Webinar Series: Evaluating and Sharing Your Library’s Impact

Part 1: April 24
Kara Reuter
User-centered Assessment: Leveraging What You Know and Filling in the Gaps

Part 2: August 14
Linda Hofschire
Digging into Assessment Data: Tips, Tools, and Tricks of the Trade

Part 3: October 3
Melissa Bowles-Terry
Take Action: Using and Presenting Research Findings to Make Your Case

For more information: https://www.webjunction.org/news/webjunction/webinar-series-research-assessment.html

Series Learner Guide
Use alone or with others to apply what you’re learning between sessions. 13 pages of questions, activities, and resources. Customizable to meet your team’s needs!

OCLC Research

• Research devoted exclusively to the challenges facing libraries and archives
• Research Library Partnership includes working groups to collaborate with institutions on research and issues
• Lifelong learning from WebJunction, for all library staff and volunteers
• All connected through a global network of 16,000+ member libraries
• Global and Regional Councils bring worldwide viewpoints together, informing and guiding the cooperative from their unique perspective.
Research Library Partnership: Library Assessment Interest Group

• The OCLC Research Library Partnership invites librarians at partner institutions to participate in a new Library Assessment Interest Group, beginning in April 2018.

• This interest group will accompany and extend the Webinar Series: Evaluating and Sharing Your Library's Impact

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OCLC Research

User Studies
Embedding the library in community workflows
Understanding the work of patrons and library staff, and evaluating the digital services delivered to them, and providing insights into how they manage information in their work.

Engaging individuals in context
Understanding and valuing interaction to engage and inform communities, and the implications research has on these interactions and the impact on library workflows.

Recent content
Engaging with the user, delivering meaningful, efficient experiences.

Search OCLC Research
Some Initial Questions

1. What is your definition of assessment?
2. What comes to mind when you hear the term “assessment”?
3. What benefits do you see for assessment?
4. What are your concerns?

Why Assessment?

- Answers questions:
  - What do users/stakeholders want & need?
  - How can services/programs better meet needs?
  - Is what we do working?
  - Could we do better?
  - What are problem areas?
- Traditional stats don’t tell whole story

Importance of Assessment

“Librarians are increasingly called upon to document and articulate the value of academic and research libraries and their contribution to institutional mission and goals.”

(ACRL Value of Academic Libraries, 2010, p. 6)
Steps in Assessment Process

1. Why?
   • Identify purpose
2. Who?
   • Identify team
3. How?
   • Choose model/approach/method
4. Commit!
   • Training/planning

Outcomes Assessment Basics

Outcomes: “The ways in which library users are changed as a result of their contact with the library’s resources and programs.”

(ALA/ACRL. 1998)

“Libraries cannot demonstrate institutional value to maximum effect until they define outcomes of institutional relevance and then measure the degree to which they attain them.”

(Kaufman & Watstein, 2008, p. 227)

Outputs & Inputs

• Outputs
  • Quantify the work done
  • Don’t relate factors to overall effectiveness
• Inputs
  • Raw materials
  • Measured against standards
  • Insufficient for overall assessment
Principles for Applying Outcomes Assessment

- Center on users
- Assess changes in service/resources use
- Relate to inputs - identify "best practices"
- Use variety of methods to corroborate conclusions
- Choose small number of outcomes
- Need not address every aspect of service
- Adopt continuous process

What We Know About Assessment

- Ongoing process to understand & improve initiatives
- Librarians are busy with day-to-day work & assessment can become another burden
- Can build on what your library has already done

Leveraging What You Know and Filling in the Gaps

Kara Reuter
Digital Library Manager, Worthington Libraries (OH)
**Informal assessment**

- Anecdotes
- Casual observation
- Majority of one
- *Fine for certain circumstances…*

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**Formal assessment**

- Data driven
- Evidence based
- Accepted methods
- Recognized as rigorous
- Generalizable

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**Goal of assessment**

- Understand a phenomenon
- Build meaning
- Take a snapshot
- Tell a story
Process

1. Define the problem
2. Environmental scanning
3. Prepare the plan
4. Collect data
5. Analyze data
6. Interpret and report

Ladder of abstraction

Data analysis spiral

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Define the problem

User in their context
Community perspective
Ask the right question(s)

Define the problem

User in context

Define the problem

Community perspective
Define the problem

Ask the right question(s)

Environmental scanning

Existing data sources
Other research

Environmental scanning

Existing data sources
Environmental scanning

Other research

- Pew Research Center
- IMLS Public Libraries Survey
- PLA Public Library Data Service
- OCLC Reports
- ACRL White Papers and Reports
- NCES Library Statistics Program

Prepare the plan

What kind of conclusion do you want to come to?
How will you analyze the data?
What data will you collect?
What question(s) will you ask?

What could go wrong?
The question

What's your vision for the library's future?

The data

What's your vision for the library's future?

Analysis

What's your vision for the library's future?

- Collection/materials
- Technology
- Facilities
- Programming
Conclusion

What’s your vision for the library’s future?

People envisioned more of what the library already does.

We can fix this!

![The Tool Box](image)

The question

What’s your vision for the library’s future? One thing that would make my life better…
The data
What’s your vision for the library’s future?

One thing that would make my life better…

Analysis

What’s your vision for the library’s future?
- Collection/materials
- Technology
- Facilities
- Programming

One thing that would make my life better…
- Freedom
  - Time, Money
- Affection
  - Pets, Family
- Food
- Fantasy

Conclusion

What’s your vision for the library’s future?
People envisioned more of what the library already does.

One thing that would make my life better…
People long for more freedom in their lives and seek warmth and affection in their relationships. They are both practically-minded, concerning themselves with food and diet, but also whimsical, wishing for magical or fantastical scenarios.
Impacts and Outcomes

Affection  Freedom  Fantasy  Food

Thank you!

Questions and Discussion

#libdata4impact

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