

# La Trobe University Library

## Materials Availability Survey 2005

### Executive summary

The Library carried out its third CAUL Materials Availability Survey in 2005. The survey was conducted at the three LTU main campuses, from Monday 8 August (at Bundoora from Monday 22nd August 2005 to and including Sunday 28th August 2005) to find out the availability and reasons for non availability of book, AV and print serial items. The survey was similar in most aspects to the 2003 and 1995 surveys.

There was again discussion about the appropriateness of the instrument in the increasingly electronic environment and whether additional modifications were required. As a national tested survey instrument did not yet exist to measure success at finding electronic material, and consultation with other university libraries who had administered the survey in recent years indicated they had undertaken few or no modifications, the La Trobe survey followed the 2003 format.

The main findings showed an improvement in immediate overall availability over the three years from 67% (1995) to 76% (2003) and 81% in 2005. The greatest improvement (of 20%) was at the Albury Wodonga Campus library.

La Trobe University Library compares well with other Australian university libraries which have published data from their materials availability surveys; success rates at these libraries range from 69% to 74%.

Recommendations from the survey team include:

1. The results be referred to individual campuses for any particular action (for example, purchasing of material identified as required but not in the collection; purchase of multiple copies if required etc)
2. Publish brief survey results on the public web and full results on the staff web sites.
3. The results also be published in the Performance Indicator database on the CAUL Best Practice web page
4. The survey is repeated once *electronic* materials availability can be reliably assessed, or, if that is not possible, in two or four years (to be decided so it does not clash with the Rodski Survey) as recommended in the CAUL performance indicator documentation.

# La Trobe University Library Materials Availability Survey 2005

## Background

Amongst the priorities in the University Library Strategic Plan for 2005 is:

*“Implement specific performance measurement activities:*

- A seating usage survey, including computer workstation usage at Bundoora and Bendigo campus libraries*
- Review opening hours*
- A Materials Availability Survey”*

Materials Availability is one of a suite of library performance indicators developed with the support of CAUL and is defined as the proportion of material sought by the user which is available in the library for use at the time it is sought. Results from the survey provide information on item availability as well as reasons why items cannot be found. The overall aims are to determine:

- The extent to which the library provides the users with the items they are looking for
- The proportion of sought items not in the collection
- The adequacy of multiple copies at a campus and between campuses
- The appropriateness of loan periods
- The accuracy of shelving and users ability to find items on the shelves
- The ease of use of the catalogue to find items, to identify locations and to determine the loan status of items

The Materials Availability Survey can provide more detail about the general success in collection development and supports Library efforts towards continuous improvement of services, resources and facilities.

Benchmarking with other comparable institutions is also possible. While it would be useful to compare La Trobe results with the complete data from all the other Innovative Research Universities (IRU Australia), data is available for only two of these libraries (eg Griffith and Flinders). Materials Availability Surveys have been carried out recently by several Australian university libraries and those results include:

**Australian Catholic University:**

2004: across all campuses, 66% of respondents reported finding the item they sought.

**Curtin University:**

2005: success rate of 59%

**Flinders University:**

2003: 74% of items sought were available immediately on the shelves.

**Griffith University:**

2003: a response rate of 53% and an overall success rate of 66%

2005: a response rate of 65% and an overall success rate of 69%

**University of New South Wales:**

2004: an overall success rate of 63%.

**University of Technology, Sydney:**

2005: 68% success rate

La Trobe University Library compares well with an average availability rate of 81% (range from 86% at A-W to 77% at Bundoora).

The survey was last undertaken at La Trobe in 2003. In 2005 the survey was conducted at 3 locations – Bendigo, Bundoora and Albury-Wodonga campus libraries. As in the past, the 2005 survey was conducted over a maximum two week period from 8 August and surveyed the availability of book, AV and print serial items.

## Survey Modification

As in 2003, the CAUL survey instrument was modified very slightly. The changes included:

- Question 1 in the Albury-Wodonga survey form was modified to include the Wodonga TAFE users
- a question asking the user to identify the sort of material being sought – a book, a journal or an audiovisual item was added

There was again discussion about the appropriateness of the instrument in the increasingly electronic environment and whether additional modifications were required. As a national tested survey instrument did not yet exist to measure success at finding electronic material, and consultation with other university libraries who had administered the survey in recent years indicated they had undertaken few or no modifications, the La Trobe survey followed the 2003 format. Copies of the survey forms for each campus are attached.

## Methodology

### Promotion

Again the theme of the survey was “DID YOU FIND IT”.

Promotional tools included use of colour posters of A2, A3 and A4 sizes, bookmarks, and items in University News and the student broadsheets. Information was also published on the library and campus library websites using the DID YOU FIND IT icon. Promotional activities started approximately one week before the survey started. Staff distributing the survey wore special identification badges.

### Incentives

As encouragement to complete and return survey forms, each campus library offered \$50 cash prizes based on a lucky draw at the end of the survey period. Winners were published on the campus library websites. In addition, the Bendigo Campus Library received sponsorship from local businesses and made available additional prizes including movie tickets.

### Survey Distribution

The survey forms were coloured differently for each campus. The Lucky Draw entries were attached as optional tear off forms. This method met the privacy compliance requirements of the University. The method and timing of distribution of forms are described in the included campus reports.

