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# Using LibQUAL+ to measure, compare and improve library quality

J. Stephen Town  
Cranfield University

LIBER Annual General Conference  
Uppsala, July 4-7

## Summary

- Background to LibQUAL+
- The SCONUL Experience
- Two Case Studies
  - Cranfield University
  - Glasgow University

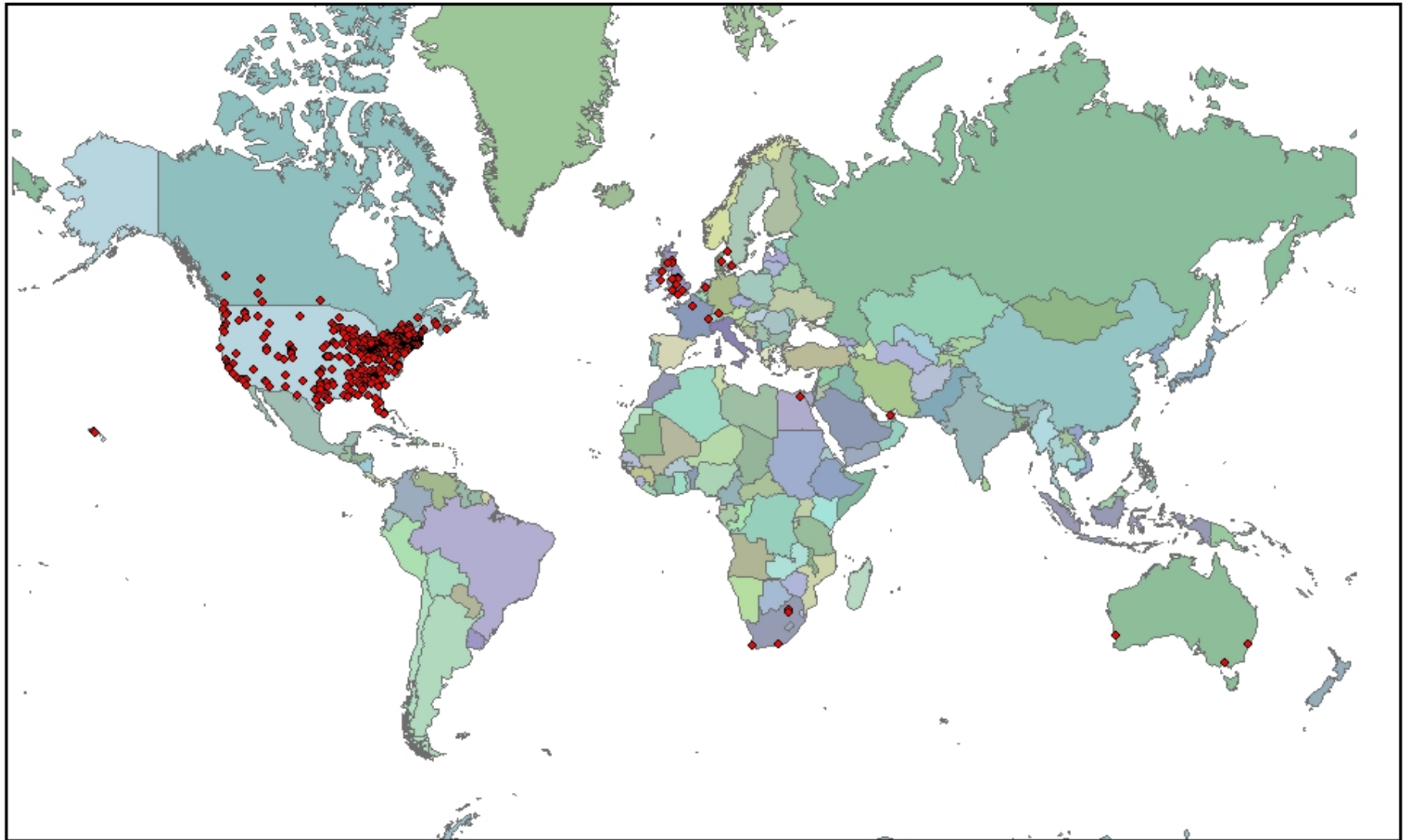
## What is LibQUAL+?

- A web-based survey tool designed to measure Library quality
- Provides comparable data with other institutions to help benchmark services
- Provides detailed data to suggest a service improvement agenda, and longitudinal data to test improvement actions

## LibQUAL+ History

- ARL New Measures initiative
- Developed by Texas A&M University
- Based on SERVQUAL
- Piloted in 2000
- Now used by over 850 libraries worldwide

# World LibQual Survey



Projection: World Mercator  
Datum: GCS WGS1984

Data Source: LibQual Survey conducted by Texas A&M University,  
ESRI, National Data Atlas

◆ Participating Libraries

March 2, 2005  
K. Weimer & J. Munchrath, TAMU Libraries

## LibQUAL+ in Europe

- SCONUL (UK & Ireland)
  - 2003: Pilot with 20 member libraries
  - 2004: 17 participants
  - 2005: 17 participants
  - 2006: 22 participants
  - 55 different institutions over the 4 years
- European Business Schools Librarians' Group
  - 2004: Pilot with 5 member libraries
  - 2006: 12 participants in 7 European countries
- National Health Service (UK)
  - 2006: Pilot with 12 member libraries

