02	19	3.80	8
20. Prompt action is taken regarding missing books & journals	3.96	20	3.31	30
21. Scores	3.95	21	3.33	29
22. Well-organized Music Library home page	3.9386	22	3.71	13
23. Interlibrary loans (ILL) requests are followed through	3.9382	23	3.64	21
24. Assistance from librarians	3.92	24	3.80	9

TABLE 5				
Ranked Important versus Performance				
Question	**Mean Importance**	**Rank I**	**Mean Performance**	**Rank P**
25. Well-organized Dental Library home page	3.76	25	3.57	24
26. Library printed/online guides	3.54	26	3.49	26
27. Being alerted to new electronic resources by bulk e-mail, Focus (HKUL newsletter), etc.	3.43	27	3.65	20
28. Audiovisual materials	3.42	28	3.37	28
29. Library orientation/ courses/ workshops meet my needs	3.40	29	3.57	25
30. Library user education (courses/ workshops/orientation)	3.34	30	3.59	23

Figure 3 provides a breakdown by number of these preferences by patron type.

Preference for Print versus Electronic Resources by Library

There is quite a wide difference in the preference for online journals between users of different libraries. Of the users of the Medical Library, 79.8 percent prefer accessing journals online, compared to 55.6 percent of users of the Music Library.

There also is quite a difference in the preference for online books between users of different libraries. Of the users of the Education Library, 33.8 percent prefer accessing books online, compared to 17.1 percent of the users of the Fung Ping Shan Library, which houses the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean collection. Table 8 shows the breakdown of the figures by library.

Frequency in the Usage of Print and Electronic Resources

The top ten resources consulted on a daily basis include: the HKU Libraries home page; Dragon, the HKU Libraries catalogue; printed books; databases (full-text abstracts and indexes); e-journals; printed journals; e-news; e-books; the Medical

Library home page; and the Law Library home page.

The top ten resources respondents never consulted include: e-news; audiovisual materials; HKU Libraries digital initiatives (e.g., HKU Thesis Online); e-books; e-journals; printed journals; databases (full-text abstracts and indexes); newspaper clippings at the Education Library; printed books; and examination papers and syllabi at the Education Library.

Six resources appear in both the most frequently and least used lists: e-news; e-journals; printed journals; e-books; databases; and printed books. This is because some respondents never use these resources and others use them frequently. When the frequency counts are added together, these resources appear in both lists, as preferences in the use of resources vary widely and are not mutually exclusive. (See table 9.)

Written Comments

Room was provided at the end of each section and at the end of the whole survey for additional comments and suggestions to encourage open-ended responses. Eighty-eight pages of written comments were received for the main library and
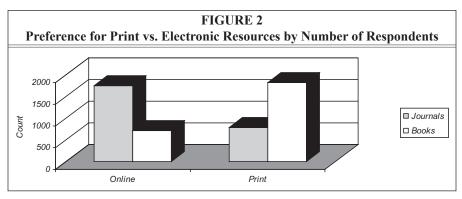
TABLE 6 Ranked Gap Scores					
Question	Mean Importance	Rank I	Mean Performance	Rank P	Mean Gap	Rank G
1. Books in your discipline	4.55	1	3.72	12	0.84	1
2. Electronic resources is accessible from my home/office	4.49	3	3.74	11	0.76	2
3. Ease of use	4.36	5	3.67	17	0.710	3
4. Ease of locating electronic resources	4.34	6	3.66	18	0.706	4
5. Prompt action is taken regarding missing books & journals	3.96	20	3.31	30	0.673	5
6. Recommended materials are purchased and processed rapidly for inclusion in the collection	4.11	17	3.46	27	0.667	6
7. Extensiveness of databases	4.29	7	3.66	19	0.66	7
8. Scores	3.95	21	3.33	29	0.63	8
9. Journals in your discipline	4.26	8	3.68	14	0.59	9
10. Dragon, HKUL catalogue provides clear and useful information	4.54	2	3.99	3	0.56	10
11. Electronic databases	4.23	11	3.68	15	0.551	11
12. Books & journals are reshelved quickly	4.15	14	3.62	22	0.546	12
13. Well-organized Fung Ping Shan Library home page	4.21	12	3.68	16	0.54	13
14. Opening hours meet my needs	4.37	4	3.85	7	0.53	14
15. Well-organized Law Library home page	4.09	18	3.78	10	0.33	15
16. Interlibrary loans (ILL) requests are followed through	3.94	23	3.64	21	0.324	16
17. Well-organized HKUL home page	4.18	13	3.87	6	0.319	17
18. Library staff are knowledgeable and answer inquiries accurately and clearly	4.23	10	3.99	4	0.253	18

