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'Putting it to the comic book fans: Is Auckland Libraries' comic book/graphic novel and manga collection meeting customer expectations?'

by

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Submitted to the School of Information Management,
Victoria University of Wellington
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

School of Information Management

Master of Information Studies

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with respect to a MIS Research Project (INFO 580)

'Putting it to the comic books fans: Is Auckland Libraries' comic book/graphic novel and manga collection meeting customer expectations?'

(hereafter referred to as 'The MIS Research Project')

being undertaken by

Michael Priest

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Master of Information Studies,
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1. Abstract

Research problem: This study examines whether Auckland Libraries' comic book/graphic novel and manga collection is meeting customer expectations and ascertains possible improvements that could be made.

Methodology: The study predominantly used a quantitative approach to gather data through the use of self-completion questionnaires. A small degree of qualitative data was obtained from the questionnaire through open-ended questions. There was no recruiting of participants. The target population for this study included all Auckland Libraries customers, regardless of whether they frequently borrow from the comic book/graphic novel and manga collection or not.

Results: The study found that participants were generally satisfied with the range of materials in the collection. However, it was commonly agreed amongst participants that Auckland Libraries could be doing more to showcase what was available. Areas identified for improvement include the organisation of the collection, its promotion and staff knowledge of the comic book/graphic novel and manga formats.

Implications: This study recommends Auckland Libraries redesign cataloguing procedures for comic book/graphic novel and manga collection in order to introduce standardised organisation at each site. It also recommends Auckland Libraries take more promotional opportunities for the collection as well as the up-skilling of staff to assist with these.

Keywords: graphic novels, comic books, manga, public libraries, collection development, user perspectives

2. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which Auckland Libraries' comic book/graphic novel and manga collection is meeting customer expectations. To date, little study has been done to evaluate comic books/graphic novels and manga in libraries and to further discern whether or not these collections are meeting their customers' demands. Much of the recent literature focuses on either analysing the growing presence of comic books/graphic novels and manga within libraries (Snowball, 2005; Welch & Brown, 2005;

Heaney, 2007; Downey, 2009; Williams & Peterson, 2009; Masuchika & Boldt, 2010; Wagner, 2010) or collection development and promotion issues (Bussert, 2005; Behler, 2006; O'English, Mathews & Lindsay, 2006; Haines, 2007). Additionally, while published books on the subject are often inclusive of all settings, the professional library journal research that exists tends to only address academic and school libraries. These studies do not often view comic books/graphic novels and manga solely as a recreational reading material, such as they are in public libraries, and fail to gain customer attitudes towards collections as a result. As well as these apparent gaps in the literature, there has also been no significant research done from a New Zealand angle.

Comic books in the modern sense can be traced from the rise of the newspaper comic strips in the 20th century. It was during this period that the format began to take shape – connecting panels of sequential art, accompanied by word balloons and boxes containing descriptive text (McCloud, 1993). Comic books were established as collections of comic strips printed in magazine form yet soon evolved to incorporate original, self-contained stories. According to O'English, Mathews & Blakesley Lindsay (2006), amongst others, the term 'graphic novel' is considered to have been popularised by writer and artist Will Eisner upon release of *A Contract with God, and Other Tenement Stories* in 1978. It is now used to describe comic books that contain an extended narrative and often bound together using traditional bookbinding techniques. Auckland Libraries uses the label 'graphic novels' to describe all its comic books/graphic novels due to this.

As a style, manga has deep roots in Japanese culture and had emerged by the 1950s as a hybrid of traditional Japanese sequential art and contemporary American comic book technique (Masuchika & Boldt, 2010). Manga was initially slow to catch on outside of Japan, however paperback reprints of series translated into English and other languages have resulted in increased sales and exposure worldwide.

A customer is defined by Hernon & Altman (2010) as being the recipient of any product or service provided by an organisation. Hernon & Altman (2010) argue that in today's customer focused environment it is now an appropriate term when describing library users. Furthermore, understanding customer expectations enhances the capacity for a library to respond to changes and implement improvements to services (McKnight & Booth, 2010).

Utilising Hernon & McClure's (1990) theory of practical action research in libraries, this project has been designed to assess the quality of an individual service. It seeks to examine the effectiveness of Auckland Libraries' graphic novel and manga collection by analysing the perspectives of its readers. Recommendations considering ways to improve library decision making regarding the collection will then be provided. The study predominantly uses a quantitative approach to gather data through the use of self-completion questionnaires. A small degree of qualitative data will also be obtained from the questionnaire through open-ended questions. It will primarily take place within the Auckland Libraries network in a one-time administrative manner. Questionnaires will be made available to customers at various locations over a period of one month. The participants being targeted are library customers who regularly borrow graphic novels and/or manga from the Auckland Libraries collection.

The outcomes of this research will benefit both Auckland Libraries staff and its customers. At the completion of the study the extent to which the current graphic novel and manga collection is meeting customer expectations should be ascertained. By then analysing the evidence and identifying potential improvements, this study should inform staff decision making surrounding the collection. This includes enabling them to keep the collection fresh and relevant and giving them insight as how to promote the collection to their customer base. Library customers who frequently borrow from the graphic novel and manga collection will naturally profit from this outcome. Giving staff a broad overview of their users, as well as specific wants and needs, means better assistance and a more satisfying selection of materials.

3. Literature review

3.1 Academic research on comic books/graphic novels and manga in libraries

The presence of comic books/graphic novels and manga in libraries, and their rationale for being so, is possibly the most popular topic in much of the academic literature. One of the earliest examples of research related to graphic novels was Vergueiro's 1994 analysis of the progressive approach being made towards the format by Brazilian public libraries. A survey interestingly revealed that a growing number of public libraries were developing graphic novel collections due to high demand amongst customers, both juvenile and adult (Vergueiro, 1994). Welch & Brown (2005) examined the similarly expanding comic

book/graphic novel collection at Cleveland Public Library and its value. It gave interesting insight into why the library expanded its collection, its justifications for doing so and what resources were consulted when building the collection. Brushed upon in the Welch & Brown (2005) article, Snowball (2005) also recommended comic book/graphic novels as a format for reluctant readers and as a reason for libraries to expand their collections. Heaney (2007) introduced a much more comprehensive argument for having comic book/graphic novel collections by examining a great deal of the literature. She determined that they should be in libraries for visual literacy purposes, curricular connections and due to the high interest in them from a healthy percentage of readers (Heaney, 2007). Both Downey (2009) and Goldsmith (2011) added a variety of less conventional grounds for their inclusion such as preserving sequential art and supplementing school English instruction with adaptations.

