

## Illinois Wesleyan TechQual+ Student Survey Analysis

Fred Miller

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This report summarizes the results of the 2007 survey of Illinois Wesleyan University student perceptions of Information Technology service quality. This survey was conducted at the end of the Spring Term from April 25 to May 10, 2007, and used a web survey from the TechQual+ project.<sup>1</sup> Illinois Wesleyan University is one of the early adopters of this survey instrument. The TechQual+ survey is based on the SERVQUAL methodology used for similar surveys such as the LibQual+ project.<sup>2</sup>

Invitations to participate were sent to 2077 students. We had 180 students complete the survey, for a 9% response. This is not bad for a web survey, but below the 15% response to our 2005 web survey of IT Help Desk services. Part of the low response can be attributed to when we ran the survey: during finals week, commencement and the start of May Term. This survey also followed shortly after the University's Identity survey. We also believe the survey instrument needs some improvement. There were 217 students who started, but did not finish the survey. The TechQual+ group needs to determine why such a high number of respondents would abandon the survey, and then make necessary corrections. Usability testing may help.

### Service Area ratings

For the Illinois Wesleyan student survey we chose to use 5 of the 6 available service areas that the TechQual+ instrument measures. There were 5 "questions" for each service area. So for the 25 service questions, students were asked to assign a number on a scale of 1 to 10 for:

- My minimum service level
- My desired service level
- Perceived service level

In addition to the 25 questions seeking the three numerical ratings, we added two open-ended questions. These open-ended questions were similar to the open-ended questions we asked in our 2005 assessment of Illinois Wesleyan's IT Help Desk. In addition, if a survey respondent indicated that the perceived service level was less than their minimum level, they were prompted to provide an open-ended response for a suggestion to improve that service.

The survey results indicate that for all but four of the 25 services areas, Illinois Wesleyan is meeting minimum expectation. The four questions that clearly indicated that Illinois Wesleyan is *not* meeting minimum student expectations are:

- Having my help desk request resolved in a satisfactory amount of time
- Having adequate capacity (speed, bandwidth) on the wired network
- Having adequate capacity (speed, bandwidth) on the wireless network
- Having wireless network coverage in all the areas in which I teach, learn, work.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.TechQual.org>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.libqual.org>

Not enough wireless network coverage was the single biggest deficiency measured in the survey, and was not a surprise. Illinois Wesleyan only provides wireless coverage in public areas, no residence hall coverage, and only a few classrooms. We are continuing to add wireless coverage as budgets allow. The perception of not enough bandwidth was a surprise. We increased our bandwidth from 18Mbps to 45Mbps just over a year ago. (We have one more year to go with our current Internet service agreement.) This response may also be a reaction to how we restrict peer-to-peer music and movie sharing. The dissatisfaction with help desk response time mirrors what we saw in the 2005 Help Desk assessment, and can be attributed to the office of Information Technology's relatively low professional staffing level.

We did not exceed desired expectations in any area. However, the areas that the survey showed most exceeding minimum expectations were:

- Having a variety of software packages that meet my needs
- Having the latest and greatest computing equipment available to me
- Classroom technology that enhances the presentation of information in my courses

Interestingly, while these classroom technologies exceeded minimum expectations, they were not the all the same areas that came closest to meeting desired expectations. Areas that came closest to desired expectations were:

- Classroom technology that enhances the presentation of information in my courses
- Having a campus portal that helps me in my role as a faculty, staff, or student
- Having a web presence that represents the entire institution
- Having a campus portal that is easy to use, easy to understand, and easy to navigate

We can also see from this survey that Illinois Wesleyan students have much higher minimum expectations for web resources over classroom resources.

### **Open-ended questions and suggestions**

In analyzing the open-ended responses, one theme clearly emerging from those responses: the need for more resources for *technology training*. After reading all the responses to the two open-ended questions and suggestions, each response was categorized. We used the following categories to describe each response.

- Class/Lab – regarding equipment or software for classrooms or computer labs
- Good – indicates a positive response to an open-ended question or suggestion
- HelpDesk – a comment regarding a need to improve help desk responses
- Library – indicates a comment directed towards a library service
- MyIWU – a suggestion or comment about the university portal
- Net – Any network issue other than wireless (e.g., bandwidth, email, file storage, etc.)
- Other – any service not categorized by the other service areas
- Reg – a comment or suggestion about the web registration process
- Staff – indicates a realization that the office of Information Technology is understaffed
- Training – response indicated the need for more training
- Website – a comment about the University website
- Wireless – requested increased wireless network coverage on campus

The single largest category of comments on both the open-ended questions was for additional wireless network coverage. The first question asked respondents to suggest a single improvement for information technology. The largest response was the wireless category with 28% of comments. The second question was similar to the first, but asked what should most be improved in the next two years. Students identified more wireless in 41% of responses.

