

Comparing LibQUAL+™ Comments: Comparative Analysis of Comments from Two Surveys

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Background

The University of Calgary Library has participated in five cycles of LibQUAL+™ (2002, 2004, 2007, 2010 and 2013). Between the 2010 and 2013 survey Libraries and Cultural Resources at the University of Calgary was undergoing significant change (Figures 1 and 2).

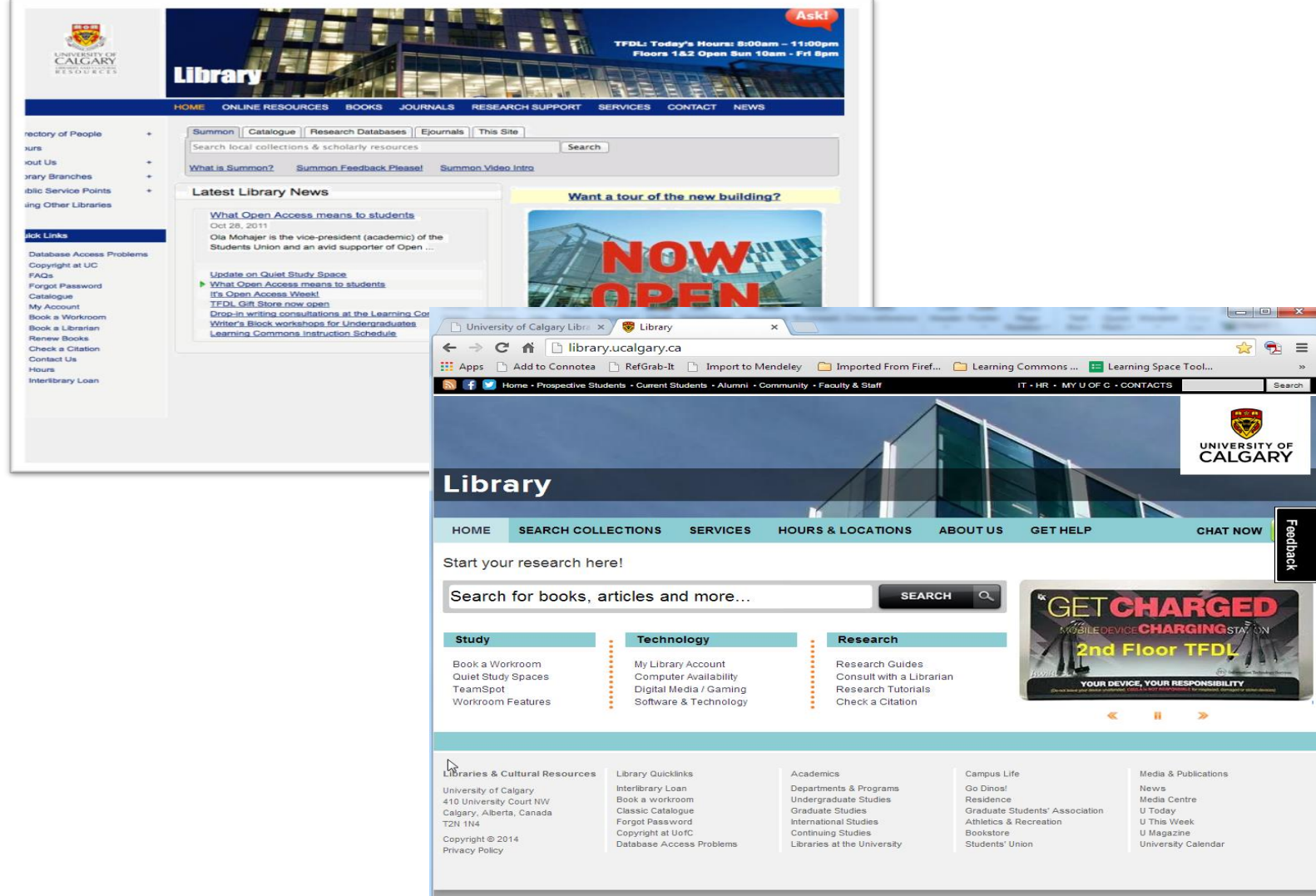
- The Taylor Family Digital Library (TFDL) opened September 2011 and replaced the MacKimmie Library (circa 1972).
- Health Sciences Library renovated (Summer 2011).
- Continuous enhancements of a new library web interface over 2011 – 2012.

We wanted to determine what influence these changes had on the service, information access and library as place perceptions of our users as reported through our LibQUAL+™ results and comments.

Figure 1. Learning Commons (2010 & 2013



Figure 2. Library Web Site (2010 & 2013



Qualitative Analysis

While ratings and gap analysis reported in LibQUAL+™ survey results tell us where users perceive the service to be in relationship to their desired and minimum expectations, this does not give us the context of the ratings. By coding and sorting the comments we hoped to gain a finer, perhaps more exact understanding of the nature of our users’ library experiences and thereby gain some insight into the actions we can take to improve. Comments tell a story. It is up to us to try to understand the story and take action.

The comments from two LibQUAL+™ surveys (2010 and 2013) were collected, coded and sorted in-house using MSExcel to better determine trends in user perceptions of their experiences with our library services. Comments were assigned themes, as agreed upon by the local LibQUAL+™ Survey Committee, and determined to be positive, negative or neutral. Themes were sorted to determine the top 10 positive and negative comments for both surveys. Comments were also sorted by LibQUAL+™ dimension (Affect of Service, Information Control and Library as Place), and reviewed by user status (undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty) and by broad discipline areas.

