OLA 2016 Uncovering User Needs in an Academic Library

Total time: 60 minutes, + 15 unstructured for questions and discussion with the audience

Introductions LG (5 minutes)

- Debbie Green, Head Robarts Research and Reference Services
- Lisa Gayhart, User Experience Librarian
- University of Toronto Libraries, Robarts Library
- Agenda and outcomes of the presentation
- Who is in the audience? Academic? Public? Are people more interested in methods or findings?

History of Service DG (5 minutes)

(What do we mean when we say "service," generally and in a library context)

- (Customer satisfaction research – globe slide)

- 1980s globalization disrupted national economies
- Transition to service based economy
- Growth of online marketplace for products, how to differentiate themselves?
- NA businesses could not compete on price
- Marketers focused on service in addition to product quality

Research produced by industry and academia

- Psychological tools, measures, formulas developed
- Service models, GAP, ServQUAL, RATER
- Scrutinize customer behaviour, etc.
    - Satisfaction
    - Loyalty
    - Trust
    - Commitment
    - Relationship building
    - Fortitude
    - Expectations
    - Inertia - funny
    - Community creation – feedback loop develops cust/bus/cust community
    - Service failure and service remediation – immediacy essential

What the research told us

- Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry themes:
    - Service quality perceptions rely on comparison by consumer between expectations and actual service performance
    - Assessments of quality are based, not only on outcome of service but the process of service
    - But they also identify that services, by their nature offer opportunity of developing loyalty, that does not reside in products – companies and later libraries went hogwild

Interpretations of service research

- Wow service, exceeding service expectations, focusses on personal p2p service
- Zappos
- But, the primacy of reliability and efficiency of service has been ignored in favour of Wow

- However a 2010 Harvard study of 75,000 concluded:
    - Most public service interactions are unsuccessful at remediating service issues
    - 3 out of 4 public service interactions result in a reduction of loyalty rather than an increase
    - Public service involves risk
- WHY DO IT?

Understand current operational environment and user base DG (10 minutes)

(What is the context and culture of our institution? How is service seen and weighted? Who are our users? What data and information is already available to us?)

- Using our institution's business intelligence

- NSSE tells us in relation to Canadian peers U of T UGs spend more time:
  - working for pay
  - commuting (St George+)
  - on home life responsibilities (UTM/UTSC+)
  - doing schoolwork
  - on class prep

- David Newman, Senior Director of Student Experience #1 worry for first year students in Ontario:
  - non U of T - finances
  - U of T - academic achievement

Vice Provost, Students tells us U of T students lead Canadian peers in:

- Academic achievement based on:
- Yr 1-2 retention rates approx. 92%
- Strong graduation rates

U of T Graduate Outcomes Survey shows 5 years after graduation:

- 29.9% respondents had completed an MA
- 4% had completed a doctoral degree
- Much higher in relation to U15 and the rest of Ontario

- U of T students outstrip other Canadian grads and undergrads in awards at all levels (CUDO)

Overall picture

- Every indicator tells us they are strong coming in and going out.

- It tells us our students are busy, competitive and focused on academic achievements
- Based on this what might we guess are their preoccupations in the library?

Time? Efficiency?

Understanding Our Immediate Environment LG (15 minutes, including Debbie's Robarts example)

(Drilling down to our library, our users, our service providers. What is the goal and context of our research? What do people need, right now?)

- Who is the target audience for a service?
- Digging into the needs of these users and their environment
- What is the current service model? Does it still work?
- Current constraints, opportunities. Is the timing right for change?
- What are our assumptions? Are they correct?
- What can we learn from user feedback?
- METHODS:

Example: Study of Ground Floor Services in Robarts **DG**

- Robarts Library
- The building

- complexity, mythology
- The origin story, contradictory
- symbolism
- original building program
- additions
- upcoming Robarts Common

What Robarts users think and feel about service = attitudinal

- On ground floor, busiest, noisiest, ugliest
- Whiteboard
  - broad questions
  - seed the answer
  - moved to 3 different locations with each of 5 questions
  - approx. 1 month

