

LibQUAL+ Survey Analysis of Comments re: Circulation / Reserves / Photocopying Summer 2003

I. Photocopying Services

>> FACULTY / STUDENT COMMENTS:

Many of the comments focused on the age and unreliability of the photocopiers. Other comments focused on use of copy cards versus BuzzCards and the need for copy machines on various floors in the Library. The following are some comments and our responses.

- *"Photocopying is not very efficient the way things are arranged at present".*
- *"Please take better care of copiers. Too many are found 'out of order, add toner, add paper' or simply of poor quality."*
- *"Photocopiers should be upgraded for PDF email capabilities (copies could be mailed electronically at no cost to the user?) "*
- *"Copy cards should be done away with and Buzz cards should be used instead."*
- *"Who wants to get charged for the copy card? And, who wants to carry another card? "*
- *"I really don't like the copy machine situation. If you want to copy something on the 5th floor, you have to go all the way down to the first floor. I wonder if it would be possible to get more copy machines..."*
- *"The copiers are few, slow, and of mediocre quality."*
- *"I do not like the new location of the copiers - all located on the first floor - carrying armfuls of journals from floors 4-6 all the way down there has been very annoying. Please return some copiers to the upper floors."*

>> LIBRARY RESPONSE:

In the Fall of 2002, the Library Copy Center merged with Circulation services on the 1st floor East building, making the machines more easily accessible to customers. Eight new digital photocopy machines were purchased, with two placed in the Architecture Library. We priced copiers with PDF and e-mail capabilities, but they were too costly.

Machines on the 1st floor East are located near the Circulation desk so that staff can provide more timely assistance with photocopying. The feedback from most customers is that the digital copiers work well, rarely malfunction, and stay in good working order. Most users also tell us that consolidating copiers to one area rather than distributing them across various floors simplifies the effort to find a machine that works, with assistance nearby. Invariably, distributed machines are more difficult to sustain in good working order, paper is pilfered from storage trays, and customers are somewhat rougher when using them.

We are pleased to finally be implementing BuzzCard service. We anticipate that some time during Fall semester, we will have in place the mechanisms required to accept BuzzCard payments for photocopying, fines, and other Library services. Credits remaining on the current Library debit card will be rolled over to BuzzCards.

We encourage customers to check-out a book cart from the Circulation desk when multiple items are gathered from one or more floors. Carts facilitate the transfer of materials within the Library complex, especially when the destination is photocopiers on 1st floor.

II. Reserves Services

>> FACULTY / STUDENT COMMENTS:

The following comments and responses relate to provision of Reserves materials, and to policies and procedures related to various aspects of the circulation of Library books.

- *“E-reserve services have been excellent.”*
- *“I enjoy the friendly students at the circulation desk, as well as the helpful staff in Reserves...”*
- *“Everyone other than those individuals at circulation have been extremely helpful for ever inquiry/request I’ve made.”*
- *“I have used the electronic reserves extensively in previous classes.”*
- *“I’ve been using the library’s electronic reserve system for the last few semesters and I’ve generally been very happy with it. I do think, however, that the library interprets the concept of fair use in much too restricted a way. I realize that policies in this area are not unique to this library, but I think that the library could take a leadership position by standing up for enhanced rights of access for faculty and students and not simply adopting rigid and formulaic policies regarding what materials can and cannot be made accessible through electronic reserve.”*

>> LIBRARY RESPONSE:

Electronic Reserves is a heavily used service, with 650,000 documents viewed in the past 12 months. At no cost to faculty the Library provides access to a wide variety of scanned materials, including published articles, homework solutions, sample tests, PowerPoint presentations, images, etc., typically within 24 hours of submission. Students like the service because materials are always available at the desktop. In the months ahead we expect to facilitate access to streamed videos of digitally recorded classes.