Focusing on the presence of comic books/graphic novels in academic and research libraries, the articles by Williams & Peterson (2009), Masuchika & Boldt (2010) and Wagner (2010) all utilised list-checking methods to analyse the collections of multiple North American tertiary libraries. Alarming, each author reached the conclusion that academic libraries are not putting the amount of funds and effort into building their collections that they possibly should be. However, Toren's (2010) study using more or less the same techniques seemed to counter this. She found that between 2008 and 2009, a period of worldwide economic recession, the number of comic book/graphic novel titles in academic libraries increased by 40 percent on average (Toren, 2010). Toren (2010) presented a number of reasons for this trend, chiefly increased sales within the marketplace and the success of films that have been adapted from the format. From a different perspective, Weber (2011) looked at the Library of Congress comic book/graphic novel collections and its dedication to their preservation. If nothing else, it underlines the progress graphic novels have made as a respected form of literature.

Collection development and promotion has emerged as a pressing issue in the research to date. O'English, Mathews & Lindsay (2006) consulted much of the leading literature available at the time to address the growing popularity of comic books/graphic novels in academic libraries and highlight collection development issues. They gave detailed information on the background and roles of graphic novels in libraries, cataloging and classification issues, and the marketing and promotion of collections. Being an overview, it

analysed much of the prior research and resources related to the topic. It has been frequently cited in subsequent research on the topic. Bussert (2005) also acknowledged the lack of scholarship and research on the topic of comic books/graphic novels. She compiled a wide range of online resources to aid with comic book/graphic novel collection development. While presenting a range of books, periodicals, catalogues and websites useful to collection development, both Matz (2004) and Behler (2006) also drew attention to some of the core comic book/graphic novel titles and authors. Haines' (2007) step-by-step guide to creating a comic book/graphic novel collection is a simple tutorial for librarians to follow. It was broken down into sections on developing the parameters of the collection, acquiring the materials and providing access. It should be noted that recent articles concerned with collection development are rare. This is perhaps due to the increase of published books on the topic.

There is little literature dedicated to simply evaluating the effectiveness of comic book/graphic novel and manga collections, let alone those done with the customer's perspective in mind. Charbonneau (2005) intended to measure patron demographic novels and attitudes towards the graphic novel collection at the Octogone Library in Montreal through the use of self-completion questionnaires. The results revealed an array of useful information that informed library staff about their patrons and areas for potential improvement within the collection. These included which genres readers prefer, the popularity of Japanese manga amongst younger readers and a demand for the collection to be better promoted (Charbonneau, 2005). For her PhD thesis, Snowball (2007; 2008) aimed to investigate comic book/graphic novel collections in Australian public libraries.

Interestingly, she applied a variety of different research methods to allow for triangulation. Data were collected through a national survey of public libraries, focus groups with teens and structured interviews with librarian. Snowball's 2007 article reported that the survey showed most Australian libraries, particularly in urban areas, have comic books/graphic novels. However, collection development policies are incredibly diverse and often involve censorship by staff (Snowball, 2007). In 2008, Snowball put forth the results gathered from the focus groups that intended to gain teenaged readers' opinion of comic books/graphic novels, and whether or not this group frequently reads them. It was believed that the results would inform public library decisions about young adult collections. Comic

books/graphic novels prompted a mixed response in terms of popularity during the focus groups, although the conclusion could be drawn that in most instances they had not been well promoted to the participants (Snowball, 2008).

Comic books/graphic novels and manga have increasingly become a topic of interest for library and information science students. At Victoria University of Wellington alone, several Master's students in the School of Information Studies have based their research projects on comic books/graphic novels and manga in one way or another. Two of the more recent examples are Thomson (2008) and Walker (2009). With library collections in mind, Thomson stepped outside of the library environment to focus upon the manga reading clientele at Auckland's Graphic Novel Café. The objective was to explore manga readers in the hope of gaining insight into this customer base. Walker (2008), on the other hand, turned her attention towards the use of comic books/graphic novels in Hamilton schools, particularly as a learning tool for reluctant readers. In addition, a number of international Master's level theses stand out. Raab (2005) gave an extensive account of manga in academic libraries. The study charted manga's background, characteristics and best practices for collection building and management. Ray (2010) focused primarily on censorship and the age appropriateness of comic book/graphic novel collections. Focus groups highlighted difficulties when allocating titles to children's, young adult and adult sections of the library. This issue was also touched on by Wright (2011) when examining the disparate cataloguing systems of Canadian public libraries.

The majority of the professional library journal articles and Master's level papers included in my literature review were concerned with academic and school libraries rather than public libraries. Furthermore, they tended to focus on two broadly defined areas; asserting how and why comic book/graphic novels and manga should be used in libraries, and issues surrounding collection development. While these studies still explored relevant themes and provided insightful background knowledge, they emphasise that purely research driven literature, particularly in the manner of applied research, has proven to be rare. As of yet, perhaps only Charbonneau (2005) and Snowball (2007; 2008) were recent efforts that directly relate to my proposed study. Both papers intended to evaluate comic book/graphic novel and manga collections in public libraries by using methods common in applied research. Additionally, they attempted to collect data that reflected the perspective of

library customers in the hope that the results would inform decisions made by library staff regarding the comic book/graphic novel and manga collection. However, it must be taken into account that Charbonneau's (2005) survey of customers in Montreal was not peer-reviewed and Snowball's 2008 focus groups examine graphic novels only from the viewpoint of their teenage readers.

3.2 Books pertaining to comic books/graphic novels and manga in libraries

Published books on comic book/graphic novel and manga collections within libraries tend to focus upon their presence as a whole, regardless of whether the setting is public or academic. Miller's 2005 publication represented a guide to designing a comic book/graphic novel and manga collection that will appeal to predominantly teenaged readers. It contained sections that explored the various formats, collection development, promoting collections and recommended titles. Miller acknowledged that there had been a limited amount of research in professional library journals up until recently, pinpointing 2002 "as the year when ideas about graphic novels in libraries really began to solidify" (Miller, 2005, p.18). To inform his own work, he relied upon his experience as a public librarian and consultation with peers through electronic mailing lists and message boards. Miller's most notable concept is what he called the 'Five Cs' of comic book/graphic novel and manga librarianship – credibility, circulation, commitment, collection, cost – with each one playing a critical role in collection development (Miller, 2005, p.29). As outlined, these five steps represent a logical and effective process for building a comic book/graphic novel and manga collection and would be helpful to any library. For determining the value of the collection, Miller suggested that statistics will play a vital role and outlined how that can be achieved. He presented how to promote the collection less successfully. While containing some sound basic ideas such as promotional events and book discussion groups, it perhaps failed to take into account the limited time and money available to libraries in promoting a single part of the collection.

Serchay (2010) is thought by some to be a definitive guide to creating a comic book/graphic novel and manga collection for adult readers. The book was certainly one of the largest and most complete works on the subject, featuring up-to-date information on comic books/graphic novels and manga. It has been divided into two parts; Part 1 focused on

understanding the value of the different types of formats, while Part 2 looked at designing, building, managing and promoting a comic book/graphic novel and manga collection aimed at adults. Serchay, who is a youth services librarian, had written extensively about comic books/graphic novels and manga in libraries over a number of years and this experience informs much of the book. The bibliography suggested that a great deal of previously published material was also consulted. Much of what Serchay put forward in Part 2 built on what has more or less become standard practice in libraries for comic book/graphic novel and manga collections. However, the detailed guide to writing collection development policies specific to comic books/graphic novels and manga, and including exemplars from several US libraries, serves as a useful tool. Serchay later went on to introduce the interesting idea of working in collaboration with local comic book stores to achieve an understanding of what patrons want. A section on ways of meeting patron and staff challenges to material also contained informative advice to counter the issue, namely through being proactive and seeking their opinions.