- Elevators, printers, scanners
- 10 - 1 hour walk throughs:
  - first year students
  - open questions to elicit impressions of space and services
  - along the way collected their feelings about university and Robarts

- Surveys – what are they doing in Robarts library - slide
- Focus groups/interviews 3 focus groups, mix of ug, grad H&SS, 1 Engineer Post Doc

What the users said about their expectations

- Shouldn't need help, should be high tech
- Robarts is for intensive work - "get shit done"
- High level services don't touch us
- Timeliness important
- Transit a major concern

What Robarts users do: behaviour

Declines in some areas - Robarts includes many staffed service points:

- general library wide services
- many specialized full service libraries within Robarts

Lots of potential for interacting with users but data from 2008+ shows:

- steady decline of f2f
- gate counts steady

Anomolies that tell us stuff – Robarts printing, workstation use, Scott Bennet successful study space. - slide

Findings: Putting behavior and attitudes together

Robarts student users' attitudes do not line nicely up with research about most effective study space.

Scott Bennett has done extensive study to determine what makes good study space. He concludes:

- Convenience
- Balance of noise and quiet
- Balance of individual and group study
- Comfort
- local info is needed - Robarts is a confusing building

What users expect and what frustrates them about Robarts

- Don't care about library staff, High tech, shouldn't need help from staff
- Use Robarts for concentrated work, not social, use college libraries for relaxed work, get shit done library
- No interest in high level service, doesn't touch them
- Wasting time is the worst!
- Getting through the building a major issue
- They hate feeling stupid

Conclusions

U of T students specific characteristics informs expectations

U of T students use Robarts differently than other libraries, even at U of T.

- Academic achievement most important
- Time constraints are great
- Comfort takes a back seat to efficiency : behavior and attitudes
- In person service not important! Maybe this is good

Take into Account Future Directions LG (10 minutes)

(Can we take advantage/piggyback on imminent change or projects?)

- How can we use the forward momentum of change to develop opportunity for user centred service design?
- Gauging future direction of library, department, university, etc.
- Opportunity move with the tide of change
- These opportunities can be rare in slow(er) moving organizations, so when one appears, use it to your full advantage.
- Be willing to be part of the change/solution, not just pushing your own agenda. Find meaningful contributions to the conversation as a whole.
- Methods:
    - User journey mapping.
- Key takeaways:
    - Organizational support is key here, as you want to approach problems as a united front, or at the very least without major

resistance. Developing an understanding with staff and management about user-centred design is important. Keep the user at the centre of the conversation always, and away from the organization's structure, culture, history, or politics. Of course you will discuss these things, but discuss through the lens of the user.

Example: Robarts Commons/ICORUS review

- ICORUS group was struck by library administration to review and assess the current state of user services in Robarts Library, in anticipation of the Robarts Common construction slated to begin in 2016
- The group looked into the services delivered across our biggest library, what users currently want/need, opportunity for future changes in service, and offered recommendations for changes
- Services offered by department, siloed. Not based on user need.
- So, what do users need/want? User journey mapping exercise, in addition to previous research and other stats available
    - (image of journey mapping sheet completed by a user)
    - How and why users move through Robarts?
    - Where do they cross channels?
    - What emotions develop?
    - Where are the pain points?
- Approached users in the library on the first and second floor. what is your goal? fill out work sheet. journey mapping but also empathy mapping - how does this experience make you feel? how does this impact your decision to visit the library, or you view of the library as a whole?
- Results:

Service goal orientation	Scholarly goal orientation
Group and individual study space, cash to card machine, printing, scanning, cafeteria, ATM, and TCard office.	Retrieve book from the stacks.
65% of total	35% of total
87% satisfaction rate	75% satisfaction rate
Lower rate of completion	Higher rate of completion
Typical journey: multiple points, longer	Typical journey: prepared, direct, and brief

