Library UNIVERSITY

Loughborough University

"Have your Say!": Findings of the Library Engineering Team
Survey of the Engineering Faculty

The Engineering Team
Library
Loughborough University

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Executive Summary

This report outlines and evaluates a broad-ranging survey of Loughborough University academics by the Library Engineering Team. It was undertaken as a follow-up to the 2001 Engineering Team Survey which successfully informed the strategic direction of collection development. The purpose of the 2007 "Have Your Say" survey was to gauge the level of understanding and knowledge within the Engineering Faculty of the services offered by the Team and to establish how best to meet the Faculty's ongoing and changing needs.

The methodology adopted utilised internal online survey software. This was advertised by email to all Engineering Faculty staff and linked to the Team's newly launched Blog 'Broadcast'. The survey was also promoted via a post on the Blog and as a News item on the Library web site, which also featured a direct link to the survey. This represented a different approach to the previous 2001 survey when a more traditional approach to delivery was adopted with printed copies being distributed by internal post.

The 91 responses received represented an approximately 16% response rate. This compared to approximately 18% in 2001. This was viewed as a healthy response and when analysed in terms of staff type, the feedback ratio is largely proportionate to those targeted. Analysis of the survey data shows there is an encouraging level of Faculty awareness and understanding with regard to the services offered by the Team, though there remain a number of areas where knowledge could be raised. Data analysis has also enlightened the Team as to which resources could be enhanced and the need for specific skills of Faculty staff to be upgraded.

The survey was a highly worthwhile and informative undertaking. It has been possible to identify both where the Team has successfully promoted its services and resources, for example, with regard to book-ordering and answering queries, and where awareness raising activities are still needed, for example, the Institutional Repository requires further promotion with respect to the PhD community/researchers. It has been a useful tool for pinpointing staff training needs in terms of MetaLib and the use of databases. It is now possible to identify some 'Most Wanted' resources. The open-ended questions provided a means of determining which resources and services require further investigation and consideration by the Team – for example, the feasibility of Instant Messaging as a Team endeavour and literature searching as a charged service.

A total of 11 recommendations have been determined. These include a number of awareness raising and promotional activities in terms of training, the Institutional Repository and the provision of one-to-one support for academics. A Team investigation of current policy regarding Literature Searching is to be undertaken, a resurvey scheduled for 2009 to determine the need for Instant Messaging and a new undertaking to link email

correspondence to the Team Blog. A pricing of resources requested will also be undertaken.

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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

In 2001, the Library Engineering Team performed a thorough survey of Loughborough Engineering academics to inform collection development. The data gathered proved very useful. Thus, six years on, with a number of changes of personnel both within the Library Engineering Team, and undoubtedly within the Faculty, it was felt an appropriate time to perform another survey. This time, the focus was more broadly on the services the team provided to the Faculty, to measure their understanding, and to see how best we could meet the Faculty's changing needs.

2. Methods

The 2001 survey was printed and circulated by internal post to 300 academics and 53 responses were received. The "Have Your Say" survey was designed using the Library Systems Team's online survey software and advertised via email to all staff in the Engineering Faculty. It was also advertised via, and linked to, the new Library Engineering Team Blog, "Broadcast". Indeed the survey was launched simultaneously with the Blog in a combined effort to raise the profile of the Team's work within the Faculty. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