			TABLE 6			
			Ranked Gap Scores			
Question	Mean Importance	Rank I	Mean Performance	Rank P	Mean Gap	Rank G
19. Well-organized Music Library home page	3.94	22	3.71	13	0.25	19
20. Well-organized Medical Library home page	4.13	16	3.89	5	0.24	20
21. Well-organized Education Library home page	4.02	19	3.80	8	0.23	21
22. Library staff are readily available to provide assistance and respond in a timely manner	4.24	9	4.04	2	0.209	22
23. Well-organized Dental Library home page	3.76	25	3.57	24	0.206	23
24. Assistance from librarians	3.92	24	3.80	9	0.13	24
25. Library staff are polite and friendly	4.14	15	4.06	1	0.084	25
26. Audiovisual materials	3.42	28	3.37	28	0.075	26
27. Library printed/ online guides	3.54	26	3.49	26	0.073	27
28. Library orientation/ courses/workshops meet my needs	3.40	29	3.57	25	-0.16	28
29. Being alerted to new electronic resources by bulk e-mail, Focus (HKUL newsletter), etc.	3.43	27	3.65	20	-0.21	29
30. Library user education (courses/ workshops/orientation)	3.34	30	3.58	23	-0.22	30

branch libraries, covering a wide range of issues. Substantial efforts were devoted to classifying the comments according to a classification scheme developed by the User Survey Task Force.[30] To maintain originality, no revisions were made to the spelling and grammar of the written comments submitted. When a comment touches on several issues, it is segregated and consolidated with the respective categories. When a comment is on another library or department, it also appears on

FIGURE 2
Preference for Print vs. Electronic Resources by Number of Respondents
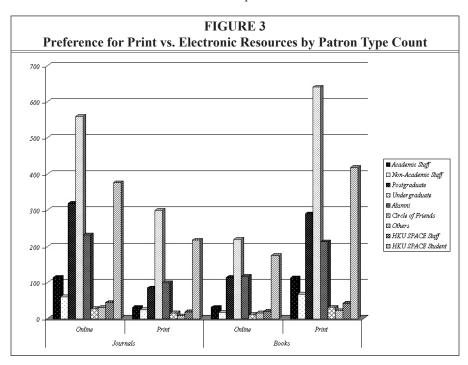

the summary of written comments of the respective library/department.

The top ten most frequently occurring suggestions for improvement at the main library were:

1. extend opening hours;
2. improvement on shelving turn-around time and tracing of missing items;
3. more e-resources;
4. improvement on the attitudes of library staff
5. access to electronic resources by alumni

6. more user-friendly timetables for user education courses and availability of online courses
7. acquiring multiple copies of heavily demanded books; improvement on HKU libraries home page
8. more user-friendly e-resources interface
9. expand the depth of the collection
10. availability of interbranch loans and improvement on circulation counter efficiency; noise from mobile phones.

FIGURE 3
Preference for Print vs. Electronic Resources by Patron Type Count

TABLE 7
Preference for Print versus Electronic Resources by Patron Type (percentage and count)

