

# Unplugged

Welcome  
Back!

NEWS FROM THE RONALD WILLIAMS LIBRARY



Issue 15, Fall 2004

## Assessing Library Service Quality

Faculty and staff of the Ronald Williams Library are committed to improving library services by creating our own culture of assessment. To help the Library better understand user expectations and how the University Community views our services, the Ronald Williams Library administered the LibQUAL+ survey to a random sample group of NEIU students, faculty and staff members during April and May. LibQUAL+ is a web-based, total market survey designed by the Association of Research Libraries to measure library service quality.

*How good are library services?* We were pleased to find that the overall assessment of library service quality is generally very high. On a scale of 1 to 9, the average rating provided for the Ronald Williams Library across all of the 22 core service quality questions was 7.01, slightly higher than the national average rating of 6.94 across all college and university libraries participating in the survey in 2004. NEIU graduate student respondents rated the Library the highest, with an average rating of 7.33 across the 22 questions. NEIU undergraduates were a bit closer to the overall average with a cumulative rating of 7.09. NEIU faculty provided somewhat lower average ratings of 6.77 on the 9 point scale.

*What is the Library doing well?* Looking overall and at average responses by most user groups, the highest perceived quality ratings were for questions related to personal touch in providing service to users (affect of service) with an average rating of 7.15. This is a very positive finding given that so much of what we do in the library is providing face-to-face service and instruction to our patrons. Graduate students, faculty and staff all gave their highest ratings to questions related to affect of service. Analysis of comments submitted along with the surveys confirms the generally very positive sense across the University Community that users are treated very well by Library faculty and staff members.

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*Within a service-quality model, "only customers judge quality; all other judgments are essentially irrelevant."*



**Contributors:** Brad Baker, Carlos Melian, Jill Althage  
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*What services do users most need and want from the Library?* The survey findings leave little doubt about what users most desire from the Library. The top five most desired items from the 22 core service questions all relate directly to electronic access to information resources and to greater ease of use in accessing these resources. Users want online access to information resources and they want to be able to use these resources anytime/anywhere on their own. While this high priority for electronic resources is evidenced in findings for each of the user groups, there are clear differences as well among undergraduates, graduate students and faculty. For undergraduates, “convenient service hours” and “library space that inspires study and learning” both make it into the top five most desired items. For graduate students, “timely document delivery/ILL” and “teaching me how to locate, evaluate, and use information” are highly desired, with “convenient service hours” and “quiet space for study and learning” not far behind. Faculty data show the strongest overall priority for electronic resources and access, though “employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions” is also highly desired.

*Where does the library fall below service expectations?* Not surprisingly, the areas with the biggest gaps between desired service ratings and perceived current service ratings generally mirror the most desired items. Access to needed electronic resources comes up high on each of these lists. It is interesting to note that our collections of printed books and journals and our multimedia collections also surface here as services falling most below desired levels. Again, “convenient service hours,” “library space that inspires study and learning” and “timely document delivery/ILL” also show significant adequacy gaps. Clearly the Library cannot ignore library facilities and traditional collections in addressing the demand for ever more electronic resources.

*What are we doing with the survey findings?* Library faculty and staff members have begun a new strategic planning process this summer in which we are using LibQUAL+ survey findings as a key driver in setting new priorities and strategies for the next three years. The survey findings have already stimulated exciting discussions about what is needed to ensure that library funding and service priorities are in line with the needs and desires of the University Community. I am pleased to note that the Library has taken some important steps already to address two of the key adequacy gaps noted in survey responses by adding JSTOR to our suite of electronic resources and by purchasing a new server and software package to enhance document delivery and ILL services. Separate articles on these two new services are provided in the insert to this newsletter issue.

Bradley F. Baker  
Dean of Libraries and Learning Resources



### **Finding Books Across the State Now Smooth as SILC**

A new Statewide Illinois Library Catalog (SILC) has just been launched to streamline access to the holdings of all Illinois libraries for the citizens of Illinois. SILC provides search and retrieval access to over 12.4 million titles and 62.6 million holdings in 2,665 libraries in Illinois – including the holdings of the Ronald Williams Library and all 65 academic libraries participating in ILLINET Online. SILC uses the familiar FirstSearch interface to search Illinois holdings in the comprehensive WorldCat database. Users can search all Illinois library holdings simultaneously or “scope” the search by region or type of library. Special features include the ability to link into local library catalogs to determine shelf status and the ability from within the system to request titles via interlibrary loan. When a title is not held in Illinois, users can easily expand their search to the 56 million titles contained in the global WorldCat database. SILC is available as a link from the Library’s web site at <http://www.neiu.edu/~neulib>, under the section for Library Catalogs. The discovery process has never been easier. Give it a try.