3. Results

3.1 Response rate: A pleasing 91 responses were received. The total number of staff in the Engineering Faculty in 2005/6 was 561.35, making the response rate approximately 16%. A graph showing the distribution of respondents across the departments is given in Table 1.
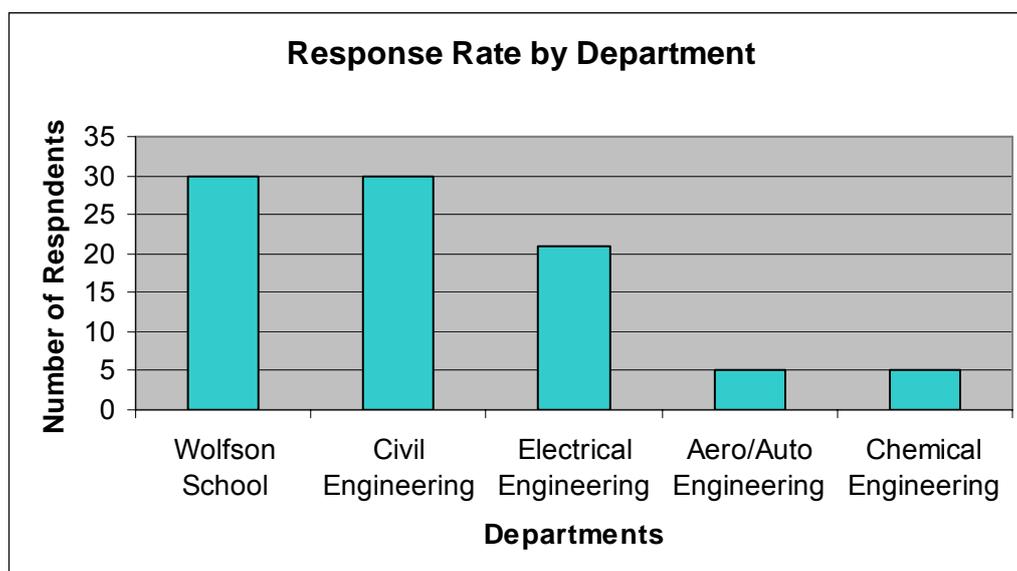
Response Rate by Department

Table 1. Responses by department

Respondents were asked how they would classify themselves in terms of staff type. The results (Table 2) show that almost half the respondents were PhD students. Just over one-quarter were academic staff, and just under one-quarter salaried research staff.   Considering there are approximately 161 Academic staff, 173 contract researchers, and 361 Postgraduate researchers currently in the Engineering Faculty, the ratio of respondents is almost exactly representative of the target population.
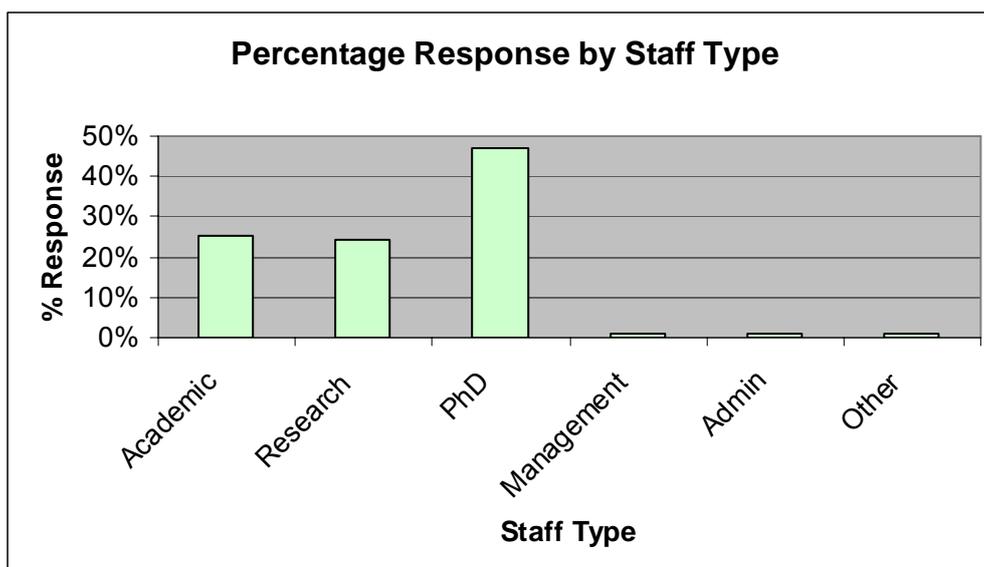
Percentage Response by Staff Type

Table 2. Responses by staff type

3.2 Awareness of services: Respondents were asked which of a list of services offered by the Library's Engineering Faculty team they were either aware of or had used. The graph in Table 3 illustrates the responses. It is worth noting that due to the way the survey was set up some respondents may have answered yes to both questions. Fortunately the vast majority of respondents were either aware of, or had used, two of our key services: book ordering and answering enquiries.

