Website Usage 2002

Portia Usage Survey Summary of Results

A total of 335 online questionnaires were completed enhanced by 59 email submissions, a total of 394 submissions. This response was greater than we expected and perhaps indicates in itself that Library users are pleased with the current service level and are keen to assist in its improvement.

Overall, feedback was positive, with a number of suggestions for improvement. Some of these suggestions are viable and we would like to implement them. Other suggestions, although sound, are not technically feasible, although we should bear all of them in mind when looking for a new Content Management System for PORTIA.

Note: Some negative aspects could be improved by better help either on the web site, or by having tutorial sessions available to help those who are struggling to use the web site successfully.

Using the web from home was another area that was frequently commented on. Many students are part-time, who do research from home. We need to make it easier for students like this to have access to resources e.g. exam papers, digitised articles and other electronic resources.

DETAILED SURVEY RESPONSES

The majority of respondents (71%) were undergraduates, most of whom use Portia on a weekly basis.

GENERAL WEB SITE

STRUCTURE & NAVIGATION

Most people ranked the clarity of the structure 4/5, and the site navigation 4/5. This indicates that most users find the site easy to use & navigate. Comments include:

- Clear and easy to use
- Clear layout and structure
- Sometimes over-simplified
- The site map is best
- Difficult
- Databases / journals not easy to find your way around

VISUAL ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE SITE

Most respondents gave the site design 3/5, then 4/5. Many of the comments suggested that users thought the site was a little plain, however, many people would prefer a simple, functional site with quick download times to flashy graphics.

RELEVANCE OF INFORMATION

Most respondents marked the information relevance4/5. One person commented that some journals which could be found on Portia, could not be found in the Library. Another commented that Portia was good because many books in the library are old/out of date, so PORTIA allows access to up to date information.

DESCRIBE ANY INFORMATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE, BUT ISN'T AVAILABLE

There were numerous comments in this section which have been grouped into categories.

Distance Learning
Distance learners would like to have more access to resources from off-campus, more help when having difficulty accessing resources and also the ability to register for Library services by email and not having to come directly to the library desk.

Exam Papers
Library users would like more exam papers available, the ability to access these from off-campus, the addition of postgraduate exam papers and possibly exam timetables.

Library Resources
As regards library resources, users would like to see 'new library titles listed'. To be able to see when searching for journal articles whether they are held in the library. A list of journals & papers the library has. Past dissertation papers or titles of research; old newspaper articles; more title details and a specific section on Journals/Papers.

General Website
In general, users would like to see more help on how to find journals, scientific papers etc in the library and also help on accessing electronic data/journals/CD-ROMS.

HELP SECTIONS

84% of respondents haven't used the Help section. This indicates that the site is fairly straightforward & users feel they don't need help to use the site. Of the people that used the help section, their responses were split. There were 3 main response groups, 2/5, 3/5, 4/5. This indicates that the help section is one that requires looking at and enhancing.

REASONS FOR USING PORTIA

The main reasons for using Portia were:

1. To use the Library Catalogue
2. To access electronic resources
3. To access to practical information about the library
4. To access past exam papers
5. To renew / reserve books
6. To use Borrower Info feature of Talis

The response to this question is really as expected, and should give us the go ahead to develop these popular areas.

OVERALL USEFULNESS OF PORTIA

Most respondents marked the site as either 4/5 or 5/5. This indicates that the site is thought of as useful and functional and users gain lots from using it. Comments indicate that many users use the PORTIA from home; also, it is used within the Library as an aid to finding required resources. One user commented that they 'would be stuck without it'. One user commented that it was slow when used from home.

SUBJECT DIRECTORY

NAME OF 'SUBJECT DIRECTORY' AS A TITLE

The majority of respondents (84%) thought that 'Subject Directory' was an adequate title for the section. There weren't really many suggestions and some comments indicated that some users may be a little confused as to exactly what the subject directory contains. One alternative suggestion was 'Electronic and Journal Article directory' another was 'course support'. One criticism of the subject directory was that it doesn't target subjects under course names.

HOW EASY IS IT TO FIND RESOURCES IN THE CURRENT SUBJECT DIRECTORY?

Most people marked this either 4/5 then 3/5. This indicates that resources are quite easy to find, but the system could be improved to make it more efficient. One criticism was that good resources are often available in a higher or different category and that perhaps could be linked to more subjects. One suggestion was that we should add 'computer engineering' into the 'engineering' category.

HOW CLEAR DO YOU FIND THE SUBJECT CATEGORIES?

Most people marked this 4/5 then 3/5. This indicated that on the whole, the subjects are acceptable, however, there could be some improvements to make resource retrieval easier. One comment was that the first page subjects were too broad and it was unclear which subjects were contained within each one. One suggestion was that the subjects may be easier to find if listed in alphabetical order. (We do have an alphabetical list, but we could make it more predominant).

HOW CLEAR DO YOU FIND THE RESOURCE TYPES?

Most people marked 3/5 then 4/5. There were only a few comments for this question. This perhaps indicates that people weren't sure what resource types were.

HOW USEFUL DO YOU FIND THE SEARCH FACILITY?