Francisca Goldsmith has produced a variety of material concerning comic books/graphic novels and manga in libraries, often from a public library angle. Goldsmith's (2010) readers' advisory guide can be viewed as both an update and condensed version of her widely referenced book from 2005. Rather than dedicating large sections to building and promoting a comic book/graphic novel and manga collection, it explored ways to use the collection once in existence. Naturally, many of the ideas put forth were meant to be for the benefit of librarians acting in a readers' advisory capacity. Approaches to pushing existing comic book/graphic novel and manga readers towards new or more challenging material were covered along with those aimed at introducing more traditional readers to the format. These strategies often emphasised the necessity for extensive interaction between the librarian and reader. It can also be ascertained that the librarian requires a strong working knowledge of the comic book/graphic novel and manga collection at hand as well as other media connected to it. In this respect, Goldsmith (2010) proposed a rather idealised vision of what can be achieved. However, useful readers' advisory hints and pointers specific to the comic book/graphic novel and manga format were still forthcoming. As a whole, the book still represents one of the few published attempts on how to practically engage readers in a comic book/graphic novel and manga collection.

In Robert G. Weiner's (2010) edited book on comic books/graphic novels and manga in libraries, three chapters stand out. Cubbage (2010) looked at shaping an academic library comic book/graphic novel and manga collection to the needs and interests of its community. She offered pointers on how to connect with both students and faculty through the use of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups to gather their ideas. This approach could easily be transferred to a public library setting. Ziolkowska & Howard (2010) conducted a study to find out what adult readers enjoy about comic books/graphic novels and manga. 9 participants over the age of 18 took part in semi-structured interviews and their responses were analysed in terms of Csikszentmihalyi's four defining principles of the 'flow' state. A number of conclusions were drawn about the appeal of comic books/graphic novels and manga. These include that they were quick to read, generally escapist in content and highly evocative through the use of text and visuals. Similar to the research conducted by Williams & Peterson (2009), Masuchika & Boldt (2010) and Wagner (2010), Collins (2010) explored evaluating comic book/graphic novel and manga collections in Canadian public libraries through list-checking methods. For her study, she adapted the quantitative collection evaluation techniques developed by Howard White to measure the state one library's collection in relation to another (Collins, 2010). While not that relevant to my own study, it represents an interesting alternative for collection evaluation.

3.3 Research approach

Attention must be given to the research approach underpinning my proposed research. Hernon & McClure's 1991 book *Evaluation & Library Decision Making* explored the role of action research in allowing libraries to assess the range and quality of their services. Action research was defined by Hernon & McClure (1991) as being the process of collecting and analysing data in order to make improvements to existing services and programmes. It is identified as being more practical than other applied research methods, with clear objectives in mind. The authors declare that "understanding the relationship between planning and evaluation is essential for improving the services of the library" (Hernon & McClure, 1991, p.14). It is argued that action research can act as a link between planning and evaluation as the findings are likely to further inform a library about the relationship between the two processes (Hernon & McClure, 1991). The success of a service or programme, and any improvements and changes that need to be made, can be identified

through the application of action research. In addition to outlining action research and its uses in libraries, the book gave an overview of other evaluation processes. It described key literature, steps in conducting an evaluation study, designs and data collection techniques and sampling. Connaway & Powell's 5th edition of *Basic Research Methods for Librarians* (2010) also recognised the link between action research and strategic planning. They characterised the process as being flexible and adaptive, with its goal ultimately being to provide data to library decision makers who will in turn take a specific course of action (Connaway & Powell, 2010).

3.4 Final comment

All of the above literature informs my research proposal in one way or another. The bulk of it does often not specifically relate to my proposed research yet still provides me with extensive background knowledge of the topic and definitions of the concepts being explored. Charbonneau (2005), in conjunction with the methods outlined in Hernon & McClure (1991) and Connaway & Powell (2010), presents a clear framework to be consulted when it comes to designing and conducting my own survey of library patrons about comic book/graphic novels and manga. The likes of Snowball (2008), Cubbage (2010) and Ziolkowska & Howard (2010) provide similar inspiration for gaining user perspectives on comic books/graphic novels and manga with the aim of identifying needs. Lastly, Miller (2005), Serchay (2010) and many of the articles dealing with best practices (Matz, 2004; Behler, 2006; O'English, Matthews & Lindsay, 2006; Haines, 2007; Toren, 2011) should serve as benchmarks to which the Auckland Libraries graphic novel and manga collections can be measured against and subsequently inform any recommendations that are given.

4. Research questions

4.1 Main question

- To what extent is Auckland Libraries' graphic novel and manga collection meeting customer expectations?

4.2 Sub-questions

- What are the expectations of the customers who borrow from the collection?

- Does the collection meet these customer expectations, and if not, what is it failing to do?
- In what ways could the collection be improved with customer expectations in mind?

5. Research design/methodology

5.1 Project design

For this project I will not be starting with any particular framework or theory. Instead, the research findings are expected to reveal insights and possible themes that may inform a framework, or perhaps suggest an emerging one. The research design utilised by my study is that of action research as outlined by Hernon & McClure (1990) and Connaway & Powell (2010). Action research is characterised by the exploration of an issue that has direct application to the workplace of the researcher, who then looks to provide practical solutions (Connaway & Powell, 2010). This project was intended to act as a formative evaluation of a library service that is in operation (Hernon & McClure, 1990). It sought out customer feedback to assess and perhaps modify or improve the Auckland Libraries' graphic novel and manga collection that is available for loan. Data was collected using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods in the form of self-completed questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered to library customers at several Auckland Libraries sites. In most cases, these were displayed by the graphic novel and manga collection or distributed by staff when appropriate.

5.2 Population and sample

The target population for this study included all Auckland Libraries customers, regardless of whether they frequently borrow from the graphic novel and manga collection or not. There was no recruiting of participants. Instead, it was at the customer's own discretion as to whether they completed and returned a questionnaire. Due to this, the customers' status varied in terms of age, background and occupation. Non-probability sampling is seen as being the best fit for a study of this kind and it occurred in the form of a convenience sample (Bryman, 2008). In the case of this study it was done by administering questionnaires to Auckland Libraries' customers on site. It was projected that 30 fully completed questionnaires would provide the minimum amount data suitable for analysis.

However, the study aims to collect as many completed surveys as possible in order to gain a broader perspective on the views of customers. 42 completed questionnaires were eventually collected.

5.3 Ethical considerations

All relevant documents were submitted to the School of Information Management Human Ethics Community for approval. As the survey was to be conducted on library premises, permission from Auckland Libraries was also obtained before research commenced.