## Benefits of LibQUAL+

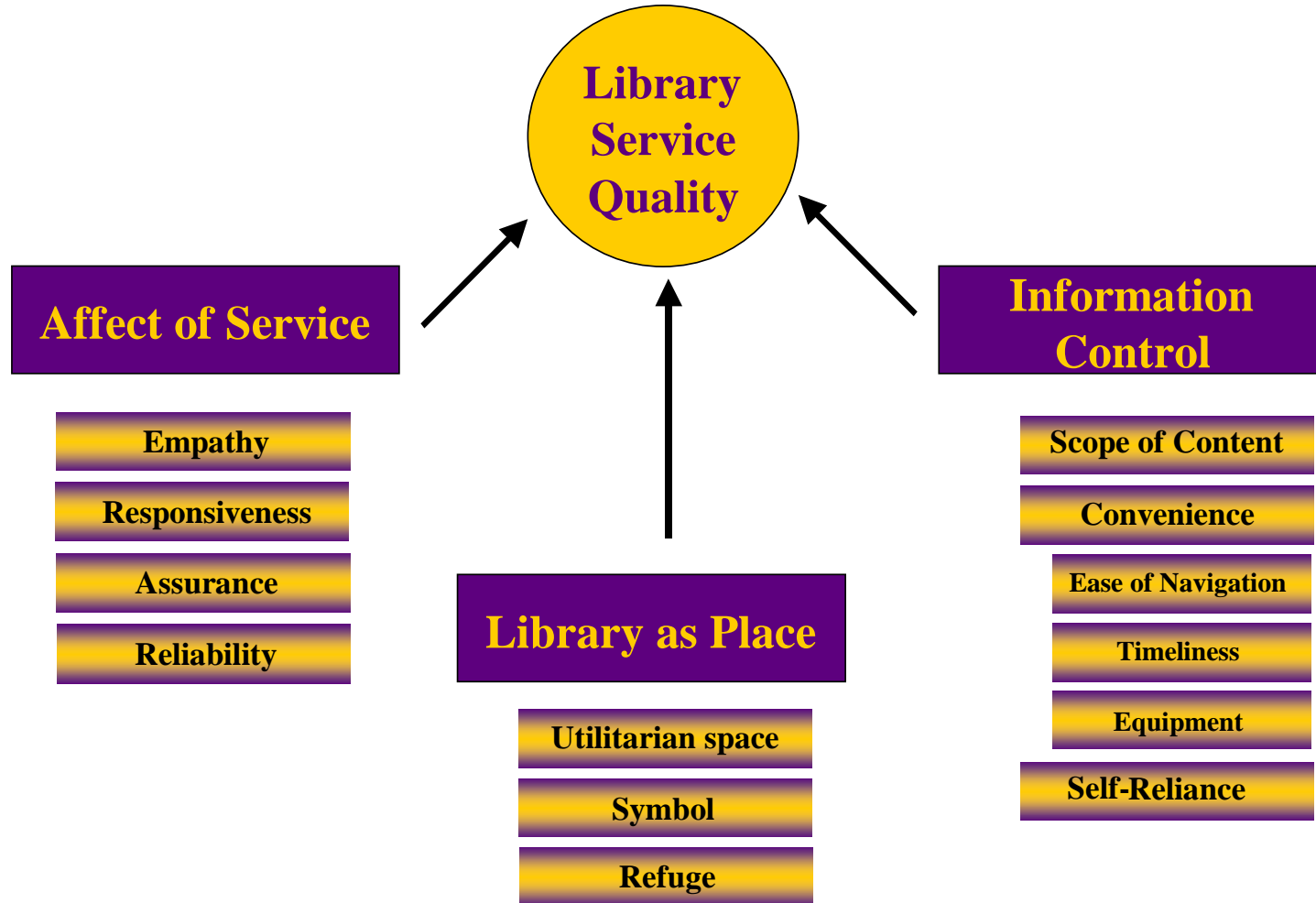
- Managed service
  - for delivery & analysis
  - cost
- Web-based
- Gap analysis
- Permits benchmarking
  - Peers, nationally & internationally



## Time frame

- Surveys can be run for a chosen duration in:
  - Session 1: January - June
  - Session 2: July - December
- January / February
  - Training for Session 1 Participants
  - Results meeting for Session 2 Participants
- July / August
  - Training for Session 2 Participants
  - Results meeting for Session 1 Participants

