
HERNON, Peter, ALTMAN, Ellen, DUGAN, Robert E. *Assessing service quality: Satisfying the expectations of library customers*. 3rd Ed. London: Facet. 2015.

232 pages. ISBN 978-1-78330-059-4. £49.95

Academic libraries and public libraries have seen huge amounts of change in recent years, not least with the advent and inclusion of new technologies into all areas of library work and provision. Physical environments have changed to incorporate self-issue, computers and different seating layouts and staff members have developed their skills in order to continue to provide high levels of support. One thing that hasn't changed, and which is at the heart of all libraries, is the provision of resources and services to the library user – or the library customer.

Customer demands on library collections, facilities and services continue to develop and this has led to the need to reassess how and what libraries offer in the future. This book, produced by the American Library Association, looks at the traditional ways we have measured service, and identifies new ways of obtaining information that is meaningful and useful. There is a move away from the simple quantitative measuring that has characterised information gathering in the past (how many books loaned, how many books on shelves etc.) to looking at the ways customers use the library and the impact that the library has.

Although the book has a strong focus on American libraries, there are clear parallels with UK public and academic libraries and a real attempt by the authors to make the information transferrable. Information is supported with clear diagrams and references, making even the most complex customer-related metrics information accessible to the general reader. In addition they provide suggestions for how to present data to initiate change and how to continue to assess and develop to meet the changing needs of the library customer.

I found the book to be clearly laid out, interesting to read and very informative. On occasion the focus on the American library systems was slightly distracting but there is plenty of information that could be applied to the UK. It is comprehensive in its coverage of qualitative and quantitative information gathering and provides clear guidance on what to collect, and how to use it. This book is recommended for academic and public librarians who wish to learn more about customer opinions and needs, and develop their services as a result.

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