To inform participants before they engaged in the research, the purpose, nature and procedure of the study were clearly outlined in each questionnaire through the use of an information sheet. The information sheet also included details regarding the participant's protection of privacy, how to obtain the results of the study and contact details for both the researcher and the supervisor of the project. All computer files related to the research were password-protected. Completed questionnaires were stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and will be destroyed two years after the completion of the project.

5.4 Data collection procedures

The two main sources of data during the course of this study were derived from a self-completion questionnaire and literature pertaining to comic book/graphic novel and manga collection development. According to Bryman (2008) a self-completion questionnaire is one of the most cost-effective and convenient ways of collecting survey data. The questionnaire is designed from a set of questions, the purpose of which is to gather a particular data from a sample population (Bryman, 2008). Evidence provided from the questionnaire served to highlight areas of strengths and weaknesses within the Auckland Libraries graphic novel and manga collection as viewed by customers. In order to further inform any recommendations on possible changes to the collection, the examination of literature related to collection development (i.e. Miller, 2005 and Serchay, 2010) was also necessary.

There are many ways to send a questionnaire to sample populations. For this study I proposed to follow Charbonneau's (2005) approach and have the questionnaire on hand in the library for customers to fill out. Charbonneau (2005) revealed that a large, colourful display filled with questionnaires and placed near the comic book/graphic novel and manga

collection acted as a primary point of access. Smaller displays were present in other parts of the library, such as the circulation and reference desks, and library staff were encouraged to hand out questionnaires to customers who borrowed comic books/graphic novels and manga (Charbonneau, 2005). Whereas Charbonneau (2005) was concerned with only the population of the Octogone Library in Montreal, my study aimed to collect data that sampled the greater Auckland population. For this reason it was pertinent to distribute the questionnaire, with permission, at several different branches to gather a more accurate range of customer perspectives. This led to another area where the studies differ; that of having multiple locations. I addressed this by giving full discretion to the Library Manager at each site with regards to where and how the displays were set up. They were simply sent a poster and bundle of questionnaires along with brief instructions. In every case, small displays were set up containing the questionnaires in the vicinity of the graphic novel and manga collection. Interestingly, most of the Library Managers reported that handing the survey to borrowers at the issues desk proved to be the most effective method of delivery.

5.5 Analysis techniques

Due to the mostly quantitative nature of the data, a code book was designed that listed each variable or question name, all of the answer options for each question, and the numerical code assigned to each answer option (Connaway & Powell, 2010). Once the code book was designed, the collected data was entered into an electronic format using Microsoft Excel. As the data was be in the shape of hardcopy questionnaires, each completed questionnaire will be assigned a unique ID. The responses was organised by question and entered into the spread sheet with reference to the code book. To ensure reliability, the data in the spreadsheet was compared with the actual data on the hardcopy questionnaires to verify it was entered correctly (Hernon & McClure, 1990).

To borrow from Bryman's (2008) explanation of quantitative data analysis, the questions from my questionnaire were likely to extract responses that are interval/ratio [i.e. age], ordinal [i.e. frequency with which they use the library], nominal [i.e. areas in which the collection can be improved] and dichotomous [i.e. gender] in nature. Bryman (2008) further states that variables can be analysed in a univariate, bivariate, or multivariate manner. The majority of my collected data underwent univariate analysis and was presented through

frequency graphs and diagrams such as bar charts. Various contingency tables were utilised when bivariate analysis was required; for instance, showing the relationships between genders and borrowing from the graphic novel and manga collection. In the case of the smaller amount of qualitative data that will be collected, thematic analysis was applied (Bryman, 2008). It was hoped that general themes and viewpoints could be drawn from the data regarding Auckland Libraries' graphic novel and manga collection.

5.6 Limitations of the project

An obvious limitation of the project was the low response rate of participants who completed the questionnaire. This could be put down to a number of factors. First and foremost was the limited number of sites the questionnaire was distributed at. This was mainly down to logistical reasons and also not wanting to overburden library staff. However, given that the library sites where the questionnaire was distributed were either small or medium sized branches, more of an effort could have been made to contact the larger sites. Not having the questionnaire at the Central Library, for example, could most definitely be seen as a missed opportunity.

Another limitation, and similar to the first, was the fact that the questionnaire was only distributed in the central Auckland zone. Due to it being a small scale project, I felt it unnecessary to extend it to the wider Auckland region. Unfortunately, once the questionnaire was distributed and data collection underway, I was reminded on several occasions by staff of the high graphic novel and manga readership in Auckland's southern zones. While not having access to statistics that would confirm this, it seemed a legitimate theory and could certainly be thought of as an oversight.

The last limitation was staff time and involvement in promoting the questionnaire. As stated above, I was wary of overburdening an already busy library staff with this project and so tried to keep procedures as simple as possible. In most cases, I left each site to their own devices in terms of displaying and distributing the questionnaire. Naturally, some sites were more successful than others. In all, I remain grateful to all who assisted and participated in this part of the project.

6. Findings/discussion

6.1 Participant demographic novels

One of the aims of this research project was to get in touch with the customers to gather opinion on how they feel about the current collection and ways in which it could be improved. Feedback on services is crucial to any customer-service focused organisation and libraries are no different. To start with, the questionnaire aimed to gather information on participant demographic novels. This was to get an idea of who was borrowing from the graphic novel and manga collection and to define any links or patterns that might be apparent.

Firstly, the questionnaire wanted to find the gender and age range of participants [see Graphs 1 & 2]. The participants were predominantly male, with 28 respondents being of that gender as opposed to the 14 who were female. This in itself is not surprising given the higher status of the graphic novel and manga formats amongst male readers (O'English, Mathews & Lindsey, 2006). The age range was well mixed with a spike in participants belonging to the 20 to 34 age group. This group totalled 15 participants and was followed by those in the 13 to 19 group with 10 participants and those in the 35 to 49 group with 9 participants. Only 3 participants belonged to the 12 and under age group and 5 to the 50 and over.

Table 1 Age range of participants by gender									
Male (Total: 28)					Female (Total: 14)				
<12	13-19	20-34	35-49	50>	<12	13-19	20-34	35-49	50>
3	7	10	7	1	0	3	5	2	4

Participant demographics can be further broken down by age range in relation to gender [see Table 1]. Of interest is the lack of female participants under the age of 12 and the similarly low number of male participants above the age of 50.

When assessing the span of time participants have been borrowing from the collection [see Graph 3], questionnaire findings show that many of the participants are relatively new to utilising the collection. The greater volume of participants have only been using the

collection for less than one year — with 10 participants borrowing for less than 6 months and the greatest number of participants, 13, having borrowed for 6 months or more. This increase in relatively new readership suggests a renewed interest in graphic novel and manga material. This might be in part due to the fact that there is now easier access to collections for customers through the My Info online borrowing service. The recent popularity of comic book-themed feature films could easily be pinpointed as another cause. Also worthy of note is that the most common borrowing length after the less than one year category is a borrowing length of 5 years or more. With 7 participants having borrowed from the collection for this extended length of time, it seems there is still a very dedicated readership for these formats.

