

Executive Summary
Depository Services
Program (DSP) 2006
Client Satisfaction Survey

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LES ÉTUDES DE MARCHÉ CRÉATEC +

206 avenue des Pins East - Montreal (Québec) H2W 1P1

Tel.: (514) 844-1127 - Fax: (514) 288-3194

Email: info@createc.ca / Web Site: www.createc.ca

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1. ABOUT THE STUDY

- This executive summary presents the key findings of the 2006 DSP Client Satisfaction Survey conducted by Createc+.
- The overall purpose of the survey was to assess and obtain quantitative measurements of client satisfaction and performance of the Depository Services Program (DSP) to ascertain why clients have favourable or unfavourable views and to provide suggested improvements.
- The study was composed of a qualitative phase followed by an on-line survey.
- The purpose of the qualitative phase of the study was to collect detailed perceptions from DSP clients and explore suggestions for improving the service.
- Accordingly, between August 30 and Sept 12, 2006, a total of 16 individual telephone interviews, lasting 20-45 minutes each, were conducted with participants from all three DSP client segments. The interviews were not tape-recorded, and no incentive was provided.
 - About two-thirds of the interviews were in English, and one-third were in French.
 - Respondents were randomly recruited using the list of clients provided by the DSP.
- As in all qualitative research, and in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of the Marketing Research Intelligence Association (MRIA), it is important to note that findings from the qualitative phase are not based on statistics, and may or may not be representative of the target population at large.
- The purpose of the on-line survey was to establish key baseline measures of client perceptions about the experience DSP provides, including satisfaction and performance ratings related to Customer Service, the ordering / delivery process, and their web site.
- The survey was posted from October 2 to October 25, 2006 and all registered clients received email invitations and reminders, with a clickable link to the survey and an individual password. A total of N=332 usable questionnaires were completed, for a response rate of 18 percent.
- Although the unweighted completed sample did not differ significantly from known database figures, findings of the on-line survey may or may not be representative of the entire client base.
- Assuming the sample is a true random sample, the maximum margin of sampling error is +/- 4.7%.

2. IN A NUTSHELL

- Overall, qualitative and quantitative findings were quite consistent.
 - Although each approach had its own limitations, this consistency added value to the feedback received.
 - Both findings suggested that the difficulties created by the transition phase about two years ago have since been resolved and are not a factor in the perceptions of clients today.
- Clients were generally quite satisfied regarding how they used and what they received from the DSP:
 - All things considered, 79 percent said they were satisfied with the DSP and only 4 percent said they were dissatisfied;
 - Timeliness of delivery emerged as a key strength of the Program.
- In general, transactional aspects tended to receive better ratings than relational aspects – in other words, higher satisfaction ratings were attributed to processes rather than to staff.
- The following is a list of opportunities for improvement that could help improve or maintain the currently high level of satisfaction:
 - 1) Search capabilities, cataloguing, coding and indexing schemes, as well as the visual look of the web site.
 - 2) Better guidance on how to look for / get government publications clients need and not offered by the DSP.
 - 3) Response time of Customer Service staff to client inquiries and calls.
 - 4) Quick fixes, including consistent packaging for CD's, email notification of new publications, easier to find retention guidelines, etc.

3. OVERVIEW OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

- Even though the 16 interviewees represented a wide range of roles with respect to government publications, findings were generally consistent, and thus have been combined, with differences pointed out, where relevant.

FAMILIARITY

- Not surprisingly, levels of familiarity with DSP and its services varied. However, most participants tended to assume they were more familiar with DSP than they actually were. For example, most could only identify one or two DSP services, and were baffled or surprised at the implied range of DSP services, when asked which ones they did not use.

POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS

- On the whole, most participants had positive impressions of, and experiences with, DSP. In fact, when rating their overall satisfaction with the DSP, almost all participants consistently gave high ratings -- between 7-10 on a 10-point scale.
 - 1) While some specifically mentioned the changeover when DSP service had been disrupted for awhile, they pointed out that since then service has returned to satisfactory levels.
 - 2) Participants who had dealt with international depository programs, particularly in the US, felt that DSP far surpassed them in terms of service and service quality. DSP also fared either equally well or better than provincial programs.
- The DSP was seen to be doing a good job in three main ways: (1) ordering, including over the internet, (2) fast delivery times, and (3) responses to questions.
 - Most participants thought it was "relatively easy" to obtain copies of Canadian government publications from the DSP, despite the decreasing availability of items on the checklist.
 - Timeliness was by far considered the most important DSP service aspect, in terms of ordering and delivery, and most interviewees said the DSP did well in this regard. Overall, there was a consensus on the maximum acceptable amount of time of two to four weeks.
- The four main aspects participants liked about DSP service echoed what they considered to be important: (1) the prompt and timely ordering and receiving of publications, both on-line and from the weekly checklist, (2) the fact that publications are free, (3) consistency of service, and (4) DSP commitment.

