

Introduction and Background

In Spring 2013, New York University (NYU) Bobst Library revitalized its space assessment for the recently renovated 4th, 5th, and 6th floors, collectively called the Research Commons. The following year the survey was expanded to incorporate the entire building, spanning 13 floors. Previously, conducting an assessment meant placing hash marks on a paper survey to indicate how many people were on each floor. However, data collectors were unclear on numerous sections in the original survey, creating issues with the reporting of results.



The Director of Public Services tasked this team with creating an improved way of assessing the spaces. NYU subscribes to the Qualtrics survey software and the assessment team took advantage of this software to update the original survey into a mobile version for iPads- offering optimal mobility, clarity, and quick data extraction. Data collectors were recruited from Access Services, Public Services, Data Services, and the Digital Studio - including student assistants, library staff, and librarians.

Recommendations for Testing, Editing, and Training



HOW TO RE-DESIGN SPACE ASSESSMENT SURVEYS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Designing and Implementing a New Survey

The first step to successful survey design is to have a clear goal. Survey design must also offer ease of use for volunteers collecting the data. This particular survey aimed to understand how patrons use the newly renovated spaces. For this assessment, data for the total number of users in a particular area of a floor, number of users for dedicated graduate student spaces, usage of newly added technology in study rooms, and use of specialized services (Data Services and Digital Studio) were of key interest.



Survey Design Strategies:

- Create a survey for each floor, allowing for a clear division of spaces and services on each floor and sense of accomplishment for the participant
- Organize the survey into blocks for each space to be assessed as a unit
- Synchronize the flow of the survey for each floor, ensuring that every survey starts and ends at the same point
- Create and maintain a uniform vocabulary for each space and service on every floor
- Add images for an accurate identification of spaces and services
- Design questions to not only be aesthetically pleasing, but also easy to answer on iPads

Data Collectors Recruitment and Training:

- Have support and initial announcement of project, highlighting objectives, sent to library employees by higher management
- Send out an email to introduce and explain the survey and call for volunteers among student assistants, library staff, and librarians across various departments
- Set up an online schedule so that data collectors can assign themselves shifts
- Provide instructions in multiple formats: handout, wiki, email, verbally
- Offer training sessions to orient data collectors to the survey
- Send out a follow-up email close to the start of sampling week, reminding data collectors of open shifts and training sessions
- Send daily reminders to data collectors the day of their shift

Shift	Mon 4/27	Tue 4/28	Wed 4/29	Thu 4/30	Fri 5/1	Sat 5/2	Sun 5/3
Lower Level 1 01:15-1:45	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm
Lower Level 2 01:15-1:45	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm
1st, Mezzanine, 2nd, 3rd & 4th Floor	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm
10th Floor	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm	1:15pm-1:45pm

Feedback

"It felt like a video game, it was fun!"

Data collectors indicated in the past the survey had felt like work, using the iPads and having a survey that anticipated their needs led to a more enjoyable experience and more robust responses.

"I got to explore the library!"

Many data collectors had not visited the renovated spaces, and conducting the survey allowed them the opportunity to do so.



"With the iPad I blended in with the students, I was just another scholar."

Anonymity made data collectors comfortable.

Lessons Learned

Communication is Key!

- Data collector feedback is vital to the structure of survey design and improvements for future iterations
- When working across multiple departments at a large academic institution, it is invaluable to have a clear understanding of what the survey will be assessing
- Communication venues- such as email, wiki updates, and in-person conversations (both formal and informal)- lead to less confusion and more accurate results
- Show appreciation and have an open forum for comments about overall experience from data collectors (i.e. a pizza party)

Results

What we Know:

- The 6th floor was most utilized
- Wednesday saw the most traffic and Friday the least
- Patrons will take almost any opportunity to turn surfaces into a desk space (including our portable lockers)

Still to Come:

- What existing technology was being used by patrons?
- What types of space (islands, group study, quiet rooms) were the most utilized?
- What behaviors stood out to data collectors?