There was less awareness when it came to the training we offered. Perhaps of greatest interest were those services where a lack of awareness could be assumed by the small number of responses. Thus 35 respondents (almost 40%) were unaware that we provided information literacy training (or perhaps did not know what it was). Interestingly, there was greater awareness of one of our newer services: study skills training. Fewer than a quarter (23%) were unaware that we provided study skills training and almost one-third of respondents had used it.   The greatest lack of awareness (61%) related to

our online interactive training materials. There are clearly awareness-raising activities to be undertaken in all of these areas.
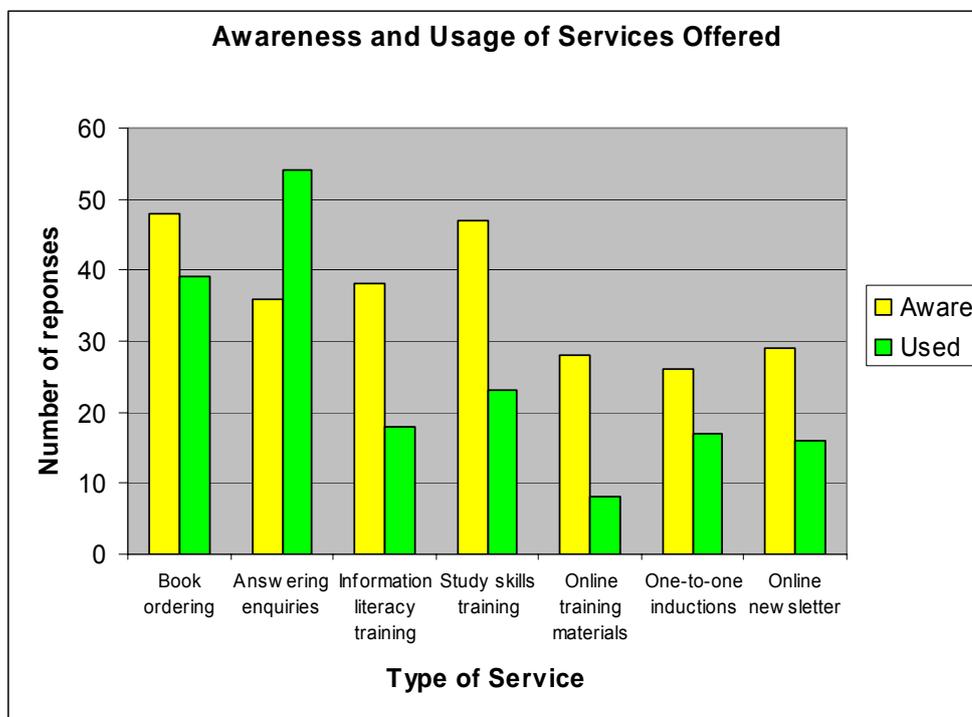

Table 3. Awareness and usage of Engineering team services

Interestingly, 17 respondents had had one-to-one inductions with us (18%), perhaps explaining their interest in continuing to engage with the Library through activities such as this survey. However, 53% were unaware that we offered one-to-one inductions. Similarly, 50% were unaware of our online newsletter, Broadcast. This was surprising as the survey was advertised via Broadcast and all emails referring to the survey also highlighted Broadcast as an access point. Again, there are clearly awareness-raising activities to be taken on here.

3.3 Most wanted resources: In an effort to prioritise team spending, respondents were asked to list their "Top three most wanted Library Resources". 155 separate answers were given. However, despite emphasising that we wanted specific titles, 17 just stated "books", 22 said journals or e-journals, and 12 put "databases" (or "Metalib" or "Search Engines"). It may be that some misinterpreted the question to mean "which three resources do you use the most".

3.3.1 Databases: Nevertheless, 60 specific databases or publishers of online collections were given. Excluding databases to which we already had subscriptions (e.g. Web of Science), eight appeared more than once in the list (Table 4).

