



## 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

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[@LynnConnaway](#)



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### User Studies

Libraries are impacted by the ways in which individuals engage with technology, how they seek, access, contribute, and use information, and how and why they demonstrate these behaviors and do what they do. We're collaborating with librarians to shape their services around a set of expectations that have been influenced by consumer technologies and modern research and learning environments. By providing the library community with behavioral evidence about individuals' perceptions, habits, and requirements, we can ensure that the design of future library services is all about the user. Our efforts are amplified by strategic partnerships and focus in these four areas:

Overview All Theme Projects Recent Reports

#### Embedding the library in community workflows

Understanding the needs of current and potential users, characterizing and evaluating the digital services libraries provide them, and proposing changes that will deliver library services where people do their work.

Recent work:

- [Shaping the Library in the Life of the User: Addressing, Empowering, Partnering, Engaging](#)
- [The Library in the Life of the User: Engaging with People Where They Live and Learn](#)
- [E-Research and Data: Opportunities for Library Engagement](#)

#### Engaging individuals in context

Understanding what motivates individuals to engage in information environments, defining the expectations researchers have in these environments, and proposing library responses to connect them to library services.

Recent work:

- [The Many Faces of Digital Visitors and Residents: Facets of Online Engagement](#)

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## 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?

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## 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

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## 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.acrl.org/press/als.org/acrl/files/content/Issues/value/vsl\\_report.pdf](http://www.acrl.org/press/als.org/acrl/files/content/Issues/value/vsl_report.pdf)

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## 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*, 38(3), 225-231.

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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

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## 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

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## 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



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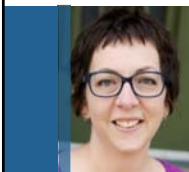
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## Leveraging What You Know and Filling in the Gaps



### Kara Reuter

Digital Library Manager,  
Worthington Libraries (OH)

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## Informal assessment



Anecdotes  
Casual observation  
Majority of one

*Fine for certain  
circumstances...*

"Suggestion Box" by John Pavolka, is licensed under CC BY 2.0

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## Formal assessment



Data driven  
Evidence based  
Accepted methods  
Recognized as rigorous  
Generalizable

"Lego Alien DNA extractor @corams" by Paul Hartog, is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

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## Goal of assessment



Understand a phenomenon  
Build meaning  
Take a snapshot  
Tell a story

"Building blocks" by Eitan Mazar, is licensed under CC BY 2.0

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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

\*Steps by Phil Whitehouse is licensed under CC BY 2.0 Valparaiso, Chile

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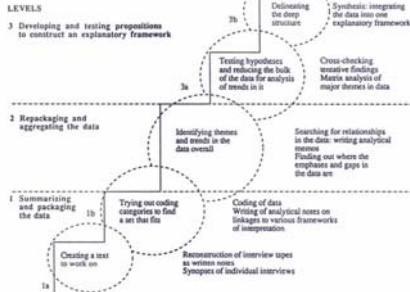
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## Process

### 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. 52]

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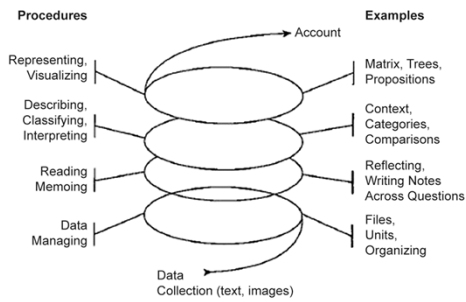
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## Process

### 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)

"FOCUS" by Jan Fassel is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0  
Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, Rhode Island

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## Define the problem

User in context



"Family is Looking Up" by Troy Tolley is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0 Paris, Indiana

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## Define the problem

Community perspective



"Community," by Rebecca Siegel is licensed under CC BY 2.0

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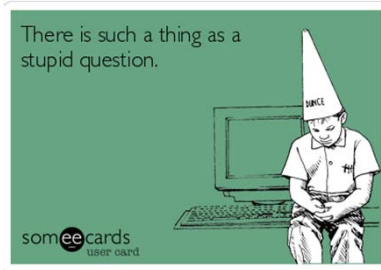
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## Define the problem