# Dimensions of Library Service Quality



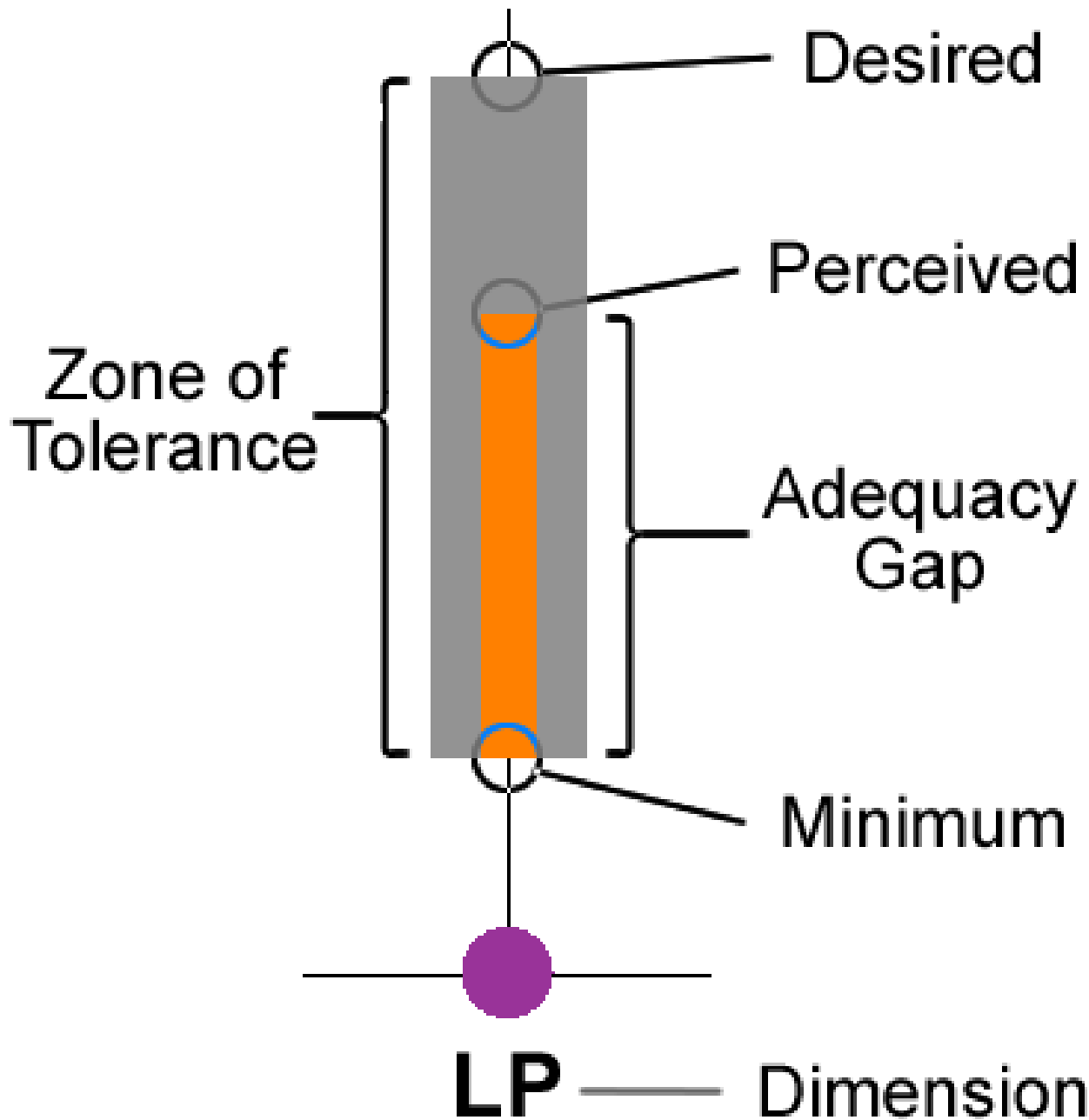
## The Survey Comprises of

- 22 Core questions
- 5 Local questions (selected by the institution)
- 5 Information Literacy questions
- 3 General Satisfaction questions
- Demographic questions
- A free-text comments box

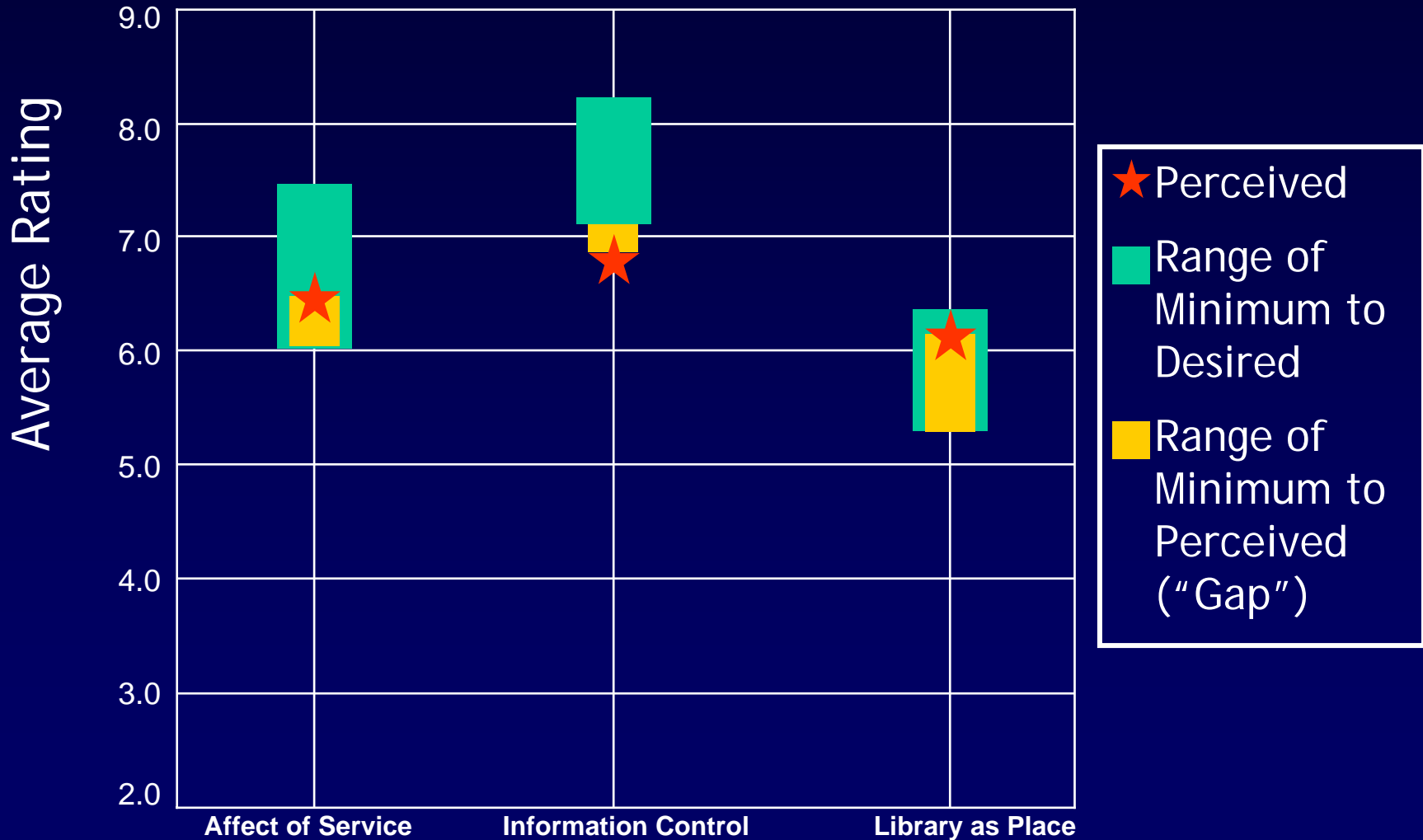


## How it works

- For the 22 “core” questions and 5 “local” questions users rate out of 1 – 9 their:
  - Minimum service level
  - Desired service level
  - Perceived service performance
- This gives us a “Zone of Tolerance” for each question, and an “Adequacy Gap”



# Benefits of gap analysis



## Comments box

- Free-Text comments box at the end of the survey
- About 40% of participants provide open-ended comments, and these are linked to demographics and quantitative data
- Users elaborate the details of their concerns
- Users feel the need to be constructive in their criticisms, and offer specific suggestions for action