### Staffing Resources Required

The staffing resources used at each campus for the survey were:

	A-W		Bendigo		Bundoora		Total	
	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005
<b>Local planning</b>	5hrs	20hrs	26hrs	46.7 hrs	44hrs	16 hrs	75hrs	82.7 hrs
<b>Form distribution</b>	26hrs	24hrs	19hrs	25.25hrs	21hrs	21 hrs	66hrs	70.25 hrs
<b>Checking and coding</b>	8hrs	14hrs	9hrs	17.75hrs**	16hrs	15.5 hrs	33hrs	47.25 hrs

\*\* includes the 10 hours of data entry. There were only 7.75 hours spent at Bendigo on actual shelf checking & manual coding of sheets.

Administering the survey was staff intensive and required some additional casual staffing resources to assist in the distribution and subsequent checking and coding of the returned forms. Individual time sheets were used in 2005 to accurately count the involvement of all members of the Materials Availability Survey team. It appeared that the 2005 survey required greater numbers of hours invested for a poorer return rate, although this may be an artefact of the 2005 use of time sheets. For example, during 2003, data entry took a total of 10 hrs all at

Bendigo. During 2005 data entry took 18 hours - 8 hours at Bundoora and 10 hours at Bendigo.

## **Results**

A total of 2785 forms were handed out and 1224 forms were returned, giving an overall response rate of 43.9% (50% in 2003). Of these returned forms, 1216 had data that could be analysed generating a participation rate of 43.6% (45% in 2003). Individual response and participation rates are provided in the campus library reports.

The data was entered into the Excel spreadsheets provided in the CAUL package. (The kit is available electronically from CAUL at <http://www.caul.edu.au/best-practice/PerfInd.html> C. *Proportion of sought material obtained at time of visit*. Colin Taylor and Jan Hiscock, Library, University of South Australia, 1995).

The data entry for AW and Bundoora was carried out at the Bundoora Campus while the Bendigo Campus Library entered and analysed their campus forms.

The immediate availability of materials across the campus libraries ranged from 77% to 86%, for all client groups, with the average for the library as a whole of 81%. The range at the 95% confidence level varied from campus to campus and is detailed in the individual campus reports.

A comparison of 2005 results with the 2003 and 1995 survey is given in Table 1. This shows an improvement in nearly all categories across the campus libraries.

**Table 1. Comparison of 2005, 2003 and 1995 Results**

	<b>Albury-Wodonga</b>			<b>Bendigo</b>			<b>Bundoora</b>			<b>All campuses</b>		
	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>1995</b>
<i>Materials immediately available</i>	86%	80%	66%	81%	76%	62%	77%	74%	68%	81%	76%	67%
<i>Not in collection</i>	2%	3%	5%	2%	4%	11%	3%	4%	7%	2%	4%	7%
<i>User error - catalogue search</i>	0	0%	1%	0	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	1%
<i>At another location</i>	4%	5%	0%	2%	2%	0%	3%	0%	1%	3%	2%	2%
<i>User error - location check</i>	0	0%	0%	0	1%	0%	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
<i>On loan</i>	5%	6%	11%	4%	8%	11%	4%	8%	11%	4%	8%	9%
<i>User error - item status check</i>	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<i>Missing</i>	1%	1%	6%	4%	5%	6%	8%	6%	7%	4%	5%	6%
<i>User error - shelf search</i>	1%	2%	7%	4%	4%	6%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%
<i>Other</i>	0	2%	1%	0	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%
<i>Confidence level</i>	4.08%	4.54%	5.11%	3.72%	4.22%	4.60%	3.61%	3.48%	3.38%	3.80%	2.30%	1.89%
<i>Materials availability range at 95% confidence level</i>	82% to 90%	76% to 85%	61% to 72%	78% to 86%	71% to 80%	58% to 67%	73% to 80%	70% to 77%	65% to 72%	78% to 85%	74% to 78%	65% to 69%

*NB The 1995 "All campuses" result includes data from the Abbotsford, Carlton and Bendigo Learning Resource Centre libraries*

*NB The "All campuses" results are average figures, rounded to the nearest whole number.*

Analysis also included a breakdown by material type in the returned forms, and a further breakdown into materials immediately available and those not found. The results are given in Table 2 and Table 3 and suggest that library users may have slightly more success in finding wanted monographs/AV items than journals. This trend is stronger in 2005.

**Table 2. Breakdown of material type in returned forms**

	Monos/AV		Journals	
	2003	2005	2003	2005
A-W	86%	86%	14%	14%
Bendigo	88%	81%	12%	19%
Bundoora	84%	87%	16%	13%
<b>All campuses</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>

**Table 3. Breakdown of immediately available material**

	Monos/AV		Journals	
	2003	2005	2003	2005
A-W	87%	89.8%	13%	10.2%
Bendigo	89.5%	82.5%	10.5%	17.5%
Bundoora	85%	89.5%	15%	10.5%
<b>All campuses</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>

At Bendigo, the 2005 survey found proportionally more users looking for, and finding, journal articles than at the other campuses.

**Table 4. Breakdown of material not found**

	Monos/AV		Journals	
	2003	2005	2003	2005
A-W	81%	65%	19%	35%
Bendigo	82%	75%	18%	25%
Bundoora	81%	78.8%	19%	21.2%
<b>All campuses</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>27%</b>

*This further analysis was not undertaken in 1995, so no comparisons could be made.*

### Recommendations

1. The results be referred to individual campuses for any particular action (for example, purchasing of material identified as required but not in the collection; purchase of multiple copies if required etc)
2. Publish brief survey results on the public web and full results on the staff web sites.
3. The results also be published in the Performance Indicator database on the CAUL Best Practice web page
4. The survey is repeated once *electronic* materials availability can be reliably assessed, or, if that is not possible, in two or four years (to be decided so it does not clash with the Rodski Survey) as recommended in the CAUL performance indicator documentation.