

INFORMATION SERVICES AND USER STUDIES

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User Studies in Information Services



Introduction

- In information service provision, it is always appropriate to know who your users are.
- This gives knowledge to the information professional about the background users and what the user may want.
- Knowing users help to provide quality service and customized service



User studies

- The information professional needs to know the following about users;
- Who the user is:
 - A user may be
 - One –time user
 - Casual user
 - Frequent/regular user
- Knowing who the customers are allows the professional to segment them into groups with certain characteristics in common and develop services that meet the needs of each individual group.



User studies

- What is the background of the user?
 - Age
 - Intellectual ability
 - Able or physically challenged?



User studies

- What are the user's interest?
 - Leisure
 - Academic work
 - Sitting space

What is the information need of users?



- To determine the information needs of users, we conduct Needs analysis or information needs analysis (INA)
- Needs analysis or information needs analysis (INA) is a practice based activity conducted mostly but not exclusively by an information manager in relation to user and community needs
- It is like any research activity that requires careful planning including an understanding of precisely what needs analysis is



- INA is an investigative process that allows us to identify and analyze the information related needs of a particular group in a specific context and the use of that data to inform a decision
- INA includes the identification of information needs, the analysis needs so that they are understood and the assessment of the needs with respect to the impending decision



- The purpose of an INA is to obtain data about information needs in order to determine how best to resolve a problem
- Judgment must be made base on available evidence (data collected)
- Services can be provided on two basis
- What users' want: demand-driven
- What users' need: value driven



Conducting user studies

- 1. Design a plan
- Identify a problem area or a need to study
- Formulate data collection methods
- Formulate and develop data collection instrument
- Design data collection plan
- Design data analysis plan



Conducting user studies

- 2. Implementation of research plan
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Writing of research report



Conducting user studies

- 3. implementation of research result
- This calls for dissemination of findings and taking appropriate actions.



Means of data collection on users

- Questionnaire
- Interview
- Observation



User satisfaction

- Libraries have recognized the importance of identifying and user needs and satisfying those needs for many years.
- Evaluation of library services as we know it today started in the late twentieth century.
- The customer care movement in the 1990s gave accelerated growth to the importance libraries attach to satisfying user needs.



User satisfaction

- The 1990s came with new ways of managing libraries including strategic planning, customer service and budgeting.
- Strategic planning resulted in the introduction of mission statements and institutional targets which are used as a base for evaluation.



User satisfaction

- Evaluation of library services necessary due to the following reasons:
- Determine value for money
- Changing nature of library resources
- Availability of competitors
- Changing user groups and their needs
- The increasing value placed on information



User satisfaction

- To enhance quality service delivery, we need to determine whether our users are satisfied with our services or not.
- In doing this we have to determine the users expectations, service received and whether the information need of the user has been met.



- Satisfaction is the sense of contentment that arises from an actual experience in relation to an expected experience.
- Expectations are essential, as the degree to which expectations conform to or deviate from experience is the pivotal determinant of satisfaction (Crawford, 2006)



User satisfaction

- Methods of obtaining user satisfaction include the following:
- Observation of users by staff
- Formal feedback from users
- Informal feedback from users
- Daily tally – keeping
- Suggesting box
- Interviews
- Questionnaires