We received 419 suggestions from people who rated a particular service below their minimum expectation. Considering we only had 180 people respond, that means that we had a substantial number who rated more than one IT service below their minimum expectation. Of those suggestions, improving wireless coverage received 19% of responses. Somewhat surprisingly, the largest category of suggestion from students related to a need for more training. This may be a reflection of the university's low staffing level in the office of Information Technology.

### **Additional detail**

There's also more detail comparing responses by class year, and male versus female. Some interesting insights include:

- Female students perceive campus Internet bandwidth to be above their minimum expectations, while men see it below minimum.
- The class of 2007 is more satisfied with IT services. They only rate bandwidth and wireless as below minimum
- In addition to wireless, bandwidth, and helpdesk speed, the class of 2008 sees the opportunity to provide feedback on the direction of the institution's web site as being below minimum expectation.
- The class of 2009 is most dissatisfied with IT services. They rated 7 of the 25 service questions as failing to meet their minimum expectations.
- The class of 2010 appears to be most satisfied with IT services. Only access to wireless networking was rated as below their minimum expectation.

### **Conclusions**

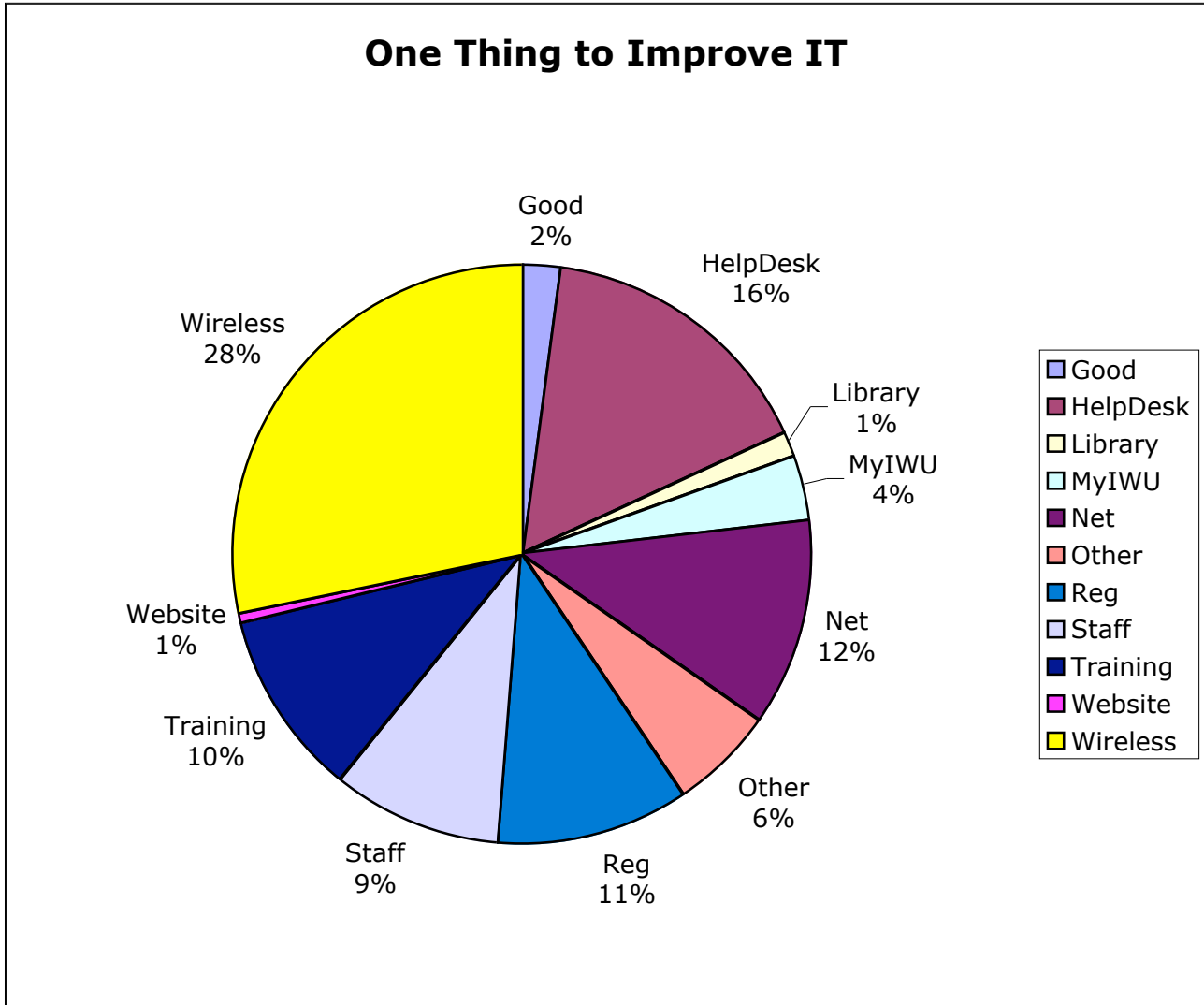
This was our first use of the TechQual+ survey, and we learned quite a bit. Certainly increasing access to the wireless network has to be a priority in technology planning. The university should also consider adding additional resources to IT so that we can provide additional training, as well as continue to support and improve the programs currently in place.