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- Most participants had not been in contact with DSP's Customer Service, mainly because this was outside the realm of their job or role. Of those who had, most were pleased with (1) the contact, (2) their treatment, (3) the time it took to establish contact, (4) the response time, (5) the competence of the Customer Service staff, and (6) the outcome.
 - When it came to filing a claim with the DSP, participants who had filed one had experienced no problems, and those who had not filed expected the same.

NEGATIVE IMPRESSIONS

- Participants identified five areas where the DSP was not doing a very good job.
 - Most focused on two aspects: (1) the way materials were listed, which made some things difficult to find, especially on the internet, and (2) the decrease in the amount of free publications, and those available in print format, even though this was probably not the fault of DSP.
 - Others were unhappy about (3) the availability of parliamentary and legislative documents, (4) DSP response-time and call-backs, and (5) the amount of paperwork generated by invoicing each order individually, instead of invoicing on a weekly or monthly basis.
 - Participants wanted: (1) publications that were up-to-date (i.e., not from the 1990's), (2) consistent coding, (3) "clarity on retention guidelines/requirements and on the migration of materials from print to electronic format," and (4) someone to contact in person, instead of relying solely on email correspondence.
- Participants also mentioned seven other service aspects they disliked: (1) the need to contact departments directly to order publications unavailable/discontinued from DSP, (2) that the checklist time limit is too short, (3) that not all government departments participate in the program, (4) that some publications are out-of-date, (5) that some annual reports are not available, (6) that the web site list is not as complete as the pink list, and (7) that the on-line database is not user-friendly.
- Despite the above, less than a handful of respondents had experienced problems dealing with the DSP in the past 12 months. Most involved disruptions caused by the transition phase about two years ago, when things were disorganized, but which has since been resolved. Several were still waiting for telephone call-backs.

WEB SITE

- Overall, evaluation of the DSP web site fell into the moderately acceptable category, where familiarity bred both contempt and usability. Some participants used it more than others, and some did not use it very much at all.
 - Participants who used the site appreciated five main aspects: (1) the weekly checklists, (2) that checklists and publications are easily accessible on the home page, (3) that the Contact Us section provides names and titles, (4) that searches can be performed using a checklist or title, and, (5) the catalogues.
 - The DSP electronic collection received praise from those who used it. The bibliographic information (catalogue record) and the contact information of the author department were also considered useful by those who had used these features.
- Criticisms of the DSP site covered a wide range of topics, related mainly to navigation and usability. Effectiveness and content also generated some negative feedback.
 - Navigation or usability difficulties included: (1) a "clunky" search engine, (2) an incomplete checklist when compared to the pink list, (3) a need for more information about publications not provided by the DSP, (4) a need for a direct URL link to the department providing the publication, (5) inconsistent or inaccurate coding and organization, (6) hard-to-find retention guidelines, (6) the time-consuming need to scroll through it, and (7) a screen that expires too quickly.
 - The web site's content-related difficulties essentially included: (1) out-of-date reports and (2) the unused potential to inform clients about products. There was no consensus as to whether or not the site provided adequate information about GoC publications.
 - Participants' criticisms of the site's effectiveness included: (1) slow catalogue updates resulting in unnecessary ordering and too many copies, and (2) the length of time to receive an on-line order.
- Most participants who used the site did not seem particularly enthusiastic about seeing more information about DSP on the site, although one individual wanted a tutorial to help navigate the site, especially the search features.

COMMUNICATIONS

- On the whole, most participants were satisfied in varying degrees with DSP communications, and even saw an improvement over the past two years.

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- However, some felt more could be done, since not everyone checked the list serve on the web site. Others wondered what other communications were available, besides the weekly checklist or the catalogues.
 - Some individuals voiced four very specific complaints regarding communications: (1) a still-awaited call-back (since the summer), (2) the lack of consistency relating to coding over time (3) the lack of consistency between the list and the web site, and (4) the termination of the newsletter that used to be published.

UNMET NEEDS

- In general, participants were uncertain whether or not the DSP was an organization responsive to client needs.
 - On the one hand, some pointed out that the DSP: (1) was willing to make any requested changes, (2) they send notices to advise them of new items, (3) they had the needed publications, and (4) they were generally helpful when contacted.
 - On the other hand, a few blamed the government for any DSP unresponsiveness, citing (1) the DSP budget or mandate, and (2) the government's movement away from paper to on-line documents.
- Overall, participants reported ten specific and very different options related to desirable DSP products and services, including some improvements on existing services as well as a few new options.
 - 1) Provide index pages for serials.
 - 2) Provide a batch file with all MARC records for the publications in each weekly checklist.
 - 3) Provide users with the ability to access (see) the entire list of periodicals available through the DSP, rather than only being able to access (see) most recent or just released publications (i.e., on the weekly checklist).
 - 4) Offer more items, if no, provide direct URL links to the appropriate departments.
 - 5) Provide users with an ordering period longer than 60 days, so that if DSP has copies in their warehouse, they are available at no cost.
 - 6) Make available publications that used to be free, free again.