Database	No. responses
IEEE	16
Science Direct	4
SAE papers	3
SCOPUS	3
AIAA conference papers	2
AIP journals	2
JSTOR	2
SPIE journals	2

Table 4. Most wanted databases

Fortunately, the highly-desired access to the full online collection of IEEE/IET material via IEEE Xplore was purchased within weeks of the survey closing. Access to further Science Direct back files (which we assume is what was meant by "ScienceDirect" as we already have the main database) is currently in hand. Access to SAE Papers online is a high priority on our wish list and funding has been earmarked for it, but the current licensing model (which

works on limited downloads per institution) is unworkable for academic institutions and is currently being debated at the highest level within the SAE. SCOPUS is again on our wish list, but is extremely expensive at £18,000 p.a. and duplicates a lot of our existing data (including Compendex and Geobase) for which we are loathe to pay twice.

The AIAA conference papers, AIP journals, JSTOR collections of relevance to engineering and SPIE journals will all be investigated and added to our wish list.

3.3.2 Specific titles: Thirty-six specific book or journal titles were given. Eight titles appeared more than once (Table 5).

Title	No. responses
Water Science & Technology	4
Journal of Fluid Mechanics	2
Journal of Learning Science	2
Journal of Water and Health	2
Nature Online	2
Science Online	2
Journal of Engineering Education	2

Table 5. Most wanted journal titles

Obviously, the selection of serials is entirely delegated to individual departments, with the Library just allocating each department a serials budget and managing their chosen subscriptions. However, the survey did highlight four titles that would be considered "general" titles (Science and Nature online, the Journal of Learning Science and the Journal of Engineering Education) which will be referred to the Library's Collection Manager. The

Journal of Fluid Mechanics is already taken by the Library. The other titles (including those mentioned only once) will be referred to the appropriate Library Liaison Officer within departments. As the Serials Review process is currently on-going within the Library it is to be hoped that some of these titles may be included in next year's serials lists.

3.4 Training needs: Respondents were asked to complete the sentence, "I could do with some more training in…". This question elicited answers from 20 individuals, with a total of 23 suggestions put forward. These may be divided into the following categories:

Category	No. responses
Databases / journal article retrieval	10
Finding information quickly	3
RefWorks	1
Interlibrary Loans	1
Cross-referencing tools	1
Other / not relevant to Library	7

Table 6. Training needs

With less than a fifth of respondents answering this question, it is perhaps unwise to draw too many conclusions. However, if the responses are indicative of academic/researcher needs within the Faculty, then continuing to focus on the use of databases and the MetaLib portal would appear to be advisable. With 'Finding information quickly' also likely to be a further reference to article retrieval this makes approximately 50% of the responses identifying database training as their major need. In view of this, the Team may wish to address whether additional training could be delivered to Faculty

staff. It may also be worth investigating whether this is a need for academics as well as researchers.

3.5 Instant Messaging: Many University Libraries are embracing Instant Messaging technologies to offer real-time enquiry services to Library users. Whilst the Library has investigated this and to date not found enough evidence to support a trial, it was felt it was worth revisiting with a particular user group such as the Engineering Faculty. Respondents were therefore asked whether they would find it useful if they could access an Engineering Librarian via MSN (or similar). Results are given in Table 7.
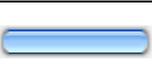
No	50	56.82%
Yes	38	43.18%
Total Answers	**88**	

Table 7. Usefulness of accessing an Engineering Librarian via MSN

It can be seen that whilst the majority (57%) could not see the value of it, 43% thought they would find this useful.   Further analysis of those that answered "Yes", showed that the vast majority (26 or 68%) were PhD students, seven (18%) were Research staff and just five (13%) Academic staff. Thus, if those starting out on their academic careers are using IM services more heavily than those already established, it may be that in future this will become an important way of communicating with Users.

3.6 Institutional Repository: In 2005, the Library introduced an Institutional Repository (IR) service for the University. Whilst use of the Repository is heavy in some departments, the Engineering Faculty has, in general, been slow to realise the benefits that the IR can bring. Two questions were therefore asked of respondents relating to the IR to help us understand how we can best promote it to the Faculty, and support Faculty members in it's use.