The frequency in which participants borrow from the collection [see Graph 4] is quite varied and less easily defined. Only one of the participants acknowledged a borrowing frequency of more than once a week. The highest amount of participants, 16, in fact, stated they borrow from the collection only once every 1 to 2 months. This extended length of time between utilising the collection could be tied to the fact that most of the participants who took part in the questionnaire are in the 20 to 34 year old age range. This age group could be less likely to visit the library due to other social/career commitments. It should also be noted that comic book/graphic novel readers, particularly those who would class themselves as 'collectors', are more likely to purchase the books they are interested in.

When classifying the estimated amount of items being borrowed per participant, as best recalled upon the participants' last visit, results shows that participants are taking only a small number of items per visit [see Graph 5]. Most of the participants, 16 in total, only borrow 1 to 2 items per visit. Quite a few participants do still take up to 3 to 4 items per visit, with 11 stating this figure. Far less borrow items in the 5 to 6 and the 9 or more per visit range, with an average of 3 participants stating each of these categories. A slight increase in item per visit borrowing comes in at the 7 to 8 item category, with 4 participants admitting to borrowing this amount.

Further categorising the formats discussed into two distinct sectors — that of graphic novels and manga — Graphs 6 and 7 explore borrower format preferences. Graphic novels seem to be the preferred format by questionnaire participants, with 39 borrowing from this category [see Graph 6]. Manga borrowing by participants comes to only 24. Although several of the participants do utilise both the graphic novel and the manga collections, far fewer participants borrow from only the former [see Graph 7]. Seventeen of the participants admitted to borrowing strictly from the graphic novel collection, while only one participant borrows exclusively from the manga collection. The vast majority of participants, 22 in entirety, choose to borrow from both the graphic novel and manga collections.

Table 2 Participant borrowing of formats by gender					
Male (Total: 28)			Female (Total: 14)		
Comics*	Manga	Both	Comics*	Manga	Both
12	0	16	5	1	6

* Denotes graphic novels

When looking at the borrowing of formats by gender [see Table 2] there are not many further revelations. The preference of both male and female participants is to borrow both graphic novels and manga, although the gap is slightly more even amongst females.

Table 3 Participant borrowing of formats by age														
<12 (Total: 3)			13-19 (Total: 10)			20-34 (Total:15)			35-49 (Total: 9)			50> (Total:3)		
C	M	B	C	M	B	C	M	B	C	M	B	C	M	B
0	1	2	4	1	5	5	0	10	5	0	4	2	0	1

Key: C = Graphic novels/comic books M = Manga B = Both

Breaking down the borrowing of formats by age [see Table 3] reveals that the preference for choosing both graphic novels and manga as reading material is more prevalent amongst the younger groups. This may well be down to a generational phenomenon. Manga is, after all, a relatively new format for western audiences.

Participants were asked whether they primarily use their My Info accounts on the online public access catalogue to order the items they want into their local library or whether they just simply browse the shelves. 24 replied that they use My Info as opposed to 18 who do not.

Participants were then encouraged to clarify, at their discretion, why they do or do not use the My Info service. The majority of people who use the service talk of its ease of use and convenience when ordering material. There were those that mentioned the most obvious reason for using My Info over browsing – finding precisely the graphic novels they want to read. This is particularly pertinent to graphic novel and manga readers, who are often reading series' rather than 'one shot' books. As one participant points out, if they were to not use My Info:

"I cannot gain the comic series' I want in sequential order."

Another elaborates:

"I find that if I order/request 30-50 books at a time, they come in at a rate which keeps me supplied, and I can concentrate on a few titles."

A number of participants also reveal My Info's other advantages when it comes to selecting items:

"Easy to see what is available on the public catalogue, can see release dates, new titles etc."

"Able to find more novels/manga either by the same author or genre."

For people who do not primarily use My Info to borrow graphic novels and manga the biggest reason for not doing so is simply that they prefer traditional browsing of the shelves. In addition to this, one participant makes the point of being able to sample before borrowing:

"Not an avid reader of manga/comics/graphic novels. I enjoy reading them and look when I am in the library to see if there are any I like."

Another simply adds:

"I go into the library to see what I like."

Interestingly, one participant brings up one shortcoming of using My Info due to cataloguing oversights:

"I think online in the catalogue it is hard to follow which volume follows which, as the titles and numbering systems are not consistent within a series or at all."

Only a couple of participants who do not use My Info stated that they did not know of existence.

Table 4 Participants usage of My Info accounts by gender			
Male (Total: 28)		Female (Total: 14)	
Yes	No	Yes	No
16	12	6	6

In terms of My Info usage by gender [see Table 4], male participants indicated that they had more of a preference for using the service. Females, on the other hand, were more evenly divided. This may be reflected by the fact females are more frequent visitors to the library in general and therefore may take the opportunity to browse the shelves.

Table 5 Participants usage of My Info accounts by age									
<12 (Total: 3)		13-19 (Total: 10)		20-34 (Total:15)		35-49 (Total: 9)		50> (Total:3)	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	2	5	5	11	4	4	5	1	2

My Info usage by age [see Table 5] indicates a resounding inclination for participants aged between 20 and 34 to utilise this service. This in itself is not surprising given the previously stated theory that participants of that age juggle their library visits with other commitments. It is reasonable to expect they value the convenience and flexibility My Info brings to library membership. There is more of a split in the other age groups which may be accountable to frequency of visits and computer access/fluency.

6.2 Areas that are meeting customer expectations

The main purpose of this research project is to measure whether the graphic novel and manga collection is currently meeting customer expectations. It is therefore important to take time looking at the ways in which the collection is living up to these expectations, and, in some ways, exceeding them. Participant response to the breadth and physical condition of the collection were generally positive and highlight the efforts being made by Auckland Libraries towards building their collections. Most participants agree that the collection offers a satisfying array of materials in a variety of genres. However, as one participant points out, this has largely been a benefit of Auckland Libraries' recent amalgamation and subsequent floating collection policy:

"The establishment of the Auckland Supercity means a larger variety of items to choose from and now no charge for items sent to people's local library."

By pulling together resources, Auckland Libraries has given its customer's greater choice and flexibility when borrowing materials. The floating collection policy has also had a significant impact on the library branches. It allows for continual restocking of items and the opportunity for staff to develop their collections in tune with customer demand. As another participant writes:

"When I first came to NZ I was impressed that they had comics in the library. The collections at each library has [sic] now increased to a satisfying amount."

Given these developments, it is not surprising that the majority of participants indicated their satisfaction with the selection of graphic novels and manga when prompted to by the research questionnaire [see Graph 9]. 21 participants agree that they satisfied, with another 8 strongly agreeing. In the middle, 4 participants were undecided over their level of satisfaction. To round it out, 6 disagreed that they were satisfied and one strongly disagreed.

