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Streamline e-Information Services for Virtual Users: A Quality Function Deployment (QFD) Approach

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Crux theme of the paper

- Migration from traditional to web-based library paradigm is usually accompanied by remodelling of core library services
- How quality approaches (as QFD) can be integrated strategically in designing and providing library service for virtual users within IT-rich academic setting?

Premise:
Web-based ICT has changed the mode of:

- **Search conduct**
- **Information retrieval and use**
- **Information delivery and exchange**
- **Creation of new knowledge**

ICT-rich Information Environment:

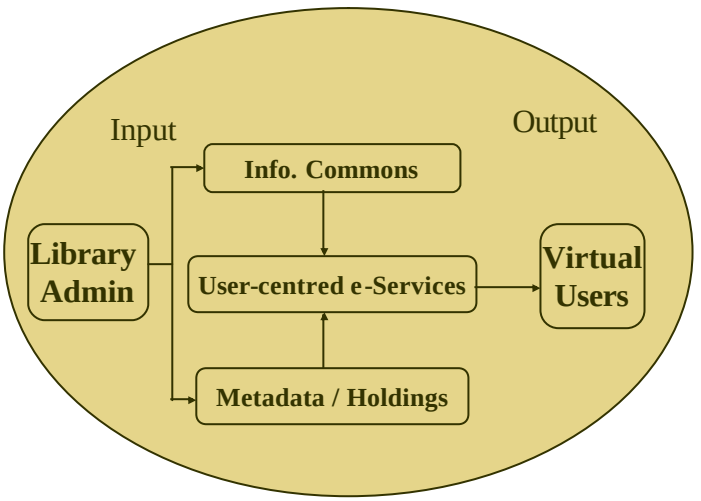
- Induced growth of information plethora
- Engendered:

1. e-Research community
2. e-Science grid
3. e-Learning paradigm
4. Networked digital library

Networked Library:

- Linked with academic activities
- Input-output interoperability
- Outcomes- results of interactions in which users are changed as a result of their contact with the library events, resources, and services (ACRL 2000)

Networked Library Service Environment



Cont.

- Outputs- direct result of interaction between inputs and library functions
- This can be translated into:

1. Quality of e-information services
2. Efficiency of delivery system
3. Satisfaction (how the user perceives access and use of library e-services)

Delivered Service Quality

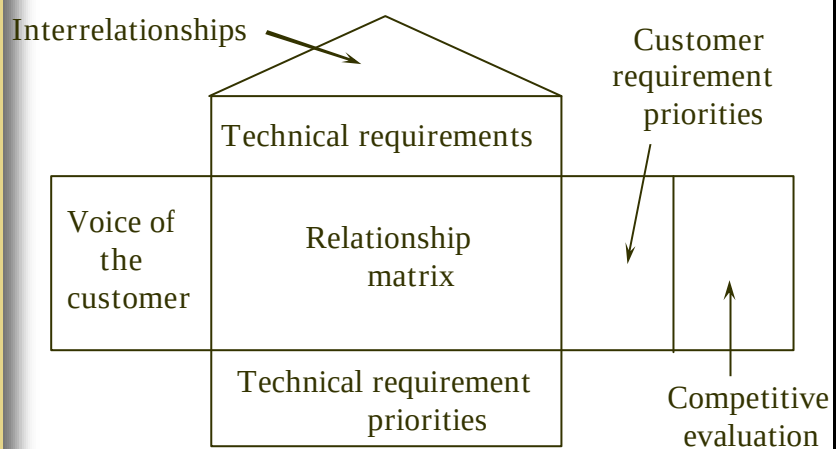
	=	**Good**
User Expectations	>	**Excellent**
	<	**Gap**

(quality gap may be due to either unrealistic expectations or lacking service level)

Quality Function Deployment (QFD)

- **A means of integrating design service:**
  - Listen to the voice of the v-users
  - Convert their demands & needs into substitute quality characteristics (SQC)
  - Deploy SQC throughout planning and design e-services

House of Quality (Akao, 2003)



Virtual User Requirements

- Reliable ICT-based facilities
- Remote access to e-resources (ease of use)
- Collection quality & relatedness (perceived usefulness)
- Efficient outreach service (SDI, CAS, etc.)
- Efficient VRD (inquiry services)

Questionnaire Survey Findings

- **e-Resources & e-Services:**
  Range of satisfaction 94.50 – 97.40%
  = User expectations
- **ICT facilities**
  Range of satisfaction 98%
  > User expectations
- **Librarians abilities & skills**
  Range of dissatisfaction 91.65 – 96.85%
  < User expectations (gap)

Concluding Remarks

- **Setting service design & planned quality:**
  - **Involvement of library users (user studies)**
  - **Acquisition of relevant academic resources**
  - **Interactive librarian-user communication**
  - **Breaking the isolation of virtual users**
- **Setting T+D programmes for librarians**
  - **Benchmarking with comparable libraries**
  - **Subject liaison services**
  - **Gaining user acceptance & satisfaction**