3.6.1 Awareness of the Repository*:* The first question simply asked if respondents had heard of the Repository.

Yes	43	49.43%
No	44	50.57%
Total Answers	**87**	

Table 8. Have you heard of the Institutional Repository?

Table 8 shows that the results were almost exactly 50:50. These results aren't quite so discouraging when further analysis is performed by staff type. This showed that 19 of the 23 responding academics (82%) said they had heard of it, 50% of the research staff had, and just 25% of PhD students. Promotional activities have so far focussed on academic staff, with presentations at Staff Meetings and so on, which may explain the results. However, PhD students and Research Staff also produce scholarly publications, and as they are at the beginning of their research careers, may be more likely to adopt new approaches to scholarly communication. These

results show we have further promotional activities to undertake amongst the researchers and PhDs.

3.6.2 Support for the IR: The second question asked respondents to complete the sentence, "I'd put my research papers in the Institutional Repository if...". Only 23 responses were received. Seven main themes arose, and are listed in Table 9.
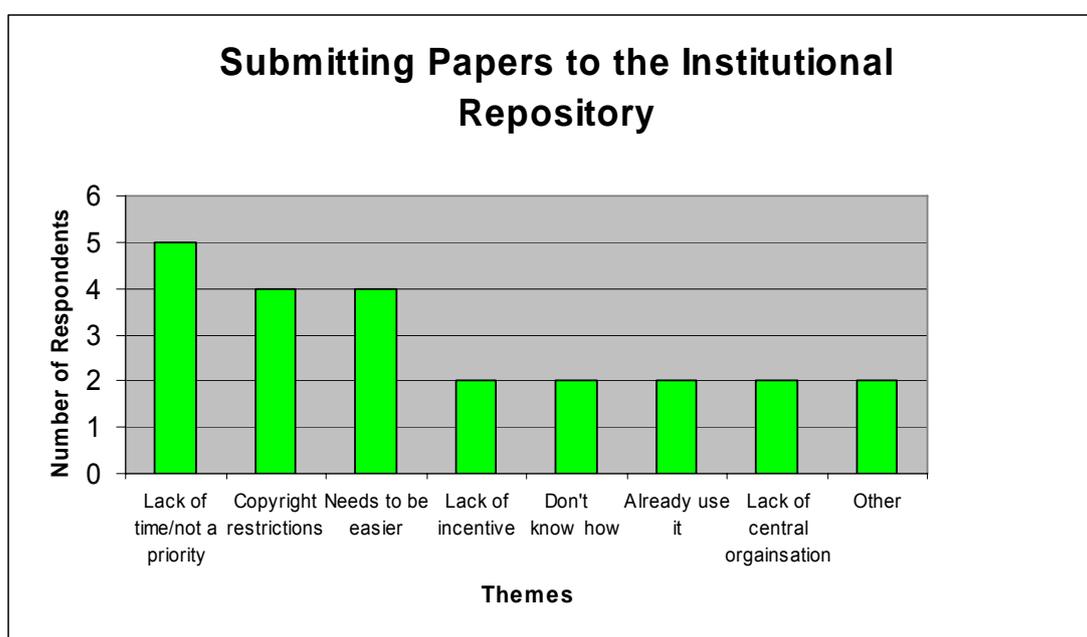

Table 9. Submitting papers to the Institutional Repository

The main theme was that respondents did not have time to submit items to the IR. This was disappointing, as were the comments that they would submit if "someone sorted it all out for me". This is because currently the Library does all the copyright checking and mounting work on the user's behalf. All we require from depositors is their permission and the full-text. Copyright restrictions were also clearly a concern to users. Again, this is something the

Library can assist users with, either by performing copyright licence checks on journals, or advising on negotiating with publishers.

Two respondents admitted they lacked an incentive for depositing, and another two did not know how. Two already used the IR and two others said they would do so if there some form of central organisation – i.e., if either their Research Group would coordinate submissions centrally, or if "it were merged with the central admin publications database and linked with reference managers". A link with the central publications database is under negotiation.