To delve deeper into customer satisfaction with the range of the graphic novel and manga collection, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the titles and genres available [see Graphs 10 & 11]. In terms of titles, a slight majority of participants were satisfied with the selection. 7 strongly agreed and 17 agreed that the collection included all their favourite titles. 7 participants were undecided, while those who disagree and strongly disagree totalled 8 and 3 respectively. The level of agreement over the genres covered by the collection produced a similar response. 7 participants strongly agreed and 16 agreed that the collection contains their preferred genres. Additionally, 6 were undecided, 8 disagreed and 3 strongly disagreed with the statement provided.

These, of course, were particularly subjective questions and consequently received a mixed reaction from participants. A number of them took the opportunity to add more details in the comments section following this set of questions. Many pointed to gaps within the collection, such as this participant:

“I would like to see more European comics and graphic novels in the collection. There is a great wealth of material that is largely absent.”

Another participant was concerned with the immediate selection available on the shelves:

“I read a lot of genres and will occasionally come across a new genre or story I am intrigued by. But this only happens serendipidously [sic] in the library. And not as often as I would like. I think superhero comics dominate over other graphic novels.”

Overall, however, the data would seemingly confirm that participants were generally satisfied with the selection on offer. As one sums up:

“Such a huge category and quite expensive so don’t expect to find everything but pretty happy!”

Expanding on participant satisfaction with the range of the graphic novel and manga collection was another set of questions. This time participants were asked to indicate whether a particular statement about the collection was true or false. Graph 12 charts participant reaction to whether they feel titles they want to read are never in the collection. 30 thought that statement to be false while 10 thought it to be true. Graph 13 instead deals with whether participants feel the titles in the collection are all too similar. 34 thought this false as opposed to 6 who thought it true. Again, results show that the majority of participants are satisfied with what is currently on offer.

Participant views on the physical condition of the collection proved to be overwhelmingly positive. 10 thought the collection to be in very good shape, 23 thought it was good and 6 thought fair. Just one participant found the collection to be lacking in this area.

As to the location of the graphic novel and manga collection within the library [see Graph 15], 31 participants indicated that they were easy to find while 9 found them difficult to find. As a few participants suggested in the comments field, this is largely down to them already knowing where to look at their local branch. One aspect to be taken into account, and brought up by a participant, was the splitting of the collection for age groups:

"I read both teen and 'adult themed' comics so sometimes this means I float between the teen section and the graphic novel section."

It is conceivable that this is occasionally an issue for library customers when browsing.

6.3 Areas for improvement

Although it is pleasing that the Auckland Libraries graphic novel and manga collection is meeting customer expectations on a number of levels, there is certainly room for improvement. Participants generally agree that the breadth of the collection is impressive, but there is concern amongst many about on site practices such as shelving, categorisation, promotion and staff knowledge.

Participant response to the organisation of the collection [see Graph 16] was as mixed as it had been in the questionnaire up until that point. Despite 23 participants declaring it to be organised and clear, 17 instead felt that it was unorganised and confusing. This question provoked much feedback from participants in the comments section. Most reply that their library site seems to be no set system for organising graphic novels and manga on the shelves. One participant puts succinctly:

“Organisation seems arbitrary and does not appear to follow a logically consistent standard.”

The effect is that collections appear jumbled, out of order and not particularly customer-friendly. Another participant portrays the confusion rather tongue-in-cheek:

“Perhaps I haven’t tried hard enough to decipher the logic of shelving, so I may be wrong, but they have seemed pretty randomly ordered to me.”

This is clearly not the kind of opinion that Auckland Libraries’ would wish its customers to have from browsing its collections. Nonetheless, and as a few participants suggest, this issue is somewhat site specific with some doing it better than others.

Participants were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the way in which Auckland Libraries is promoting the graphic novel and manga collection [see Graph 17]. A strong contingent appears to be content, with one participant strongly agreeing and 17 more agreeing. Yet, worryingly for Auckland Libraries, there are almost equally large numbers who are undecided. Add to this 4 who disagree and 2 who strongly disagree and promotion becomes a real area of concern. A participant who took the opportunity to elaborate gave some further insight:

"I have only seen advertising for comics once, so I am undecided."

Adds another:

"The libraries promote its collection only occasionally."

Tied to the promotion of the graphic novel and manga collection is participant interest in events [see Graph 18]. The results here again suggest that there is a hunger amongst participants for more activities involving the collection. 7 participants were very interested in events and 21 interested. 7 were undecided about the idea. Not to be discounted were the 3 who were disinterested and 2 who were very disinterested.

Perhaps the most divided topic between participants in the questionnaire was on library staff knowledge about graphic novels and manga. Once again, many were undecided, with 17 stating so. In addition to this, 9 disagreed that staff were knowledgeable and one strongly disagreed. On the other hand, 9 agreed and four strongly agreed that staff were indeed knowledgeable.

Several participants felt compelled to comment on this factor, and in quite some detail.

Writes one:

"I think only certain staff have a vested interest in comics; I look for the staff member who I know reads and is interested in comics."

Alarming, one participant hints at a lack of professional knowledge on multiple counts:

"Just not much interaction with staff who knew much about comics, or how to find the ones that they do know."

Another participant reasons that they can get by without staff:

"Some staff are knowledgeable. Others very much not. But it is fine. I can find what I want."

Finally, one draws attention to the stigma surrounding graphic novels and manga that may exist as well as the fact it may just be a matter of taste:

"Apart from the minority who are comics readers, there's an age/gender/educative level bias away from comics, but that's the way it should be. Comics aren't for everyone. There is a language that must be learned to appreciate them, and unless you self-taught as a kid, it seems to be harder to pick up."

Graph 21

Participants were asked to indicate whether the following statement was either true or false: I have a hard time finding what I want to read

Graph 22

Participants were asked to indicate whether the following statement was either true or false: I'd read more if I knew which titles come recommended

Graph 23

Participants were asked to indicate whether the following statement was either true or false: I'd read more if I knew which titles are in the genre I like

Extending from library staff knowledge is reader's advisory to customers. The perception by participants that staff have a lack of expertise with regards to graphic novels and manga also might mean there is a reluctance for participants to seek and accept advice. Graphs 20 to 23 cover the questions that mainly wished to gain participants' feelings towards the collection, but which also rather inadvertently found links to staff knowledge and reader's advisory. Graph 20 looks at whether participants have read everything that interests them. A surprising amount, 19, in fact, found the statement to be true as opposed to the 21 who found it false. Graph 21 focused on whether participants have a hard time finding something to read. 13 answered true, 27 false. Graph 22 features whether participants would read more if they knew which titles came recommended. 15 answered true on this count and 24 false. Lastly, Graph 23 shows whether participants would read more if they knew which titles were in the genre they like. 11 thought this true while 29 thought false.

A couple of the results, such as participants struggling to find titles to read [see Graph 21] and knowing the titles by genre [see Graph 23], are not especially shocking. However, the 13 and 11 participants who admitted to having problems in these respective areas still represent a large percentage. Of more immediate concern are the participants who believe they have read everything that interests them [see Graph 20] and would read more if titles came recommended [Graph 22]. Several participants expressed that Auckland Libraries staff could be doing more in this regard by simply presenting recommended material on the shelves or in close proximity:

"Have staff recommendation shelves which allow interested staff to recommend comics from their own experience/interest."