Regarding our interpretation of “fair use” of copyrighted materials, we have been uncommonly liberal. Beginning fall semester, copyrighted articles may only be on reserve for one semester without permission from the copyright holder. In order to facilitate the effort to gain permission for successive semesters, the Reserves unit will likely manage the correspondence with publishers, thus sparing faculty this step. Costs associated with permission to use articles on Reserves will be borne by the faculty person making the request. The Reserves unit will also no longer require faculty to submit copies of articles for processing if the Library owns the publication, instead offering to retrieve the publication from the book stacks and processing it on-the-fly as an added convenience. We continue to review our reserves process for ways to improve this popular service. We implement change to incorporate up-to-date technology as appropriate.

III. Circulation Services

>> FACULTY / STUDENT COMMENTS:

The most common concern is the recall system; patrons feel that recalls don’t work, that borrowing periods are too long (this mostly due to seeing item status and due dates in the catalog, which confuses and infuriates most users when they see overdues from years ago or due dates a year ahead), and that fines are unfair for those whose books are recalled. Along with recalls, other patron concerns include: seemingly unreasonable overdue fines; accuracy and promptness of recall and overdue notices; and the criteria for circulating or non-circulating item status, which seem to be either misunderstood or resented.

- *“There is a problem I would like to bring to your attention. There are apparently a few professors who keep a very large number of books (hundreds) checked out for an indefinite period of time. When I request a book in my area, it is often checked out to one of these professors, and it takes the library several weeks to get it back. Will you please eliminate this kind of behavior by requiring professors to physically renew books by bringing them (all of them) to the library at the end of a reasonable period of time (six weeks). Another possibility is to limit the number of books an individual can have out at any one time to say ten. I am a professor, and I view the above-mentioned behavior as totally unreasonable. The library should be for everyone's use, not a private collection to be hoarded by one or two individuals.”*
- *“All library materials should NOT be able to be checked out. It seems like almost half the collection is gone, especially when a student or a professor check books out for months or years at a time. All materials should be for use within the library. I think that when a book is recalled, there should be a notice going out the day it is due as well as the week before. Currently there is only one notice that goes out when it is recalled and a reminder one week after it is recalled. Due to a very heavy schedule one time, I forgot about the overdue book until a week later resulting in over \$20 of fine...”*
- *“Renewing books is an absolute chore since the majority of the time your book is in fact not renewed. The circulation department then sends an overdue notice claiming I had been notified 3 times of my book being overdue. This notice is accompanied by a threat of legal action, etc. In short, I only use the library because I have to, it is difficult to use and employs rude and incompetent staff.”*
- *“I recalled some books a year ago and never got them.”*
- *“Sometimes I have to wait for a month to obtain that copy (waiting in the list).”*
- *“The fines for late electronic equipment are extremely high. Please lower them.”*
- *“Accessing archived journals (pre-1978[?]) is really inconvenient. “*
- *“I particularly appreciate the ease of access to *old* periodicals.”*

>> LIBRARY RESPONSE:

Three years ago, the Library ceased charging regular overdue fines and increased the loan period from 28 days to the last day of the semester. These changes were applauded by GT customers.

Renewing books has become easier and more convenient with the option for online renewals. The new due date appears next to the item online after the renewal has been completed. If the date does not change, or is not what is expected, staff at the Circulation desk should be notified. There are several reasons why an online renewal might fail: item renewal limit of 3 has been reached, item is overdue, or item has been recalled. Once a renewal limit has been reached, the item must be brought in to the Circulation desk for inventory purposes. The book is then renewed and the limit is reset. Overdue books must be checked in at the Circulation desk before they may be checked out again. No fine is assessed.

We guarantee 21 days of uninterrupted use of Library materials (the exception is items needed for course Reserves; these must be returned immediately). After 21 days, all items are subject to be recalled, whether checked out to students or faculty. Once an item has been recalled, we allow 6 days before the item has to be returned. The deadline is printed on the notice. There is a \$2.50 per item / per day overdue fine for items returned after the deadline. We have learned that fines on recalled items have to be steep in order to compel a timely return of needed materials.

The Circulation staff is working to improve the recall process. Many problems resulted from our migration to a different circulation system a little over two years ago. We have devised a more aggressive routine to get delinquent borrowers to return recalled items. Improvement should become noticeable in the coming weeks.