# The SCONUL Experience

## LibQUAL+ Participants 2003

- University of Bath
- Cranfield University
- Royal Holloway & Bedford New College
- University of Lancaster
- University of Wales, Swansea
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Glasgow
- University of Liverpool
- University of London Library
- University of Oxford
- University College Northampton
- University of Wales College Newport
- University of Gloucestershire
- De Montfort University
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- Liverpool John Moores University
- Robert Gordon University
- South Bank University
- University of the West of England, Bristol
- University of Wolverhampton

## LibQUAL+ Participants 2004

- Brunel University
- Loughborough University
- University of Strathclyde
- University of York
- Glasgow University
- Sheffield University
- Trinity College, Dublin
- UMIST + University of Manchester
- University of Liverpool
- Anglia Polytechnic University
- University of Westminster
- London South Bank University
- Napier University
- Queen Margaret University College
- University College Worcester
- University of East London

## LibQUAL+ Participants 2005

- University of Exeter
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Dundee
- University of Bath
- University of Ulster
- University College Northampton
- University of Birmingham
- Roehampton University
- University of Glasgow
- University of Surrey
- Royal Holloway UoL
- City University
- Cranfield University
- University of Luton
- Dublin Institute of Technology
- London South Bank University
- Coventry University

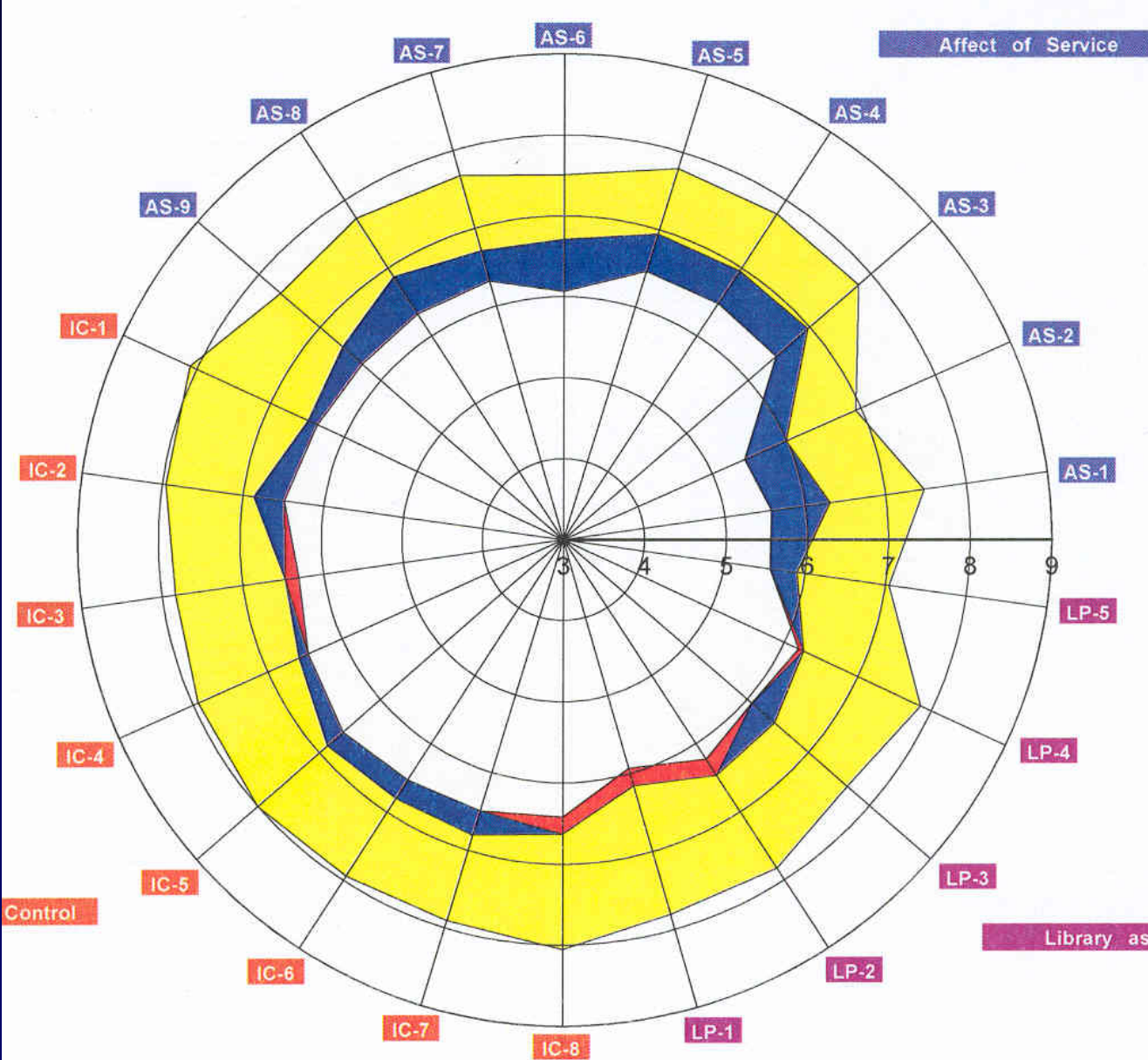
## LibQUAL+ Participants 2006

- Cambridge University
- Cranfield University
- Goldsmiths College
- Institute of Education
- Institute of Technology Tallaght\*
- Queen Mary, University of London
- Robert Gordon University
- St. George's University of London
- University of Aberdeen
- University College for the Creative Arts
- University of Central Lancashire
- University of Gloucestershire
- University of Leeds
- University of Leicester
- University of Liverpool
- University of the West of England
- University of Warwick
- University of Westminster
- London South Bank University
- Scottish Royal Agricultural College
- University of Birmingham
- University of Glasgow

## Overall Potential UK Sample to 2006

- Full variety of institutions
- 43% of institutions
- 38% of HE students (>800,000)
- 42% of Libraries
- 48% of Library expenditure

# SCONUL Overall Results 2005



## Aims & purposes

- Analysis compilation
- Comparison to existing survey methods
- A library focused survey
- Benchmarking
- Charter Mark application
- Strategic planning aid
- Real data as opposed to lobbying
- To make adjustments where needed
- To test improvement
- "User satisfaction - as simple as that"