		Academic Staff	Alumni	Circle of Friends	Non-Academic Staff	Others	Post-graduate	HKUS-PACE Staff	HKUS-PACE Student	Under-graduate	Total
Journals Online	Count	114	231	28	61	31	319	45	376	559	1,764
	% within Journals	6.5%	13.1%	1.6%	3.5%	1.8%	18.1%	2.6%	21.3%	31.7%	100.0%
	% within Status	78.6%	70.0%	63.6%	70.9%	79.5%	79.0%	70.3%	63.4%	65.1%	68.8%
Journals Print	Count	31	99	16	25	8	85	19	217	300	800
	% within Journals	3.9%	12.4%	2.0%	3.1%	1.0%	10.6%	2.4%	27.1%	37.5%	100.0%
	% within Status	21.4%	30.0%	36.4%	29.1%	20.5%	21.0%	29.7%	36.6%	34.9%	31.2%
Total	Count	145	330	44	86	39	404	64	593	859	2,564
	% within Journals	5.7%	12.9%	1.7%	3.4%	1.5%	15.8%	2.5%	23.1%	33.5%	100.0%
	% within Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Books Online	Count	32	117	12	18	16	114	21	175	219	724
	% within Books	4.4%	16.2%	1.7%	2.5%	2.2%	15.7%	2.9%	24.2%	30.2%	100.0%
	% within Status	22.1%	35.5%	27.3%	20.9%	41.0%	28.2%	32.8%	29.5%	25.5%	28.2%
Books Print	Count	113	213	32	68	23	290	43	418	640	1,840
	% within Books	6.1%	11.6%	1.7%	3.7%	1.3%	15.8%	2.3%	22.7%	34.8%	100.0%
	% within Status	77.9%	64.5%	72.7%	79.1%	59.0%	71.8%	67.2%	70.5%	74.5%	71.8%
Total	Count	145	330	44	86	39	404	64	593	859	2,564
	% within Books	5.7%	12.9%	1.7%	3.4%	1.5%	15.8%	2.5%	23.1%	33.5%	100.0%
	% within Status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Library Response to the Survey

The results of the user survey were communicated internally to all members of the Senior Management Team, the Quality Assurance Team, the department heads, and the branch librarians. Each department head of the main library and each branch librarian prepared an action plan to address the ten most common areas targeted for improvement. Action plans then were communicated externally to users via plasma televisions in library entrances, bulletin boards, and Staff Student Consultative Committee meetings. A message from the University Librarian also was published in the libraries' newsletter.[31] The user survey report together with the action plans from the main library and the branch libraries also were posted on HKU Libraries' home page.

TABLE 8
Preference for Print versus Electronic Resources by Library

		Dental	Education	FPS	Law	Main	Medical	Music	Total
Journals Online	Count	63	133	26	112	1,105	251	74	1,764
	% within Journals	3.6%	7.5%	1.5%	6.3%	62.6%	14.2%	4.2%	100.0%
	% within Library	70.8%	64.3%	74.3%	58.6%	69.8%	76.8%	55.6%	68.8%
Journals Print	Count	26	74	9	79	477	76	59	800
	% within Journals	3.3%	9.3%	1.1%	9.9%	59.6%	9.5%	7.4%	100.0%
	% within Library	29.2%	35.7%	25.7%	41.4%	30.2%	23.2%	44.4%	31.2%
Total	Count	89	207	35	191	1,582	327	133	2,564
	% within Journals	3.5%	8.1%	1.4%	7.4%	61.7%	12.8%	5.2%	100.0%
	% within Library	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Books Online	Count	27	70	6	58	425	109	29	724
	% within Books	3.7%	9.7%	0.8%	8.0%	58.7%	15.1%	4.0%	100.0%
	% within Library	30.3%	33.8%	17.1%	30.4%	26.9%	33.3%	21.8%	28.2%
Books Print	Count	62	137	29	133	1,157	218	104	1,840
	% within Books	3.4%	7.4%	1.6%	7.2%	62.9%	11.8%	5.7%	100.0%
	% within Library	69.7%	66.2%	82.9%	69.6%	73.1%	66.7%	78.2%	71.8%
Total	Count	89	207	35	191	1,582	327	133	2,564
	% within Books	3.5%	8.1%	1.4%	7.4%	61.7%	12.8%	5.2%	100.0%
	% within Library	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Frequency	No Input	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	A Few Times	Never	Total
TABLE 9							
Frequency in the Usage of Print and Electronic Resources							
1. Printed books		379	938	685	468	94	2,564
2. Printed journals		140	542	589	863	430	2,564
3. Audiovisual materials	35	28	253	294	895	1,059	2,564
4. Faculty publications database	2,475	1	7	9	35	37	2,564
5. Theses collection	2,475	5	2564	52	28	4	2,564
6. Faculty of education theses	2,358	20	2564	95	80	11	2,564
7. Examination papers & syllabuses	2,358	1	22	26	69	88	2,564
8. Newspaper clippings	2,358	4	12	28	53	109	2,564
9. Legislation law reports, etc.	2,375	28	58	49	41	13	2,564
10. Scores	2,431	6	37	29	28	33	2,564
11. HKUL home page		822	1106	298	278	60	2,564
12. Dragon HKUL catalogue		765	1271	319	175	34	2,564
13. Databases (full-text abstracts & indexes)		296	844	592	535	297	2,564
14. E-journals		229	650	540	612	533	2,564
15. E-books		63	300	501	916	784	2,564
16. E-news		70	213	357	754	1,170	2,564
17. HKUL digital initiatives (e.g. HKU Thesis Online, ExamBase etc.)	4	40	224	455	945	896	2,564
18. Dental Library home page	2,475	9	24	10	23	23	2,564
19. Faculty publications database	2,475	1	2	5	35	46	2,564
20. Education Library home page	2,357	10	48	49	55	45	2,564
21. Fung Ping Shan Library home page	2,529	4	11	5	5	10	2,564
22. Law Library home page	2,373	45	60	33	36	17	2,564
23. Medical Library home page	2,237	62	137	56	51	21	2,564
24. Music Library home page	2,431	9	35	29	38	22	2,564