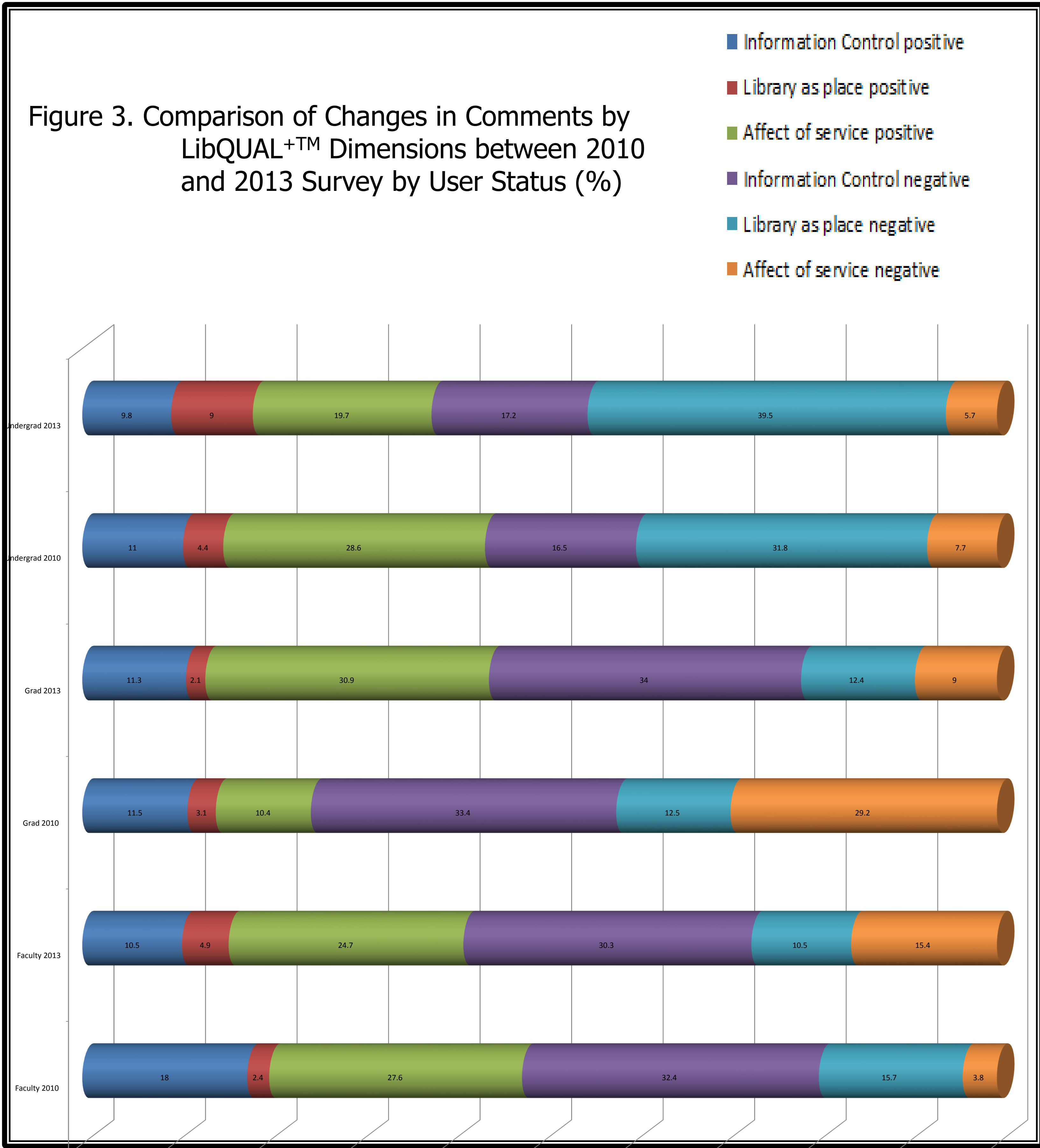
Summary of Qualitative Results

Figure 3 reflects the key changes observed between the 2010 and 2013 comments by user status (undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty).

Undergraduate Students - Negative comments related to Affect of Service increased.

Graduate Students - Positive comments related to Affect of Service increased.

Faculty - Negative comments related to Affect of Service increased and positive comments related to Information Control decreased.



Observations by User Status

Undergraduate Students

Overall, comments reflected treatment by staff, noise, lack of quiet study space, and general facility comments related to signage, seating and way-finding.

Graduate Students

There were few specific comments, other than general “great job”. However when we investigated further, the increase in positive comments centered around improved handling of user service problems.

Faculty

Comments made by faculty tended to reflect a general negative experience with the library, staff, resources and services. Faculty continue to request easier search and discovery (with fewer clicks) and more resources.

Observations by Discipline Areas

From this small sample, it appears that faculty and undergraduates from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences have had a more negative service experience with the Library as it relates to all LibQUAL+™ service dimensions. This is a large user group covering many disciplines, all of whom are more likely to use or interact with the Taylor Family Digital Library rather than one of the branch libraries or specialized service points. In contrast, there was some alignment between positive comments by graduate students and their experiences with branch libraries or specialized service points.

Questions for Further Investigation

- While we had built an amazing student-focused facility, it did not meet student expectations of what a library should be. What could we have done differently?
- What is it about the graduate student experience vis-a-vis branch libraries and specialized service points that can be translated to the Taylor Family Digital Library?
- What is it about the general faculty experience that has prompted them to comment negatively on the survey while the gap scores in the surveys were trending positively?

Actions to Date

- We increased study spaces in the new library by 15% shortly after opening.
- Signage and enforcement related to quiet study space was improved.
- Spaces that were not working as intended were identified and furniture layouts were revised to refine the functional use of spaces.
- Web interface is in perpetual beta.
- Enhanced customer service and training for staff is being developed and implemented.
- Communications and Marketing Manager hired.
- Improvement in digital signage throughout the TFDL.