Slide 1

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, Tricks, and Tools 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

OCLC Research   **WebJunction**
The learning place for libraries.

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Slide 2

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!

Slide 3

OCLC Research   Search OCLC Research

| Themes | Partnership | People | News & Events | Publications | Grants & Awards |

- **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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Lynn Silipigni Connaway

Senior Research Scientist and Director of User Research, OCLC Research
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OCLC Research

User Studies

Overview · All Theme Projects · Recent Reports

Embedding the library in community workflows

Engaging individuals in context

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)

Association of College and Research Libraries. (2010) Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report. Researched by Megan Oakleaf. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries. http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/issues/value/val_report.pdf

Steps in Assessment Process

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

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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)

ALA/ACRL. (1998). Task Force on Academic Library Outcomes Assessment Report.
Kaufman, P., & Watstein, S. B. (2008). Library Value (Return on Investment, ROI) and the Challenge of Placing a Value on Public Services. *Reference Services Review*, *36*(3), 226-231.

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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
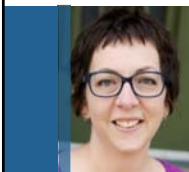
Kara Reuter

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

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Process

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

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Process

Ladder of abstraction
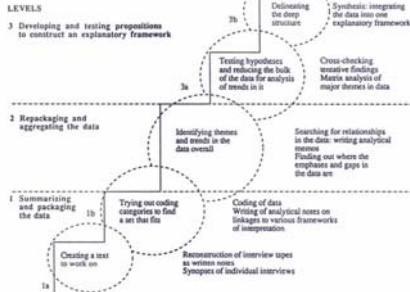
Carney, T. F. (1990). "The Ladder of Analytical Abstraction." In Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [p. 92]

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Process

Data analysis spiral
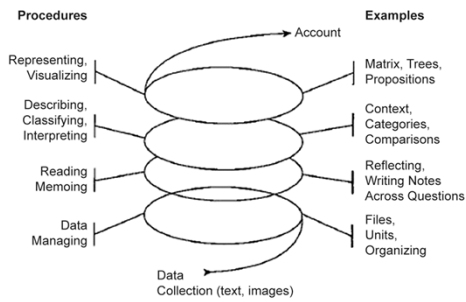
Creswell, J. W. (1998). Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [p. 143]

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Define the problem

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

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Define the problem

User in context

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Define the problem

Community perspective

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Define the problem

Ask the right question(s)

There is such a thing as a stupid question.

someecards
user card
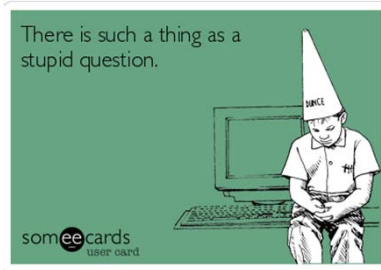
Kara Reuter, There is such a thing as a stupid question https://www.someecards.com/usercards [now defunct]

Environmental scanning

Existing data sources
Other research

"newspaper reading" by balu is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Environmental scanning

Existing data sources
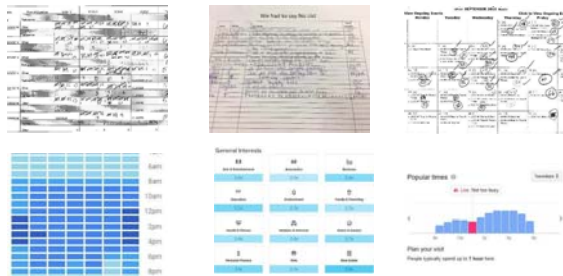
Environmental scanning

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" by Tim Green is licensed under CC BY 2.0
Otley, West Yorkshire, England

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
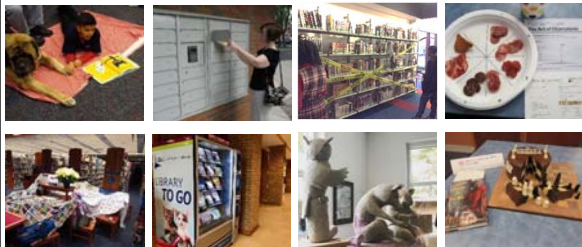
Photos by Worthington Libraries, used with permission

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Thank you!

Questions and Discussion

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