## Process Feedback

- Straightforward
- Publicity requires the most effort
- Difficulty in obtaining email addresses
- Difficulty in obtaining demographic data
- Very simple to administer
- Results as expected
- More in-depth detail obtained
- More 'discriminatory' than other surveys
- Helped to strengthen Library's case
- Comments very specific & helpful

# Case Studies

## Cranfield University at DCMT

- Cranfield's Library services at the Defence College of Management & Technology
- Contract situation demanding high quality services
- Military and civilian education and research in defence, management & technology
- About 1000 students, almost all postgraduate and post-experience

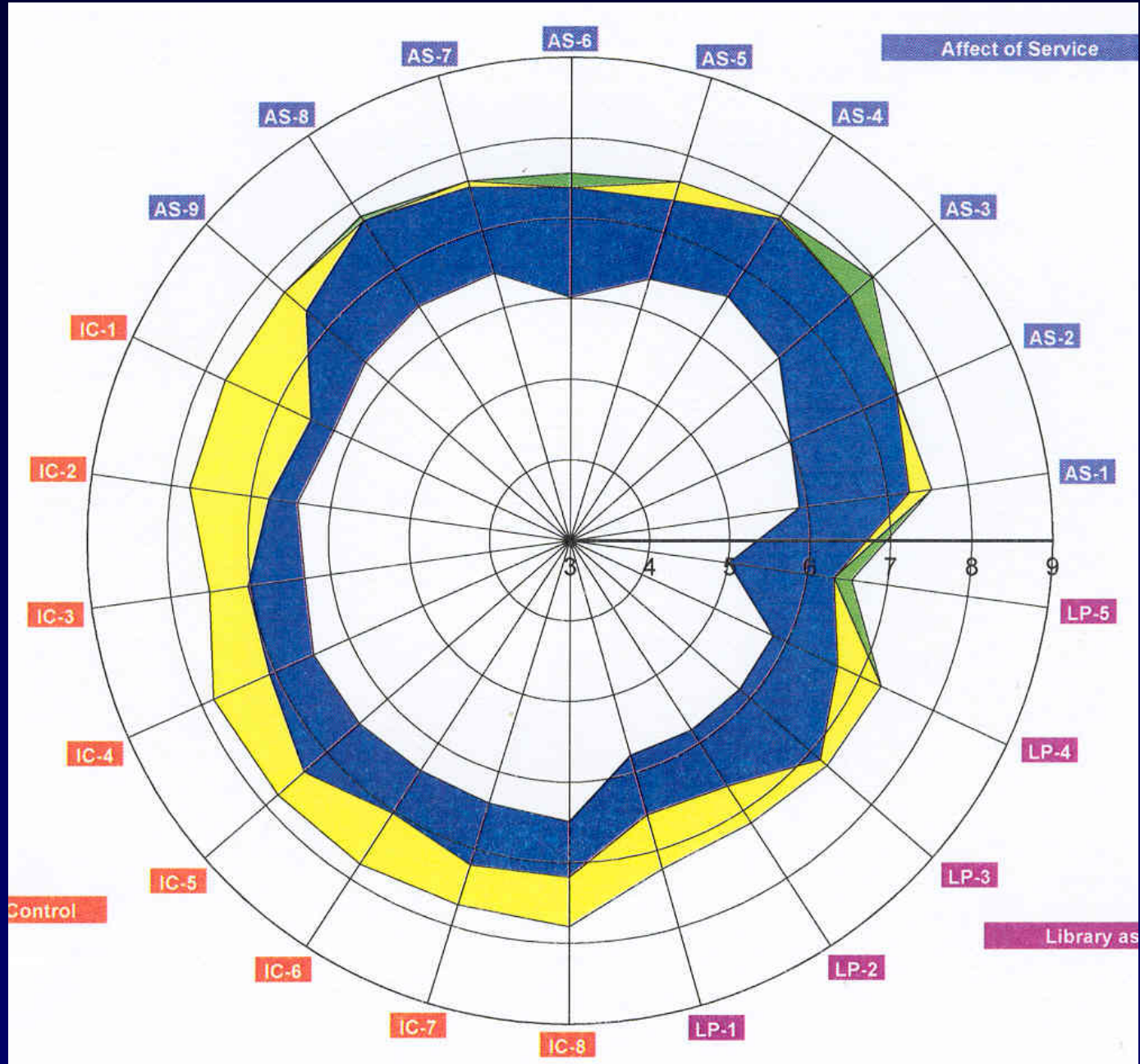
## DCMT Library Surveys

- Student perspective (1993)
- Exit questionnaires (1994-)
- Information Services (Priority Search 1996)
- DTC MSc & MA Students (1997)
- Researchers Survey (Web based 1998)
- SCONUL Survey Pilot (1999)
- SCONUL Template (2001)
- LibQUAL+ (2003, 2005, 2006)

## DCMT LibQUAL+ Surveys

- 2003, 2005, 2006
- Increasing responses
  - 11%, 16%, 22%
  - Year on year 40% up
- Increasing comments
  - 83, 153, 205 (almost 60% of respondents)
- Improved performance across three years

# DCMT Overall 2006



## Agenda for Action 2003

- Information skills training
- Improving staff specialist skills
- Access to electronic resources
- Customer care to different users