Ask the right question(s)



Kara Reuter, There is such a thing as a stupid question <https://www.someecards.com/usercards> (now defunct)

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## Environmental scanning



Existing data sources  
Other research

"newspaper reading" by [bala](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

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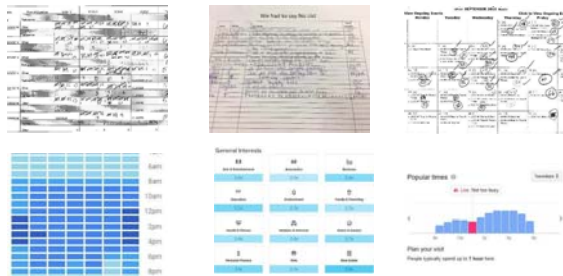
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## Environmental scanning

Existing data sources



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## 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

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## 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?

"End" by Eric Fischer is licensed under CC BY 2.0 San Francisco, California

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## What could go wrong?



"What went wrong?" by Jerry McFarland, Licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

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## Conclusion

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

People envisioned more of what the library already does.

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## We can fix this!



The Tool Box\* by Tim Green is licensed under CC BY 2.0  
Olney, West Yorkshire, England

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## The question

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

One thing that would make my life better...

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## The data

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

One thing that would make my life better...



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## 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

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## 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.

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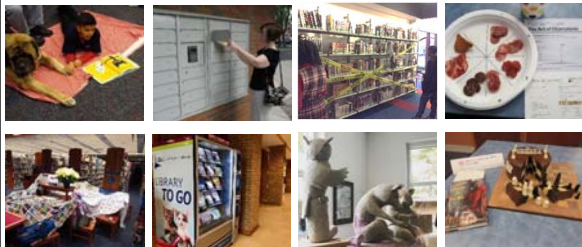
## Impacts and Outcomes

Affection

Freedom

Fantasy

Food



Photos by Worthington Libraries, used with permission

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Thank you!

## Questions and Discussion

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## 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>



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# Series Learner Guide

**Worksheet Series: Evaluating and Sharing Your Library's Impact**  
Learner Guide

**Series Overview** Explore your library's impact by using a variety of methods to collect, analyze, and share data. This series includes a variety of resources to help you get started.

**Part 1: Overview (Assessments, Data, Tools, and Tools of the Trade)**

This section introduces you to the series and provides an overview of the assessment tools and data collection methods that you will use throughout the series. You will also learn how to build a data-driven culture in your library.

**Part 2: Data Collection (Assessments, Data, Tools, and Tools of the Trade)**

This section provides an overview of the assessment tools and data collection methods that you will use throughout the series. You will also learn how to build a data-driven culture in your library.

**Part 3: Data Analysis (Assessments, Data, Tools, and Tools of the Trade)**

This section provides an overview of the assessment tools and data collection methods that you will use throughout the series. You will also learn how to build a data-driven culture in your library.

**Part 4: Data Sharing (Assessments, Data, Tools, and Tools of the Trade)**

This section provides an overview of the assessment tools and data collection methods that you will use throughout the series. You will also learn how to build a data-driven culture in your library.

**Resources Section**

**Existing Data Sources**

**Public Libraries**

This section provides an overview of the assessment tools and data collection methods that you will use throughout the series. You will also learn how to build a data-driven culture in your library.

**Part 1: Overview (Assessments, Data, Tools, and Tools of the Trade)**

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**Part 2: Data Collection (Assessments, Data, Tools, and Tools of the Trade)**

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**Part 3: Data Analysis (Assessments, Data, Tools, and Tools of the Trade)**

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**Part 4: Data Sharing (Assessments, Data, Tools, and Tools of the Trade)**

This section provides an overview of the assessment tools and data collection methods that you will use throughout the series. You will also learn how to build a data-driven culture in your library.

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!

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