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“WE HOPE IT HELPS.” THE IMPACT OF INCENTIVES ON LIBQUAL+ RESPONSE RATES

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TYPE OF LOTTERY POST-INCENTIVE OFFERED

Type	Reporting Institutions	Average Amount	Average Response Rate
Item(s) only	6	\$429	12%
Gift cards	10	\$285	12%
Combo	2	\$750	37%

Post-paid incentives

- Material or nonmaterial (often gifts or gift cards)
- Paid to every participant upon completion
- Or participants are entered into a lottery drawing for a larger prize/cash award

Pre-paid incentives

- Material or nonmaterial (usually monetary)
- Paid to all potential participants, regardless if the participant completes the survey

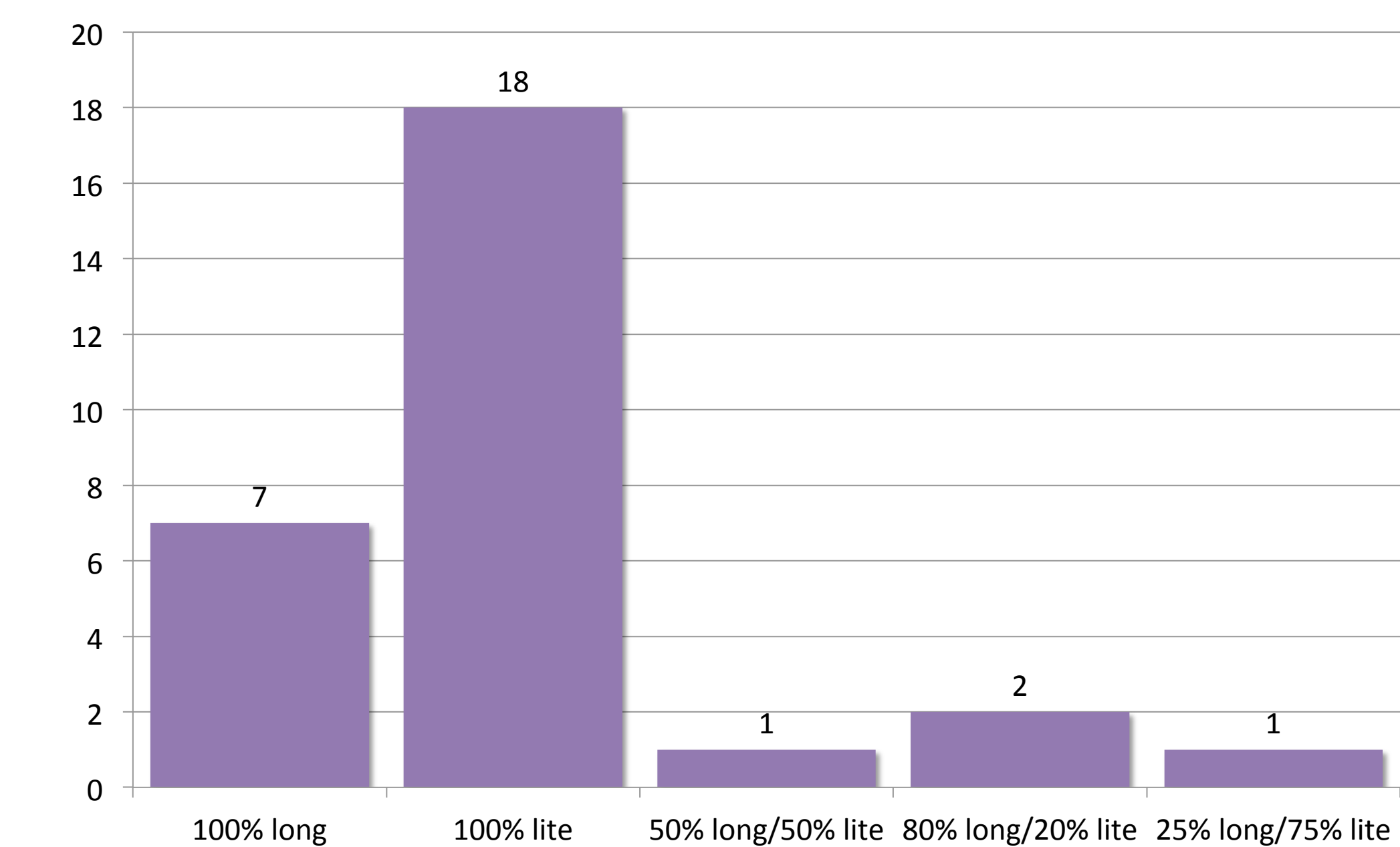
“The incentives we offered were items students purchase for themselves so they were desirable to them which increased their interest in the survey.”