All responses illustrate that there is still promotional work to be done for the IR amongst the Engineering Faculty about the high level of support on offer for depositors.

3.7 News preferences: Respondents were asked whether they would prefer to get news from the Library Engineering Team via email, web pages, a blog, or via RSS feed. Respondents were permitted to select more than one option, resulting in 104 responses (Table 10).

The overwhelming majority (75%) would prefer to receive the Engineering Team's news via email, with other methods trailing at: Web pages (13.46%), Blog (8.65%) and RSS Feed (2.88%).
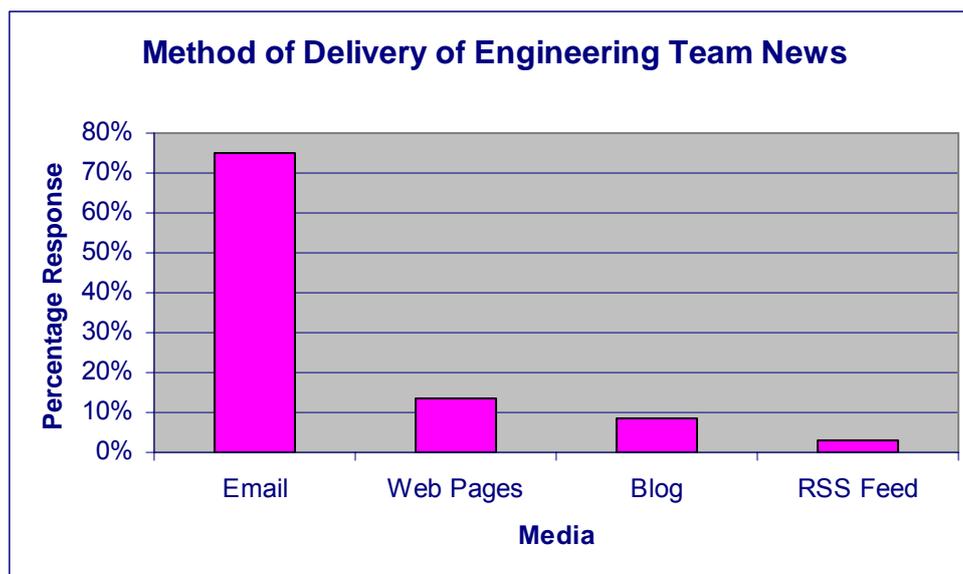
Method of Delivery of Engineering Team News

Chart showing Percentage Response (y-axis, 0% to 80%) by Media (x-axis): Email ≈75%, Web Pages ≈13%, Blog ≈8%, RSS Feed ≈3%.

Table 10. Preferred method of news delivery

Analysing these figures we can conclude the following:

- The Blog was launched at the same time as the Survey, thus making this result unreliable. The long-term effectiveness of the Blog has yet to be gauged.

- RSS is either an unpopular means of information delivery or the target audience may not be familiar with it. This is an issue the Team may wish to address.

- It affirms that the replacement of the online Newsletter with a Blog may be the best way forward as the Library Web pages are not a significantly popular means of news delivery.

- The team will need to work hard at marketing the Blog to the Faculty if its popularity is to be assured.

- Given the respondents continuing reliance on email, important news items may still need to be communicated in this way, independently of other news delivery methods, to ensure their dissemination to as wide an audience as possible.

3.8 General comments: To close the survey, respondents were given the chance to make any other comments they wanted to. Twenty-three did so. Nine took the opportunity to reiterate their desire for additional resources for the Library – either specific titles, or comments about the lack of range of resources, e.g., "online access to scientific journals is very limited compared to other universities (both journal titles and years)." Seven made positive comments about their Library experiences, such as "I've always had excellent service from Pilkington staff!", and "Generally, I like the library here a lot - cheers!".