This fall we plan to survey faculty and staff perceptions of IT service quality at Illinois Wesleyan. It will be interesting to see whether there are significant differences in how faculty and staff perceive IT service quality compared to students.

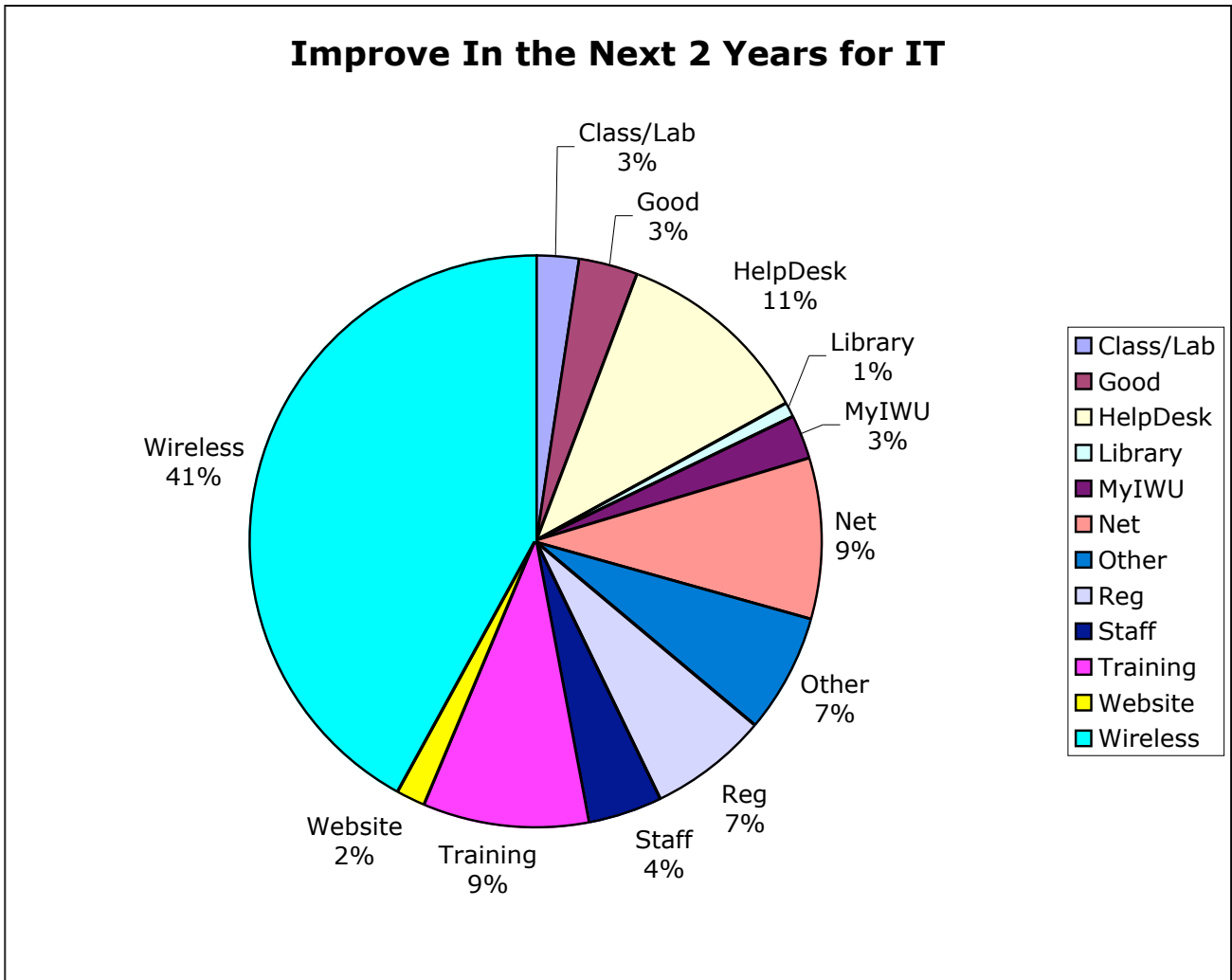
Illinois Wesleyan University is among the early users of the TechQual+ survey. As this project progresses over time, it will be interesting to compare not only our internal results, but also benchmark our results with other similar institution using the TechQual+ survey. This is an important project for improving information technology services at Illinois Wesleyan. We're grateful for all the students who responded to the survey, and for the people and institutions making the TechQual+ project possible.

## Open-ended Questions

1. If you could suggest a single improvement for information technology at Illinois Wesleyan University, what would it be?



2. In your opinion, how would you most like to see technology services improve at Illinois Wesleyan University in the next 2 years?



Summary of Respondent suggestions for areas perceived as below minimum expectations

### All Open Responses by Category