Most people marked 4/5 for this. This indicates that the search box is likely to be the usual way that resources are accessed. Some comments were that; the advanced search is more useful; excellent; it comes up with lots of irrelevant results; hard to find resources if certain keywords are not used.

HOW USEFUL DO YOU FIND THE BROWSE FACILITY?

Most people marked 3/5 then 4/5, so from these figures it would appear that browsing for resources is popular. There weren't many comments for this question, however, the browse structure is linked to the subject categories, and so we can surmise that by improving the subject categories, the browse structure will also be improved.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE THE ADVANCED SEARCH?

The results for this question were spread fairly evenly between 1 and 4, with 3% of users using the advanced search each time. One comment was 'I usually find what I want on the normal search'. Comments for advanced search included 'Specialist subject areas are easier to find' and 'I rarely find what I'm looking for when using a normal search'. The response to this question indicates that most people are happy with the standard search, however, though for more detailed & specialist searches, an advanced search is preferable.

DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS ABOUT HOW THE SEARCH RESULTS ARE DISPLAYED?

This was a comments only question. 23 comments were received.

Samples of the comments are:

- Talis Databases & resources have no description
- Does not appear to be a logical sequence of how the results are displayed
- I would like results displayed in order of age
- The 'limit' option isn't very helpful
- More information on the content of each result would be useful
- More colour would help to differentiate the titles
- Too many options - browse, advanced search, takes too long to find what you want.
- When no results found, display related materials
- Very clear and detailed

Some of these areas can be improved, however many are dependant on the technical capabilities of a future system.

ARE THERE ANY GENERAL FACTORS WHICH YOU THINK WOULD IMPROVE THE USEFULNESS OF PORTIA?

This question generated a lot of comments. Here is a general summary of these comments put into categories.

GENERAL WEB SITE

- Internet Tutorials in Skills and Support is weaker than the related Evaluating Internet Resources in Internet Search Tools (and the distinction is confusing).
  The site is so good that it needs:
  (a) a named editor with web/communication/design skills; why not have him/her have a 'How to use the site' page, and an e-mail newsletter on library and/or library-web innovations?
  (b) Frequent periodic review and moderation and checking of links by subject librarians;
  (c) more investment of money in Electronic Resources The Help and Search are poor. I couldn't find Browse. Why do I need to use the Site Map so much. How do people who don't use the Site Map manage? I'd guess that a lot of the excellent resources are underused.
- The site is by a huge margin the best innovation in library services in Portsmouth during my employment (12 years), and goes forward when other areas are going backward (e.g. book purchases and journal subscriptions).
- A summary of each section about what's contained in it when clicking on it
- Regular help e.g. training for users
- Develop a FAQ section
- The sections on the main site aren't intuitive & you have to go into each one to see what's there!
- More departmental information & helpful hints
- More visually interesting
- Electronic resources don't seem to be reliable
- Make it more obvious where to go for password information
- Once you've left the home page, it's difficult to find the areas that are in the 'quick links' part of the homepage
- Some shortcuts for frequent users would be nice
- Using clearer title or using a little summary beside each subject will help
- Too much use of small writing so need to read carefully, but slows down research
- Could be a more interactive site with moving icons and more colour
- Can use pull down menu to save space
- A menu bar down the side would make things a little easier
- Better search engine necessary!
- Confusing having a subject directory and library catalogue
- too much information on the front page.
- Could add some more colour into the site design (without slowing down the site)
- Text only option
- Opening times shown on the main page!!
- If there are any gaps on the system, recommendations on where to go?
- Sorting e.g. databases by topic would help

LIBRARY CATALOGUE

- Could we renew all books in one go?
- Borrower info needs to be more prominent
- Once in "renew lib books" couldn't navigate back to Library site.
- Catalogue unclear for 'newly arrived texts'
- Number of reservations should be shown
- Renew books doesn't work from home
- There are titles in the catalogue that are no longer on the shelf

- Can we have JSTOR please, and online access to ALL journals that we subscribe to in print?
- I've had a few problems trying to renew my library book just after it was due i.e. a 1:30 renewal but have been only moments later and it refuses. Any chance of a thirty minute amnesty? Apart from that it's a good site which I have bookmarked on my computer at home and at work
- The general appearance of the library catalogue section could be improved as the buttons appear cluttered etc. and the blue is not very appealing
- Allow students to renew overdue books online & pay fines on return
- Navigation to the rest of Portia from the catalogue
- Sometimes there are books in the library which aren't found in the catalogue
- Complete author lists (currently only space for certain number of characters so some authors are missing from search results)
- It would be helpful to know when books you are reserving are due back from their current borrowers

ROADS

- Record of searches / paths previously covered
- More signposting to specific directories and subject headings
- More relative keywords

SUBJECT SPECIFIC

- Occupational Health & Safety not covered
- More up to date animation books!!
- More Narcotic journals
- Up to date Psychology research journal articles, indexed by subject
- Guidelines for labs, better access for pharmacy notes.
- Crime & Delinquency journals

DISTANCE LEARNERS

- Being able to access exam papers from off-campus
- Improve for remote users

GENERAL LIBRARY

- Course lists of book titles