One respondent asked "Is it possible to have a librarian draw up a literature search on a specific area for an academic who is involved primarily in teaching? Would this be charged to the school?". Currently the Library Faculty Teams have different views on literature searching for departments. Engineering has only ever assisted academics in performing searches rather than doing it on their behalf. The idea of offering literature searching as a charged service has been mooted within the Library but never pursued. This is something the team will have to consider.

One respondent made an interesting comment about Metalib; "metalib showed promise but has been overtaken by Google Scholar- what a fantastic tool for students/researchers!" Interestingly, the Engineering Broadcast Blog recently ran an article on the advantages and disadvantages of Google Scholar. Another respondent said s/he "Would appreciate a quicker turn round between recommendation for purchase and arrival on the shelves".

This is something we are always striving towards but are limited by the supply times provided by Library Suppliers.

A final respondent expressed concern about the difficulty of locating full-text after searching bibliographic databases with no automatic linking (e.g. INSPEC). S/he also stated how much easier it would be if it were possible to view book chapter information on the Library Catalogue. Of course, with the move towards full-text linking and ebooks, these concerns should increasingly be addressed.

4. Conclusions and recommendations: The "Have your Say" survey has proved to be an extremely fruitful exercise with a very pleasing response rate and good representation of the various academic-related user groups within the Engineering Faculty. The Library Engineering Team proposes the following recommendations for action as a result of the survey.

4.1 Consider how best to raise awareness amongst the Faculty about the range of IL training and online interactive training materials we provide

4.2 Consider how best to raise awareness of one-to-one support (i.e. inductions for staff and literature searching interviews with PhDs)

4.3 Build on the existing high levels of awareness and usage of Study Skills training by promoting embedded sessions to the departments.

4.4 Investigate pricing of the databases and journal collections requested and place them on the Library wish list with appropriate priority statuses

4.5 Forward serials recommendations to the appropriate LLOs and to the Library Collections Manager for consideration.

4.6 Offer more training to Engineering Faculty staff and PhDs on "Finding Information Quickly" and on some of the major engineering databases.

4.7 Re-survey the Faculty in 2009 to see if more would benefit from an IM Enquiry Service. Advise Enquiry Services Manager.

4.8 Undertake more promotional activities for the IR amongst PhDs and Researchers.

4.9 Focus IR promotional activities on how easy it is, how valuable it is and how much support we offer in terms of depositing and copyright advice.

4.10 Continue to use email as the primary method of communicating with Departments, but write only short "taster" emails with links to the Broadcast Blog for further details.

4.11 Investigate other Faculty Team's policies on offering Literature Searching for departments. Assess interest across the Engineering Faculty. Consider introducing Literature Searching as either as a standard or a charged service.

Appendix 1. Electronic questionnaire

Have your say!
Help us improve our service by answering as many of the questions below as you can.

About You

1. Department

Aero Auto Eng	☐
Chem Eng	☐
Civil Eng	☐
Elec Eng	☐
Wolfson School	☐

2. Staff Type

Academic	☐
Research Staff	☐
PhD	☐
Management	☐
Administrative	☐
Other	☐

Which of the following services offered by the Library's Engineering Faculty team have you either used or are aware of?

	Used	Aware
3. Book ordering	☐	☐
4. Answering enquiries	☐	☐
5. Information literacy training	☐	☐
6. Study skills training	☐	☐
7. Online interactive training materials	☐	☐
8. One-to-one inductions with new staff	☐	☐
9. Online newsletter for Eng Faculty (Broadcast)	☐	☐

10. My top 3 most-wanted Library resources (books, journals, databases etc.) are…

11. I could do with some more training in …

12. I'd find it useful to if I could access an Engineering Librarian via MSN (or similar)

Yes	No
☐	☐

13. I've heard of the Institutional Repository….

	Yes	No
	☐	☐

14. I'd put my research papers in the Institutional Repository if…

15 . I'd prefer to get news from the Library Engineering team …….

Via e-mail   ☐
Via Web pages   ☐
Via a Blog   ☐
Via an RSS feed   ☐
Other…………………………………………………………………………..

16. Anything else?

Is there any other way the Library's Engineering Faculty team can support your teaching and research? Please use this space to give us any other comments.