- Pain points 100% service related:
    - Self checkout machine broken
    - Rude or unhelpful staff at desks
    - Not enough signage
    - Services hard to locate and not clearly identified
    - Use of library jargon by staff
    - Temperature too low
    - Insufficient group study space
    - Computers full
    - Slow elevators
    - Bad lighting in study spaces
- Users assume that our services options and standards will be in line with our research and scholarly standards.
- When users encounter inefficient signage, confusion between what services are on the two lower floors, lack of assistance, users tend to assume that we don't offer the services they are looking for and become frustrated
- Therefore, increasing service quality allows the library to be more useful and enjoyable to students, but also impacts the reputation and perceived efficacy of the library system as a whole.
- Since users anticipated and accepted small barriers to retrieving books from the stacks, they had a higher threshold for error or delays, and therefore were more resilient in accomplishing their tasks.
- Information gathered from this exercise allowed us to test assumptions, understand current services, understand gaps, and forecast future needs. Our recommendations take advantage of the new Robarts Commons development, and suggest reorienting service, design, provisioning, and physical placement to focus on the in-library user at the place of need (as opposed to departmental lines and physical limitations).

User Needs and Expectations Will Change Over Time LG (10 minutes)

(We need to keep service front of mind, be ready to make small changes on a regular basis. Some services will need to be retired eventually.)

- User needs change over time, services need to grow with users to remain effective
- Iterative design and ongoing implementation - may be a struggle at first to change culture, but once benefit is clear, easier to keep the cycle going forward
- Creating a culture of user-centered service and participatory design allows you to keep in touch with how users are currently feeling, what they want, pain points, etc
- Keeping lines of communication open, close the feedback loop, create relationships
- Methods:

- Open feedback channels like web forms on online tools
- listening (social media, going to where users are in the library)
- user advisory groups
- Key takeaways:
  - Developing relationships is key here, as you want to be informed of changing perceptions ahead of time.

Example: main library website redesign

- started project with user input and research before moving into design and development
- been about 5 years time to refresh site
- proliferation of devices and screen sizes time to move to a responsive design to meet industry standards
- we have such a diverse user group we want to make it accessible to the widest audience possible
- Iterative process. Released in phases and incorporated findings along the way.
- Communication with users ongoing
- Research findings (focused the design process):
  - A better web **searching** function that includes research guides.
  - Curated **research resources** that allow users to find a wide variety of tools in one spot, dedicated to a specific specialty or discipline.
  - A single **listing of digital and non-digital collections** held by the library and available to library users.
  - **Clean, simple, intuitive homepage** layout, navigation, and user experience that is similar in ease of use to commonly used tools such as Google and Wikipedia.
  - **Direct connection to library** through clear contact information, maps, library locations and hours, event listing, research assistance, liaison librarians.
- Methods:
  - staff consultation
  - student advisory group
  - guerrilla tools
  - social media outreach, surveys, and draws
  - interviews and observations
  - review of existing data
  - ongoing open feedback
  - share with ACRON team
- Key takeaways:
  - Meet all the people! Talk to your users in person and online.
  - Know your limits, scope the project well. You will get a lot of feedback and you can't always respond to the squeakiest wheels. Feedback in context/combination with expert opinion (team).
  - Set some deadlines and priorities. You can talk to people forever, so be strategic and try to get representative samples.
  - Communicate your findings! The best data is meaningless unless it's in the hands of the people who can and will make decisions.

Conclusions and Open the Floor for Questions (3-5 minutes) DG

- Summary of talk // key takeaways
  - Create a culture of user-centred design and delivery.
  - Be an ambassador for your library's users at all talks.
  - Develop methods and tools that are simple, inexpensive, and replicable so staff can get involved with the process in their area.
  - Constant communication: with users, stakeholders, staff, your team, etc.
- Discussion
  - Questions from the floor
  - Any suggestions for how we can further uncover user needs?
  - How do you uncover user needs at your library?
  - What's worked? what hasn't?
- Thank you. Feel free to contact us via email at any time. Make sure to check out our new website, developed in a user-centred, participatory design methodology, at www.library.utoronto.ca.

Presentation Slides

OLA pres 2016Jan26dg.pptx