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- 7) Make DSP an easy and expert resource for librarians, by phone and email. One interviewee explained that in public libraries, someone is standing in front of the librarian with a question they want answered immediately. While academic libraries can wait, and are interested in the answers anyway, the public are not.
 - 8) Have more consistent packaging, especially with regard to CDs, which are often inappropriate for library shelves (i.e., they are either very small mini-CDs or in flimsy paper cases).
 - 9) Make a Canadian statistics software package (CANSIM) available free of charge, to help business departments with statistical collections.
 - 10) Provide a notification service, so that clients can identify documents or document-types which interest them, and then provide notification whenever these materials are published. This eliminates the need for clients to read through the whole checklist every week.
- In addition to the above, interviewees said that their satisfaction levels would increase if the following seven services were improved upon or provided.
 - 1) Make an effort to increase the number of departments that participate in the program.
 - 2) Make catalogue numbers more consistent and appropriate.
 - 3) Enlarge the font on the pink sheets, so that the various options are easier to identify and mark up.
 - 4) Provide more guidelines on retention and the processing of documents.
 - 5) Provide index pages for the serials.
 - 6) Make more stuff available for free, with no back orders or orders that can't be filled.
 - 7) Make it easier to find annual publications.

PARTICIPANTS' CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- Final comments by participants at the end of their interviews related to the following five categories:
 - 1) The essential value of the DSP service.
 - 2) General satisfaction with the DSP service, "but not 100%."
 - 3) The need to re-edit the DSP classification guide.

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- 4) The need to chase federal government departments to provide their reports for distribution.
 - 5) The need for library staff to be familiar with federal government organization and web sites.

4. OVERVIEW OF QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

- The web-based questionnaire of about 10 minutes employed an adapted version of the Common Measurements Tool recommended by Treasury Board Secretariat for conducting satisfaction surveys.

OVERALL SATISFACTION

- Consistent with findings of the qualitative interviews, the overall satisfaction rating with the DSP, 'all things considered', was quite high (79 percent).
 - Only 4 percent were dissatisfied.
 - 78 percent felt that their expectations had been met or exceeded.
 - Only 5 percent rated DSP 'worst' compared with similar services they had used, and 34 percent rated DSP 'better'.
 - Only 8 percent reported problems in their dealings with DSP over the past 12 months.
- These findings confirm that the difficulties created by the transition phase about two years ago have since been resolved and are not a factor in perceptions of clients today.

USE OF THE DSP

- The high frequency of visiting and the tasks performed on the web site clearly indicate that DSP web site plays a critical role in the relationship between the Program and its clients.
- Over the past 12 months:
 - 75 percent reported visiting the web site, with 69 percent visiting it at least once a month.
 - 63 percent reported searching through the DSP on-line catalogue.
 - 52 percent reported using the DSP e-collection.

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- 57 percent reported ordering publications from the on-line edition of the Weekly Checklist.
 - 48 percent reported viewing a back issue of the Weekly Checklist on-line.
 - About half (54 percent) of all respondents reported some form of contact with Customer Service, mainly by email (47 percent) or by phone (30 percent).
 - These findings, consistent with those from the qualitative interviews, suggest that the relationship of DSP with its clients is mainly transactional and virtual, rather than relational and personal.

EVALUATION OF ACCESS TO PUBLICATIONS

- Respondents were quite satisfied with the overall quality of service from order to delivery of government publications from the DSP (84 percent). At such a high level, the process of ordering / receiving publications could be considered a strength of the program.
 - Timeliness, qualified by some participants in the qualitative interviews as “the most important aspect of service”, received high ratings of satisfaction (81 percent), and confirmed what was voiced by clients in the telephone interviews.
 - Also reflecting what was heard in the qualitative phase of this study, lower satisfaction ratings went to how government publications are catalogued by the DSP (68 percent) and availability from the DSP of government publications clients need (65 percent).
 - Internal processes at the DSP, such as returns, management of mailing lists, etc. also received lower ratings (67 percent).

EVALUATION OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Although a strong majority (74 percent) of those who had contacted Customer Service had indicated they were satisfied with the overall quality of service they had received, this overall level was:
 - lower than for the process of ordering / received publications (84 percent);
 - lower than for the experience provided by the web site (80 percent); and,
 - lower than for the program, all things considered (79 percent).
- These observations suggest that respondents are more satisfied with DSP processes (transactional aspects) than with DSP staff (relational aspects) and that Customer Service is an area that offers good opportunities for improvement.

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- Ratings of various Customer Service aspects indicate the following opportunities for improvement:
 - Time required to answer questions (71 percent);
 - Time before a call back is initiated (71 percent).
 - Staff motivation to go the extra mile (70 percent).

EVALUATION OF THE WEB SITE

- Because the web site plays a critical role in the client relationship, any opportunity to improve the web site should receive attention.
- Overall, respondents were quite satisfied with the experience provided by the web site (80 percent). However, findings indicate that while most respondents “in the end found what they are looking for on the site” (69 percent), two aspects warrant attention:
 - Visual appeal (54 percent); and,
 - Search capabilities (54 percent), a recurrent comment also observed in the qualitative phase.