## NEIU's Mystery Symposium

“One out of every four books sold is a detective fiction novel, and the popularity of this genre seems only to be increasing. In the last two decades there has been a tremendous outpouring of detective fiction written by women and persons of color. These shifting gender, sexual, ethnic, racial and political identities provide the opportunity to address social issues in an accessible manner...”

The Ronald Williams Library will highlight NEIU's Mystery Symposium during this fall semester. Be sure to stop by and check the display cases on the first floor for related exhibits.

For further information, you can visit the website at:  
[www.neiu.edu/~mystery](http://www.neiu.edu/~mystery)



## “The Mysterious Teen”

Please join us for this panel discussion on October 11, 2004, in the Library's Lower Level Classroom, from 10 - 11:50 a.m.

*Featured panelists are Gini Baker, Rick Kinnebrew, Cindy Welch, Michelle Wilson, and Sara Lifson.*



## Matching Library Space to User Needs

For many in academe, the idealized image of a library is of a large, very quiet reading room with perhaps only the sound of a ticking grandfather clock to disturb the silence. In case you haven't noticed, libraries have changed. The start of the Fall semester will bring a steady, and often noisy, stream of users through the Ronald Williams Library every day. Faculty, staff and students now come to the Library not only to read or to conduct independent research. Some come for a library instruction class, others to meet with a study group, some to meet with a tutor, others for a meeting in one of the Centers housed in the Library. The Ronald Williams Library has taken a number of steps to maximize our ability to meet your needs no matter why you enter our front doors. The first and third floors of the Library have been completely refurnished over the past few months and now feature a mix of high quality study furniture and spaces. While both floors do handle a significant

volume of traffic and a mix of functions, both of these floors do offer relatively quiet space away from the elevators and service desks well suited to study and research. The fourth floor of the Ronald Williams Library is now designated as a “group study” floor and is the place to go if you need space conducive to collaboration with a study partner or group. The lower level is reserved for individual study and generally will be the quietest location in the Ronald Williams Library. The Library requests cooperation and consideration for the needs of all patrons in your use of the Library by keeping noise to a minimum throughout the building and by turning off cell phones. In our hectic, multitasking world, we all do need the Library, as much as possible, to be a quiet place of refuge and reflection.



## Information Fluency

It's time to raise the bar on information literacy. Instead of settling for minimum requirements and competencies, the Library is challenging the University Community to strive instead for information fluency. Being information literate implies a very basic awareness and set of skills with using information resources. The elimination of the campus-wide Computer/Information Literacy Requirement indicates a general agreement that the University Community has attained this basic level of information competence. Being information fluent, however, requires a much deeper knowledge of scholarly communication and more sophisticated capabilities in finding and applying relevant information from print and electronic sources in support of learning and research. Information fluency is in short one of the real marks of an educated person. It is our hope that the University Community will join the Library in this vision to produce graduates from NEIU who are indeed fluent in their use of information. Library faculty and staff are here to partner with faculty, staff and students in this quest. We are redesigning our own library instruction curriculum and have a new instruction classroom featuring 24 wireless laptops to enable hands-on, active learning techniques. To help structure your courses to promote information fluency or to schedule instruction sessions for your classes with subject information specialists in the Library, please contact Jill Althage in the Library at ext. 4415 or J-Althage@neiu.edu, or Beth Frazin at ext. 4441 or B-Schurgin@neiu.edu.



Put it on your calendar!

Ronald Williams Library  
Annual Book Sale

Nov. 10 - 13, 2004

**IN THE EXHIBIT SPACE:**

**AUGUST - DECEMBER**

Student Art Exhibits  
of printmaking, painting,  
furniture, ceramic sculpture  
and computer graphics.

*A Warm Welcome...*



As the Library says hello to Colleen Pelka, LTA1 in Technical Services, we bid farewell to Glen Kistner, who has served as a librarian for twenty-nine years. Glen has worked in Circulation, IRAD, and Periodicals Reference. We wish him well in his retirement.



*...and a fond farewell.*



**You Asked for it....We Bought it....**  
***JSTOR: The Scholarly Journal Archive Now Available***

JSTOR, a complete online digital archive going back to volume one of approximately 600 core scholarly journals, is now available from the Databases section of the Ronald Williams Library web site. Titles included cover most disciplines in the social sciences and humanities with particular strengths in economics, history, political science, and sociology. As the collections grow, more titles will be added in additional areas including business and education. Complete title lists are available from the JSTOR web site at [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org).