"Recommendation notes next to highlighted comic/manga with small reviews. Also with recommendation highlighting 2-3 books to also read if you liked that one."

"A showcase board would be great, maybe with a summary and photocopy of the cover so people can find it in the collection later or join the queue to request."

This leaves little doubt that those staff who are sufficiently invested in graphic novels and manga need both the time and the motivation to develop reader's advisory techniques and

materials. Meanwhile, basic up-skilling and a shift of attitude will have to be reinforced amongst less enthusiastic staff in order for any changes made to be wholly effective.

7. Conclusions

From the results of the questionnaire, two discernible themes materialise. The first is that participants are widely content with the range of graphic novel and manga material in the collection. This attests to Auckland Libraries having implemented a successful collection management policy for the purchasing and distribution of materials. Clearly, having a comprehensive collection is a major step towards ensuring customer demand is being adhered to. However, it is the next stage of collection building that the second theme to emerge from the questionnaire transpires. Having a comprehensive collection is not where it should end; organisation, promotion and reader's advisory are equally important practices. These areas, more than any other, are what Auckland Libraries needs to focus upon to ensure its graphic novel and manga collection fulfils its potential. I wish to further explore the organisation of the collection, its promotion, staff knowledge about graphic novels and manga and reader's advisory in the hope of finding possible solutions. Both the professional literature and suggestions made by questionnaire participants will form my points of reference.

Issues surrounding the cataloguing and organisation of graphic novel and manga collections are not new. Plenty of the literature (Behler, 2006; Goldsmith, 2010; Haines, 2007; Heaney, 2007; Miller, 2005; O'English, Mathews & Lindsay, 2006; Serchay, 2010) addresses it in one way or another. Due to the myriad number of authors, titles, series, publishers and editions, cataloguers have found it difficult to devise a universal, one-size-fits all system for organisation. What we have instead is a number of different ordering systems, ranging from shelving by author [with the writer primarily being deemed the author], title or series to simply throwing them in with the general fiction. Auckland Libraries appears to have left organisation up to the individual sites as they see fit, with the only real suggestion being that graphic novels and manga be kept separate for customer ease of use. This makes sense to a certain degree and sensibly puts the customer first. Nevertheless, when participant feedback indicates a lack of organisation at several different sites that inhibits accessibility, an argument could be made for system wide standards.

As Haines (2007) rightly states, accessibility starts with cataloging. Currently, Auckland Libraries catalogers focus upon authors as the primary access point. While this is possibly best practice for one-shot and short-running series that are written by a single author, it unfortunately often proves less adequate for long-running series', a staple of the graphic novel and manga format. This is due to a frequent change of author during a series' publication. For example, the second book of popular series *The Authority* would be catalogued and shelved under the surname of its author, Warren Ellis, while the third would be under its author, Mark Millar, who picked up writing the series after Ellis' departure. As indicated by some of the questionnaire participants, there is a sense of frustration for readers who are looking to read the series in chronological order yet have to find each book in a different location upon the shelf. In this instance there is a case for cataloguers to give more attention to a series/title as well as chronological order on cutter labels. This may well provide library sites with a clearer idea of how to go about ordering graphic novels and manga on their shelves.

Current organisation of graphic novels and manga on shelves at Auckland Libraries sites seems haphazard at best. There are also inconsistencies due to the split in the collection between adult, teen and children's material. Even at the same site, the graphic novels and manga in the teen's section are potentially shelved very different from those in the adult section. The Central Library, which contains the largest single part of the collection, has attempted to shelve its adult graphic novels and manga according to title or series. The only exceptions from this rule are the one-shot stories, which are instead kept separate and shelved by author. Interestingly, the likes of Goldsmith (2005) and Serchay (2010) testify to this being the most successful approach to organisation and shelving, and the one that graphic novel and manga readers are likely to find the easiest to follow. The unfortunate side effect of this type of organisation is that staff who are unfamiliar with graphic novels and manga will potentially find this method difficult to follow. Yet with the appointment of a graphic novel 'champion' at each site, and a small degree of training for other staff, it is conceivable that Auckland Libraries can adopt this method as a whole.

One common cause for discontent amongst questionnaire participants about the graphic novel and manga collection was its promotion. At the time of writing, Auckland Libraries has just concluded its Comic Book Month event. While admirable, the promotion was largely

geared towards junior and teenaged readers and its content was themed as such. Indeed, promotion of the collection is an ongoing process and more measures can certainly be taken throughout the year to highlight its merits. Once the collections at sites are located in a suitable area and organised appropriately, there are any number of ways to exhibit the eye-catching array of art found in much of the material. The first, naturally, is to have face-out shelving and display stands readily available. As graphic novels and manga are a visual medium, they require an appropriate amount of exposure to capture the interest of readers. Other promotional techniques include staff recommendations, summaries/reviews and lists. Several participants noted their absence and suggested their inclusion on some scale. One downside is that this kind of upkeep, particularly the summaries/reviews and lists, requires no small effort from staff. For this reason, the prospect of creating a centralised set of resources should be taken into consideration, along with the possibility of expanding their presence on the Auckland Libraries website.

Events tied to collection are circumstantial and require a great deal of planning amongst a large number of sites. It could be deemed impractical to expand Auckland Libraries' Comic Book Month beyond its current format of system-wide competitions and workshops at specified branches. Each site is able to supplement this with their own activities, but staff time, interest and expertise can prove to be an issue. As previously mentioned, there is also a lack of opportunities for adult readers to participate during the event. Given the high level of interest in events indicated amongst questionnaire participants, there is an opening for Auckland Libraries to pursue a range of regular events. These might occur at a number of the larger sites or simply at those that have a high graphic novel and manga readership. Book clubs are an obvious place to start as do not require a great deal of staff time to plan and execute. Local author and artist talks would undoubtedly shine a light on some of the lesser known parts of the collection and may provide avenues for its expansion if public interest proves it worthwhile. Finally, cooperative projects with comic book stores, as put forth by Serchay (2010), could also be explored.

In order for Auckland Libraries to manage and promote the collection, and to offer reader's advisory services, staff will have to be engaged in a certain degree of up-skilling. In many cases, this will not involve a great deal of time or effort. Initially, the priority is simply to inform staff of any changes to cataloguing and shelving procedures. Staff education and

reader's advisory is likely to require more involved sessions, yet is also dependent on the materials that have been developed to assist with the service. In either sense, clear channels of communication and a common sense of purpose are essential to ensuring staff training. Therefore setting up a graphic novel and manga project team should become a priority. A major strength of Auckland Libraries is that is a large network with a diverse workforce. Finding a group of knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff is unlikely to prove difficult. In fact, there has been already been a precedent for the planning and administering of Comic Book Month. Once set up, the agenda of the project team will be to address the cataloguing and organisation of the collection and the development of suitable materials for reader's advisory. If changes are made, the team will consequently look at ways of communicating these to the staff at each site.

