

SEATING USAGE SURVEY 2006

Albury-Wodonga, Bendigo, Bundoora Campus Libraries

Objective of the Survey

To determine

1. How heavily each type of library study seating is used
2. Peak occupancy periods

The survey information will be used to monitor the adequacy of the overall balance of different seating types in the libraries and make adjustments as necessary. This survey is conducted every two years, the first being done in 2004, as part of the library's strategic priority to "examine the physical environment across all campuses to identify areas for improvement".

Methodology

The method used was based on the "Facilities Use Rate" methodology, as described in Van House, N. *Measuring academic library performance* (ALA, p 82, 1990). This provides a simple to use method which is widely used by academic libraries in the United States.

Each count consists of recording the number of individual places in the relevant seating category that is occupied. Places are also considered to be occupied if personal belongings or papers (but no person) is present.

The survey was undertaken during the period Monday 11th – Friday 22nd September. The types of seating were broadly categorized, however, seating category types used in the survey varied between campuses according to the facilities available at each campus, and also what was seen as the most useful data to collect. A correlation between the naming of seat types is given in the following table:

Bendigo	Bundoora	Albury Wodonga
Casual seats	Casual seats	Casual seats
Single study carrels	Single study seating Carrels (single study rooms)	Single study carrels
Group study tables	Group study seating Group study rooms	Group study tables Group study rooms
Computer study workstations (standing),	Computer workstations (including seating and standing)	Computer workstations
		Catalogue terminals
Computer workstations and AV/microform stations(seated)	AV computer workstations	
	Microform stations	Microform station
	AV viewing booths	AV (video) player

Occupancy counts of the different categories were undertaken every hour, on the half hour, between 9.30 and 4.30 each day. At Bundoora counts were hourly. At Bendigo and Albury-Wodonga, counts were every two hours. At Bendigo, the counts were made on the alternate hours during the second week.

Each count consisted of recording the number of occupied seats in each category. Places were considered occupied if personal belongings or papers (even if no person) were present. In addition to occupancy, queues at each computer workstation were counted if present. An optional count was made of the number of laptops in use in the various areas.

Data Collection Methods

At the Bundoora Campus, Library Attendants collected the data under the supervision of the Attendant Team Leader. As most attendants had been involved in surveys before, it was considered that formal training sessions were not needed. Four attendants who were new to this type of work received informal training. The Attendant Team Leader provided a “help” sheet to each attendant collecting data.

At the Bendigo Campus, Lending Services staff were rostered to undertake the counts, under the supervision of one of the Library Officers in the section. At Albury-Wodonga library, staff were also assigned to undertake counts on a rostered basis.

This first survey conducted in 2004 was reasonably time consuming as procedures needed to be discussed with staff undertaking the data collection at each campus, data collection forms had to be produced, and spreadsheets had to be developed to analyse the results. The 2006 survey used the same data collection form templates and procedures used for 2004. The counting itself was relatively fast.

Student Seating Ratios 2006

	Albury-Wodonga		Bendigo		Bundoora	
	2004	2006	2004	2006	2004	2006
EFTSU	984.2	871	3350.6	3368	13880	13895
Seating	228	226	236	210	1135	1116
Seating ratio	1: 4	1:4	1 : 14	1:16	1:12	1:12

Summary of Results

Individual campus results are detailed in the relevant sections below and, as expected, there is some variation across the campus libraries, according to the types and distribution of seating and the overall seating/EFTSU ratio. Some cross campus commonalities are evident from the survey results. Briefly these are

- The highest occupancy rates occur from Monday to Wednesday, and for three campuses over the span 11.30 am – 2.30 pm. Lowest occupancy rates occur on Friday.
- Computer workstations have the highest occupancy rates, in some cases more than 100% since all people [in some cases, 2-3 people] at an occupied workstation were counted. Single study space has, in general, the lowest use rate.
- Personal laptop use is becoming significant and the library needs to provide appropriate study space for this.

Of major importance will be the consequential actions that are taken as a result of the survey findings as a means of improving overall study space types and their distribution for library users. These vary with the campus library and are outlined in the individual campus reports.

Future Surveys

The survey was the second time a cross campus approach to this data collection activity has been taken, the first of which was 2004. In terms of the conduct of future surveys the staff involved in this project suggest the following

1. Cross campus seating use surveys should be conducted every two years, with the next conducted in 2008 during second semester at any time that reflects activity at each campus. The survey should then be routinely conducted in approximately the same time period in future years.
2. Individual campus libraries may wish to conduct a seating usage survey in the alternate year to monitor any changes implemented.
3. The methodology used in this survey should continue to be used for future surveys with the addition of laptop use and any other technologies that effect seating.
4. The final reports of seating usage surveys that are undertaken should be published on the library web site in the area Library Surveys

Lea Beranek on behalf of Seating Survey Working Group
23rd November 2006

(Parts of the preface of this report arise from the 2004 preface written by Helen King)

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY (ALBURY-WODONGA)

SEATING SURVEY 2006: RESULTS

September 29th, 2006

Introduction

The seating survey was conducted in the two week period, September 11th to September 22nd, 2006, across the three main campus libraries of La Trobe University.

At Albury-Wodonga Campus Library, the survey was conducted four times a day, Monday to Friday, at 10.30am, 12.30pm, 2.30pm and 4.30pm. The numbers of seats occupied, or deemed to be occupied, was counted at each session and recorded by seating type (see Appendix A for data record sheet)

Results

Average occupancy

The results indicated that the most frequent form of seating used was the Internet terminals (67.4%), followed by the Group Study rooms (14.1%), and then Group Study tables (10.9%). Single study carrels, single use video players and the reader/printer were the least used, with an average use rate over the period of 2.5% or less.

Types of seating	Available	In Use	%
Orange Chairs	6	0.50	8.3%
Video Players	2	0.00	0.0%
Reader/Printer	1	0.00	0.0%
Group Study Rooms 4 x 6 chairs	24	3.38	14.1%
Catalogue terminals - Total	7	0.55	7.9%
Internet terminals: LTU	24	16.18	67.4%
Group Study Tables - Total	46	5.00	10.9%
Single carrels - Total	116	2.90	2.5%
Grand Total	226	28.50	12.6%

Most frequent use

Tuesday at 2.30 p.m. was the time when most seating was occupied. During that day and time, a similar pattern of use was observed, with 72.9% of Internet terminals occupied, 27.1% of Group Study Room seating in use, and only 4.7% of single study carrels occupied.

Busiest Day/Time	Tuesday	2.30pm	%
Types of seating	Available	In Use	
Orange Chairs	6	0.5	8.3%
Video Players	2	0	0.0%
Reader/Printer	1	0	0.0%
Group Study Rooms 4 x 6 chairs	24	6.5	27.1%
Catalogue terminals - Total	7	1.5	21.4%
Internet Terminals: LTU	24	17.5	72.9%
Group Study Tables - Total	46	7.5	16.3%
Single carrels - Total	116	5.5	4.7%
Total	226	39	17.3%