-Participant

Libraries deploying the LibQUAL+™ survey can offer a lottery incentive and many do so in the hope of increasing response rates. Other libraries may be prohibited from offering one because of Institutional Review Board restrictions. We wanted to discover why libraries offer lottery incentives, what kinds of incentives, and if they believe incentives have a positive impact on their response rates. The responding libraries hold a general belief that lottery incentives are effective, but base this on feeling rather than research.

ABSTRACT

SURVEY TYPE OFFERED: LITE, LONG OR COMBINATION



REASONS FOR OFFERING AN INCENTIVE (LOTTERY OR POST-PAID)

Reason	Responses
To improve participation	17
Improve undergraduate response rate	4
Marketing	4
Precedent (other departments do it)	4
Past experience	3
Improve faculty participation	1
Student expectation that a prize will be offered	1

“People seem to be attracted to something free. However, we have no empirical proof to this effect.”

-Participant

“There is a common view of incentives and their impact on response rates: more is better.”

(Porter and Whitcomb, 2003, p. 398)

METHODOLOGY

- Created 25-item questionnaire (LibQual+ Incentives Survey)
- Sent to 124 US and Canadian LibQual+ survey administrators who participated in LibQual+ 2010
- Return rate of 31%

WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

- Is there a difference in how students view incentives as compared to the general population?
- Does a combination of incentives work better than items or gift cards alone?
- Are students in different disciplines attracted to different types of incentives?
- Are students attracted to bigger prizes (as opposed to the literature which states people are drawn to smaller prizes with a higher chance of winning)?

“Lotteries are probably the most effective reward in an online environment as they lead to the highest response rate in the short version and still a respectable response rate in the long version.”

(Deutskens, de Ruyter, Wetzels, & Oosterveld, 2004, p. 32)

“Unlike the inclusion of prepaid incentives with surveys, promises of payment upon survey completion do not appear to affect respondent behavior.”

(Porter & Whitcomb, 2004, p. 53)

INCENTIVES & COLLEGE STUDENTS

Literature on incentives and their impact on college student response rates is limited. There are many variables (timing, amount, type of incentive, length and salience of survey, etc.) to be considered. More research needs to be done on college students and incentives.

IDEAS FOR FUTURE LIBQUAL+ SURVEY ADMINISTRATORS

At Your Institution

1. Survey students to see what incentive(s) they would like

Collaborate with Other Universities to Test

1. Using pre and post incentives
2. Offering different types and amounts
3. Offering incentives with different academic disciplines

LOTTERY INCENTIVES OFFERED

Incentive	Details	Amount(s)
Gift cards	• Best Buy	• \$5
	• Starbucks	• \$10
	• University Bookstore	• \$25
	• Barnes and Noble	• \$50
	• iTunes	• \$100
	• Restaurants	• \$250
	• Target	
	• Visa/American Express	
iPods	• Touch	• \$50-\$199
	• Shuffle	
eReaders	• Amazon Kindle	• \$79-\$199
	• Barnes and Noble nook	
Wii	• Sports bundle	• \$150-\$200
Digital cameras	• 12.1 MP digital camera	• \$80-\$150
	• Coolpix	
	• Flip video camera	
iPad		• \$500
TV	• 32" HDTV	• \$250-\$300
GPS	• TomTom	• \$100
Tote bags		

Maximizing the rate of response to a particular survey, with a particular target population, is a unique challenge that requires careful consideration of a multifaceted range of factors.”

(Laguilles, 2011, p. 540)

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IMPACT OF INCENTIVES ON RESPONSE RATES & PLANS TO OFFER INCENTIVES IN THE FUTURE

Do you think the incentive(s) made a difference in your response rate

Would you offer incentives (again) in the future?

	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
Yes	15	2	6	23
No	1	0	0	1
Not sure	0	2	1	3
Total	16	4	7	27

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