Auckland Libraries has a unique opportunity to showcase its extensive graphic novel and manga collection and promote it to readers both old and new. The emphasis is also there to listen to suggestions from existing readers that enhance one's experience of using the collection. With a collective effort, much progress can be made. It is now up to Auckland Libraries to take up the challenge and deliver a highly satisfactory service for graphic novel and manga readers on all fronts.

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9. Appendices

9.1 Project timeframe

9.2 Participant Information sheet

Participant Information Sheet for a Study of Auckland Libraries' Comic Book/Graphic Novel and Manga Collections

Researcher: Michael Priest

I am a Masters student in Information Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of this degree I am undertaking a research project that gathers data through the use of self-completion questionnaires. The University requires that ethics approval be obtained for research of this nature.

The project I am undertaking is attempting to gain insight into what customers think of the comic book/graphic novel and manga collection at Auckland Libraries. Through your

participation, I eventually hope to understand customer expectations and ways in which their needs and use of these collections can be better supported by the libraries.

Attached is a brief questionnaire that asks a variety of questions about your attitudes towards the comic book/graphic novel and manga collections at Auckland Libraries. I am asking you to look over the questionnaire and, if you choose to participate, please complete the questionnaire and return it to a library staff member. If you choose to participate, please do not write your name on the questionnaire. This survey is anonymous and no data will be attributed to individual participants. Your consent to participate is implied in your completion and return of the questionnaires.

Questionnaires collected will form the basis of my research project and will be put into a written report on an anonymous basis. All material collected will be kept confidential and secure. No other person besides me and my supervisor, Dr Chern Li Liew, will see the questionnaires. The research project will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management and deposited in the University Library. Questionnaires will be destroyed two years after the completion of the project. It should be noted that the research findings may be reported in a conference/journal paper at a later date.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about participating in this study, you may contact me at 022 079 9559 or at priestmich@myvuw.ac.nz. Alternatively, you may contact my supervisor, Dr Chern Li Liew, at the School of Information Management at Victoria University, P O Box 600, Wellington 6140 or at 04 463 5213.

Michael Priest

**SCHOOL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

9.3 Questionnaire

A Survey of Auckland Libraries' Comic Book/Graphic Novel and Manga Collections

We ask you to take a few moments of your time to answer this short survey. Please fill out this survey only once. Thank you in advance for your time!

1. What is your gender? *(Please circle the appropriate response)*

Male

Female

2. Which age group do you fall into? *(Please tick the appropriate response)*

≤12 ____ 13-19 ____ 20-34 ____ 35-49 ____ 50≥ ____

3. Have you ever borrowed the following from any branch of Auckland Libraries? *(Please circle the appropriate response)*

(a) Comic books/graphic novels (for example; a book of comic strips or cartoons)

Yes No

(b) Manga (Japanese comic books/graphic novels either in the original language or translated into English)

Yes No

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of the previous questions, please move on to Question 4.

If you have answered 'No' to both of the previous questions, please briefly outline below why you do not borrow comic books/graphic novels or manga from the Auckland Libraries collection.

Thank you for your input! Please return this survey to any library staff member.

4. How long have you been using the comic book/graphic novel or manga collections? *(Please tick the appropriate response)*

<6 months ____ 6 months or > ____ 1-2 years ____ 3-4 years ____ 5 years or > ____

5. On average, how often do you visit the library for its comic book/graphic novel or manga collection? *(Please tick the most appropriate response)*

More than once a week ____

Once a week ____

Twice a month ____

Once a month ____

Once every 1-2 months ____

6. By your estimations, how many comic books/graphic novels or manga did you read or borrow when you last visited the library? *(Please tick the appropriate response)*

1-2 ____ 3-4 ____ 5-6 ____ 7-8 ____ 9≥ ____

7. Do you primarily use the Auckland Libraries website and your My Info account to find and order comic books/graphic novels or manga you want to read? *(Please circle the appropriate response)*

Yes No

Please briefly outline below why you use/do not use this service.

8. When in the library, the location of the comic book/graphic novel and manga collections are:
(Please tick the appropriate response)

Easy to find _____ Difficult to find _____

If you answered 'Difficult to find' to the previous question, please briefly outline below why you think this is so.

9. In general, how well organised are the comic book/graphic novel and manga collections in the library? (Please tick the appropriate response)

Organised/Clear _____ Unorganised/Confusing _____

If you answered 'Unorganised/Confusing' to the previous question, please briefly outline below why you feel this way.

10. How would you rate the physical condition of the collection (for example; pages missing, general wear and tear)? (Please tick the appropriate response)

Very good _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor _____ Very Poor _____

If you answered 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' to the previous question, please briefly outline what problems you encountered.

In the next set of questions, you are presented with a statement. You are asked to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. You can indicate whether you: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD). (Please tick the appropriate responses)

11. The comic book/graphic novel and manga collection includes all of my favourite titles.

SA _____ A _____ U _____ D _____ SD _____

12. The comic book/graphic novel and manga collection covers all of my preferred genres.

SA ____ A ____ U ____ D ____ SD ____

13. I feel satisfied with the selection of comic books/graphic novels and manga that are available to me.

SA ____ A ____ U ____ D ____ SD ____

14. I feel satisfied with the way Auckland Libraries is promoting its comic book/graphic novel and manga collection.

SA ____ A ____ U ____ D ____ SD ____

15. I believe the library staff are knowledgeable about comic books/graphic novels and mangas.

SA ____ A ____ U ____ D ____ SD ____

If you answered U, D or SD to any of the previous questions, please feel free to expand on your thoughts below.

16. For the following points regarding comic books/graphic novels and manga, please read the statement and indicate whether it's true (T) or false (F) for you personally. *(Please circle the appropriate response)*

(a) The titles I want to read are never in the collection.	T	F
(b) I've almost read everything that interests me.	T	F
(c) I feel like all the titles are too similar.	T	F
(d) I have a hard time finding what I want to read.	T	F
(e) I'd read more if I knew which titles come recommended.	T	F
(f) I'd read more if I knew which titles are in the genre I like.	T	F

(superhero, crime, adventure, fantasy, sci-fi, indie)

In the next set of questions, you are asked to indicate your level of interest. You can indicate whether you are: Very Interested (VI), Interested (I), Undecided (U), Disinterested (D), or Very Disinterested (VD). *(Please tick the appropriate responses)*

17. How interested are you in encyclopaedias or dictionaries about comic books/graphic novels or manga being included within the library collection?

VI ____ I ____ U ____ D ____ VD ____

18. How interested are you in Auckland Libraries hosting more events involving comic books/graphic novels or manga (for example; lectures, conferences, book clubs)?

VI ____ I ____ U ____ D ____ VD ____

19. Regarding the comic book/graphic novel and manga collection in general, are you?

VI ____ I ____ U ____ D ____ VD ____

20. Do you have final suggestions or comments regarding the improvement of the comic book/graphic novel and manga collection?

Thank you! By responding to this survey, you have participated in the collection's improvement. Please return this survey to any library staff member.

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