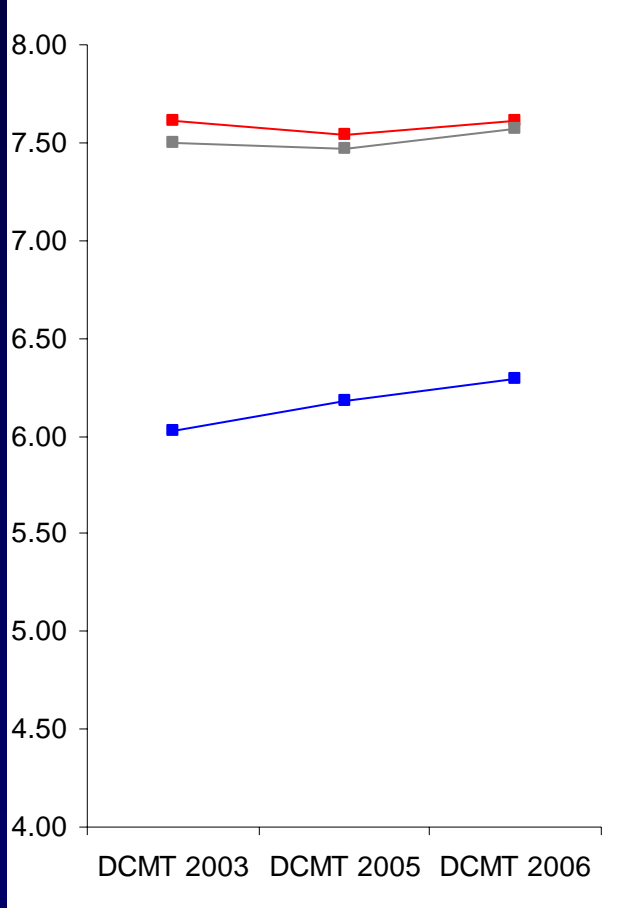
## DCMT Survey aims for 2005-06

- Test new Library building
- Test launch of the new Library Web site
- Test maintenance of other progress
  - Improved capability in data analysis & presentation
- Develop a new strategy in line with changing academic needs