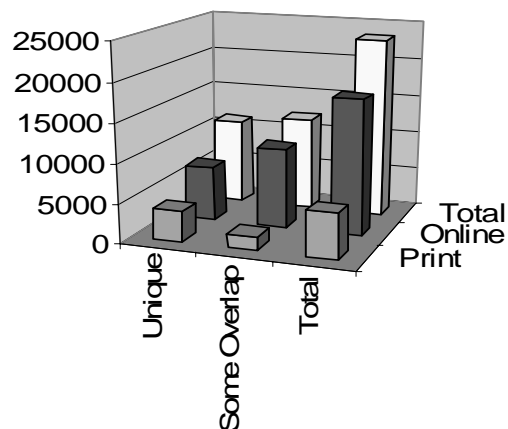
Searching JSTOR is easy in basic or advanced modes with use of keywords, topics, titles and authors. A navigational bar is always present for researchers to get tips on any screen or area. The interdisciplinary nature of JSTOR and ability to search the full text of all articles offer unique research opportunities. As an archival database, JSTOR is not a tool for finding articles from recent issues of scholarly journals. While JSTOR does continue to add content, the most recent volumes included are generally 3 to 5 years behind current publication schedules. As part of JSTOR's unique agreement with journal publishers, access to more recent indexing and full text for journal titles included in JSTOR is provided by other commercial databases. JSTOR was established as an independent, not-for-profit organization in August 1995.

**Library Print and Online Journal Title Holdings**

Despite significant budget challenges, the Ronald Williams Library has made significant strides over the past several years in enhancing our holdings of print and online journals and other serials. With the recent addition of the JSTOR database, the Library is proud to announce that we are providing access to 23,211 serial titles. As shown in the chart below, this collection is comprised of 5,783 print titles and 17,428 online titles. When overlap is eliminated for titles in multiple formats and/or multiple electronic databases, the collection contains 11,105 unique journal/serial titles. The Library web site now features a powerful tool from Serials Solutions to assist you in finding the location and format of the journal titles you need for your work. Click on the link in the Databases section of the Ronald Williams Library web site, or go directly to <http://orion.neiu.edu/~neilib/onlineJournals/jnlsIndex.html>. If the journal title you are looking for is not among our current collection of 11,105 titles, we would love to know. Please contact the librarian assigned to your program or Dean Bradley Baker at [B-Baker@neiu.edu](mailto:B-Baker@neiu.edu).

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**Library Serial Holdings**



*We'd like to welcome Tony Piña to the Library.  
Tony is the new Coordinator of Learning Technologies  
in the Center for Teaching and Learning.*



### **Enhancing Blackboard Courses**

Looking for a great way to enhance student learning by adding more content to your Blackboard courses? The Library, through our partnership with the Center for Teaching and Learning, is ready, willing and able to help you add digital copies of journal articles you are assigning as required reading directly into your Blackboard courses. As an optional feature of our electronic reserves service, the Library will supply you either with electronic links for articles in one of our licensed databases or PDF files that you can easily attach to assignments in your Blackboard courses. Information on this service is available on the Library's web site at <http://www.neiu.edu/~neulib/about/libservices/reserve/reservefaq.html>. For assistance, contact Craig Althage in the Library Circulation area at ext. 4404 or at [cl-althage@neiu.edu](mailto:cl-althage@neiu.edu). For training or consulting support on adding digital content to Blackboard, contact Paul Heydenburg in the Center for Teaching and Learning at ext. 4463 or [p-heydenburg@neiu.edu](mailto:p-heydenburg@neiu.edu).

**ILLiad**

*Interlibrary Loan  
management software*

### **ILLiad – New Interlibrary Loan Services in the Library**

The library is implementing new resource sharing management software, ILLiad, to automate its interlibrary loan (ILL) functions. In addition to providing staff with the tools for managing the library's borrowing, lending and document delivery through a single Windows-based interface, ILLiad will present a simple, Web-based patron interface that allows library users to initiate and track their own interlibrary loan requests from any browser. ILLiad also automates the notification process when interlibrary loan requests are received, reducing the time between patron requests and notification. For journal articles not found in the Library's extensive serials collection (see related article in this issue of *Unplugged*) and requested via interlibrary loan, ILLiad will store the requested item and allow the requester to download it to their PC for viewing and printing. ILLiad should address many of the ILL-related concerns that were identified by our users in the Library's recent LibQUAL survey.

The project also signals an important development for the Library as the ILLiad software will reside on a server located in the Library and primarily administered by Library staff. This will allow library staff to quickly respond to any technical issues and to readily customize features as service needs are identified. Working closely with staff from Network and Distributed Services, the initial preparations have been completed and staff training and system testing should be completed in the following weeks. Look for our new ILLiad service beginning in October.