"WE HOPE IT HELPS."
THE IMPACT OF INCENTIVES ON LIBQUAL+ RESPONSE RATES
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ABSTRACT
Libraries deploying the LibQUAL+™ survey can offer a lottery incentive and many do so in the hope of increasing response rates. Other libraries may be prohibited from offering one because of Institutional Review Board restrictions. We wanted to discover why libraries offer lottery incentives, what kinds of incentives, and if they believe incentives have a positive impact on their response rates. The responding libraries hold a general belief that lottery incentives are effective, but base this on feeling rather than research.

METHODOLOGY
• Created 25-item questionnaire (LibQUAL+ Incentives Survey)
• Sent to 124 US and Canadian LibQUAL+ survey administrators who participated in LibQUAL+ 2010
• Return rate of 31%

WHAT WE DON’T KNOW
• Is there a difference in how students view incentives as compared to the general population?
• Does a combination of incentives work better than items or gift cards alone?
• Are students in different disciplines attracted to different types of incentives?
• Are students attracted to bigger prizes (as opposed to the literature which states people are drawn to smaller prizes with a higher chance of winning)?

INCENTIVES & COLLEGE STUDENTS
Literature on incentives and their impact on college student response rates is limited. There are many variables (timing, amount, type of incentive, length and salience of survey, etc.) to be considered. More research needs to be done on college students and incentives.

IDEAS FOR FUTURE LIBQUAL+ SURVEY ADMINISTRATORS
At Your Institution
1. Use pre and post incentives
2. Offering different types and amounts
3. Offering incentives with different academic disciplines

SURVEY TYPE OFFERED:
LITE, LONG OR COMBINATION

REASONS FOR OFFERING AN INCENTIVE (LOTTERY OR POST-PAID)

Survey  TYPE Offered:
100% long 100% lite 50% long/50% lite 80% long/20% lite 25% long/75% lite

IMACT OF INCENTIVES ON RESPONSE RATES & PLANS TO OFFER INCENTIVES IN THE FUTURE

Do you think the incentive(s) made a difference in your response rate

Reason Responses
To improve participation 17
Improve undergraduate response rate 4
Marketing 4
Encourage participation 4
Past experience 3
Improve faculty participation 1
Student expectation that a prize will be offered 1

26% of respondents do not plan to offer incentives in the future.

Would you offer incentives (again) in the future?

Yes 15 2 6 23
No 1 0 0 1
Not sure 0 2 1 3
Total 16 4 7 27

“Lotteries are probably the most effective reward in an online environment as they lead to the highest response rate in the short version and a respectable response rate in the long version.”
(Deutskens, de Ruyter, Wetzels, & Oosterveld, 2004, p. 31)

“Unlike the inclusion of prepaid incentives with survey promises of payment upon survey completion do not appear to affect respondent behavior.”
(Porter & Whitcomb, 2004, p. 53)

“The incentives we offered were items students purchase for themselves so they were desirable to them which increased their interest in the survey.”

-Participant

“Lotteries have provided some useful insights into what students want.”
(Stefanie Buck1, Jennifer E. Nutefal1, Laurie M. Bridges1, 2012)

“I have offered both a lottery and post-paid gift cards.”
(Porter, S. R., & Umbach, P. D. 2006)

“There is a common view of incentives and their impact on response rates: more is better.”

-Participant

Maximizing the rate of response to a particular survey, with a particular target population, is a unique challenge that requires careful consideration of a multifaceted range of factors.”

(Laguiiles, 2011, p. 540)

“People seem to be attracted to something free. However, we have no empirical proof to this effect.”

-Participant

“Offering incentives has become common practice and appears to be expected by students.”

-Participant