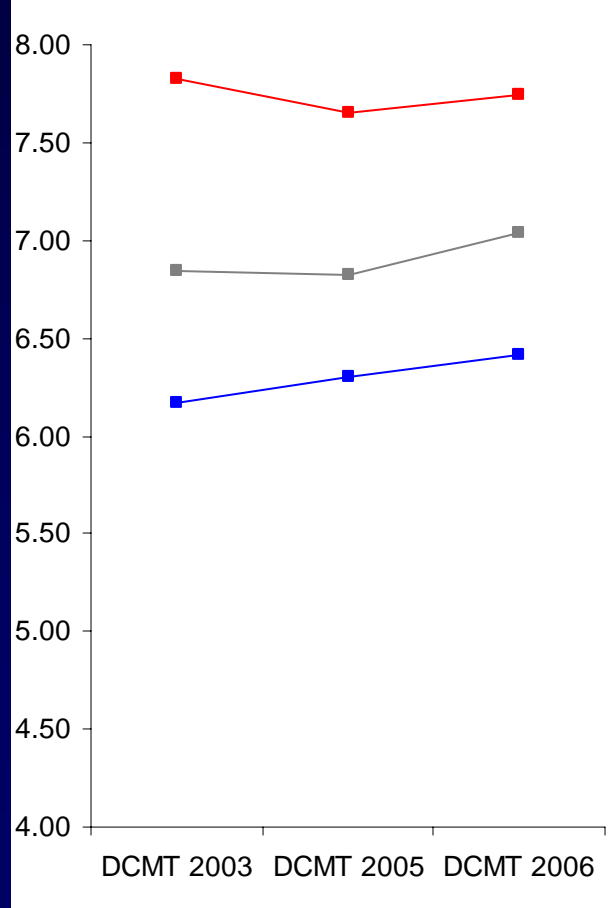


# Changes over three years

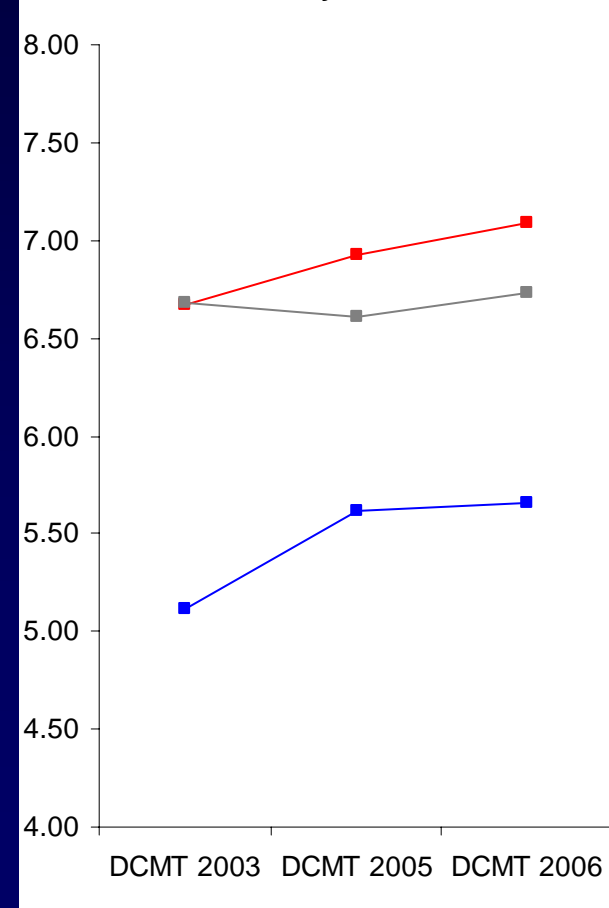
**Affect of Service**



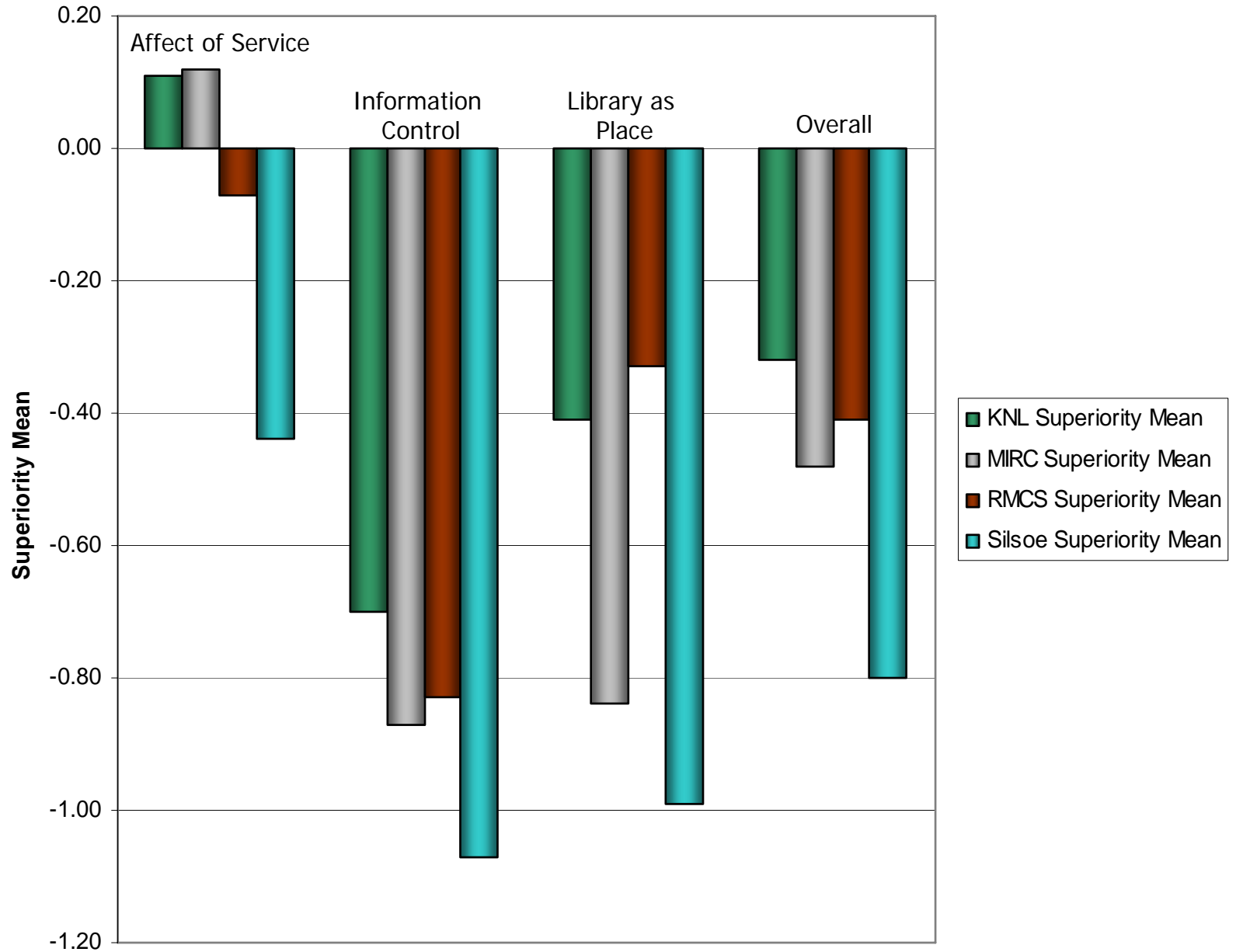
**Information Control**



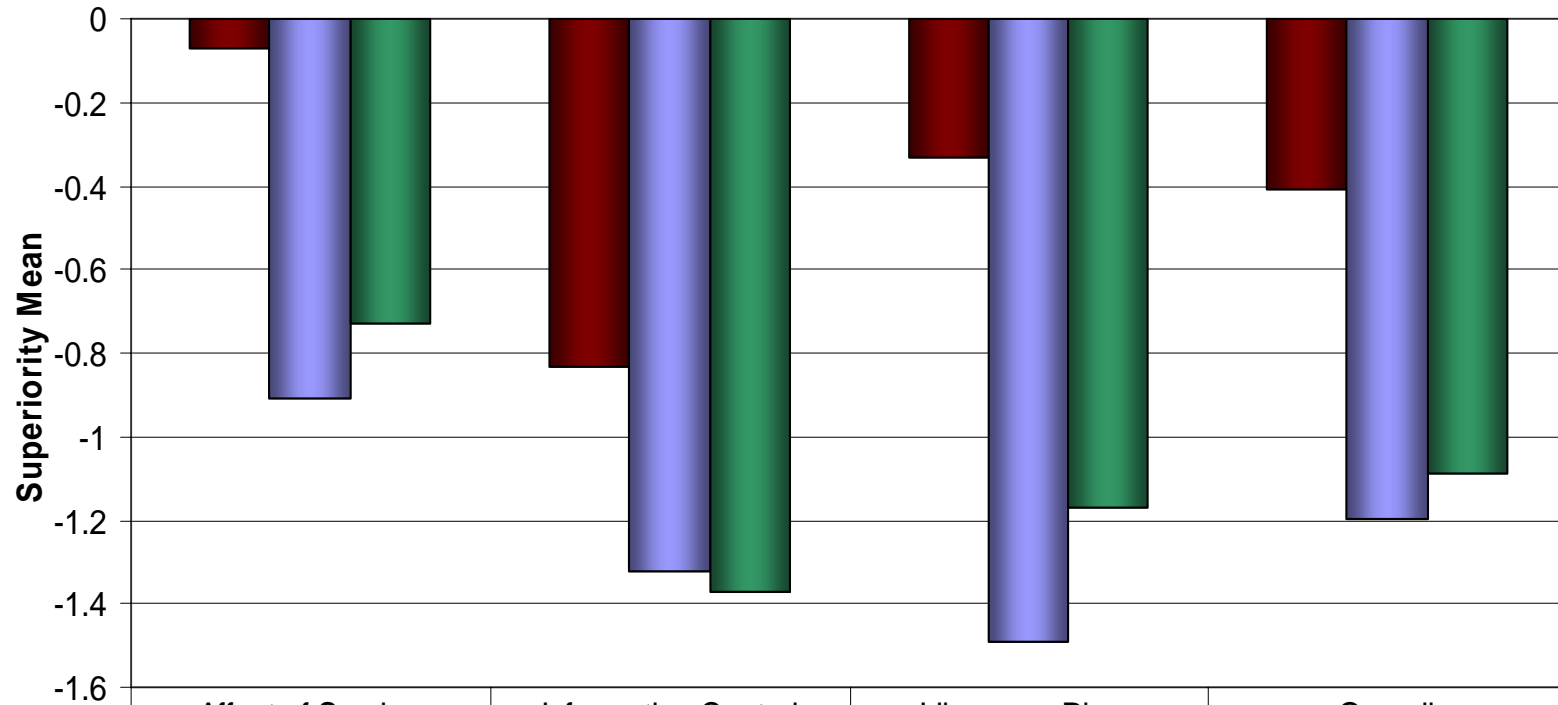
**Library as Place**



# Internal Benchmarking



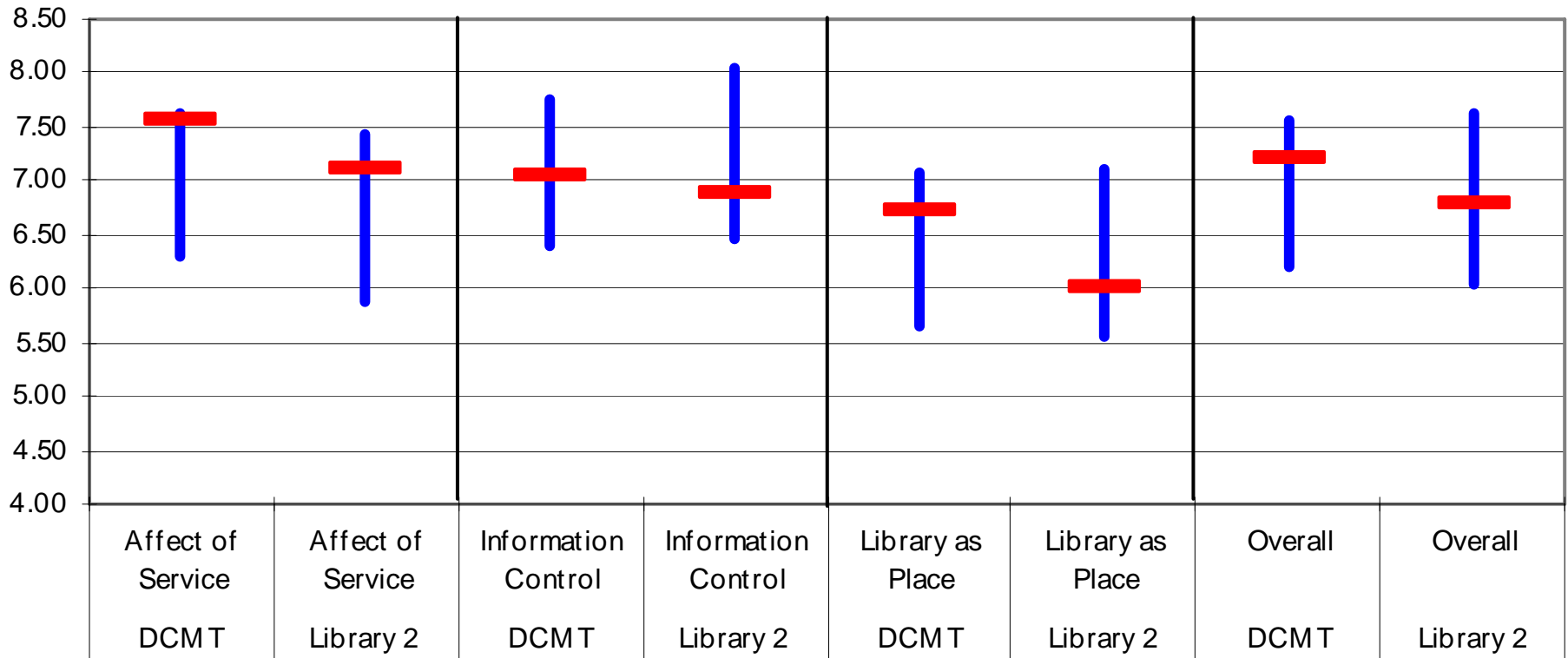
# National Average External Benchmarking



	Affect of Service	Information Control	Library as Place	Overall
DCMT Superiority Mean	-0.07	-0.83	-0.33	-0.41
UK Superiority Mean	-0.91	-1.32	-1.49	-1.20
US Superiority Mean	-0.73	-1.37	-1.17	-1.09

# Peer-to-Peer Benchmarking

Dimension Summary



## University of Glasgow

- Founded in 1451
- Large research-led institution
- About 20,000 students in 10 Faculties, and about 6,000 staff
- Member of the Russell Group of major UK research-led Universities
- Founder member of Universitas 21

## Survey Participation

- Participation in LibQUAL+ 2006 will be Glasgow's 4th successive year in the SCONUL Consortium
- 2006 - 1,535 responses
- 2005 - 1,423 responses
- 2004 - 2,212 responses, 920 comments
- 2003 - 502 responses, 402 comments

## Aims of Use of the Data

- Strategic Service Developments
  - Data to support service development
  - Ability to identify where not meeting expectations
  - Measure if change has met need
- Budget Discussions
  - Data to support bid for increased funding
  - Data to support case for change in emphasis (towards e-provision)
- Marketing Position
  - Status of the library within the University
  - Importance of national & international benchmarking

## LibQUAL+ Outcomes

- New Web Services Administrator
- Increased opening Hours
  - Earlier Saturday morning opening
  - Sunday morning opening
  - Increased late opening hours  
(From January 2006 Mon-Thurs 08:00 – 02:00)
- Now providing 222,578 seat hours per week



# Library Refurbishment Programme reinstated at costs in excess of £8 million

*From:*



*To:*



## Conclusions

- LibQUAL+ is now a market leading survey tool for UK & Irish Academic & Research Libraries, and growing use in Europe
- Some significant advantages over other survey methods
- Additional support and data analysis is now available in Europe through ARL/Cranfield contract

## LibQUAL+

If you would like to know more about LibQUAL+, or are considering participating as a consortium or independently see:

[www.libqual.org](http://www.libqual.org)

Or contact:

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## Acknowledgements

- SCONUL and its Working Group on Performance Improvement
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- Association of Research Libraries