Conclusion

Online survey proved to be popular with the University of Hong Kong Libraries' users. Compared to a print survey conducted in 2001, 759 more returns were received in the online survey. In addition, many more free comments were received, conveying the message that the online mode is preferred for the upcoming survey despite the greater technical complexity in its deployment. The pilot tests were very helpful in shaping the length and content of the questionnaire, and should be included as a necessary part of the implementation process. Bulk-mail reminders through HKU's intranet also proved to be effective, as evidenced by the higher number of returns on February 10, 14, and 19 when the reminders appeared, reflecting the positive correlation between the two. Only a total of 706 souvenirs were collected (table 1) by 27.5 percent of the respondents. This is a good indication that material incentives might not be the main reason the user surveys were completed.

In previous surveys, library staff only measured user satisfaction and learned about their performance in the areas of services, collections, and staff. This is the first time the libraries asked respondents to rate attributes both on their importance and library staff performance via the gap analysis. Despite the fact that it takes longer to complete the survey, it conveys a better picture of how well the libraries stand. Services that are of high importance, but poor performance, should be addressed much sooner than those of low importance. According to research conducted by Rodski Behavioural Research Group, gaps larger than or equal to 2.00 are considered significant with a rating scale of 1 to 7.[32] Using the same principle, the task force estimated that gap scores larger than or equal to 1.33 are considered significant with a rating scale of 1 to 5. Therefore, the task force concluded that there is no significant gap between staff performance and user expectations in any area. As a matter of fact, the negative gap scores indicate that staff performance may be even above users' expectations.

Notes

1. Helen Woo, Music Library (chairperson); Andy Choi, Systems Department; Kim Tung, Reference Department; and Irene Fung, Collection Development Department.

2. Dave Low and Andy Lau from the Systems Department were added to the task force subsequently.

3. Adams Bodomo, Mei-ling Lam, and Carmen Lee, "Some Students Still Read Books in the 21st Century: A Study of User Preferences for Print and Electronic Libraries," *Reading Matrix* 3, no. 3 (2003): 34–48.

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24. With advice from Peter Sidorko, deputy librarian.

25. With assistance from Andy Lau, Systems Department.

26. In consultation with Peter Sidorko, deputy librarian.

27. With assistance from Andy Choi, Systems Department.

28. The Quality Assurance Team consists of team leaders from Technical Services, Reader Services, Branch Libraries, Collection Development, Library Administration, and the deputy librarian.

29. With assistance from Dave Low, Systems Department.

30. Anthony Ferguson and Kim Tung assisted in categorizing the fifty-five pages of written comments on the main library. Kim Tung also assisted in categorizing written comments on the Fung Ping Shan Library. Branch librarians Julia Chan (medical librarian), Irene Shieh (law librarian), Sam Lee (dental librarian), and Helen Woo (music librarian and interim education librarian) assisted in categorizing written comments on their own branch library/libraries.

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