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
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!
• **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
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 two areas:

**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 to the Life of the User: Adapting, Empowering, Partnering, Engaging](#)
- [The Library in the Life of the User: Engaging with People Where They Live and Learn](#)
- [F-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](#)
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…

“Suggestion Box” by John Pavelka, is licensed under CC BY 2.0
Formal assessment

Data driven
Evidence based
Accepted methods
Recognized as rigorous
Generalizable
Goal of assessment

Understand a phenomenon
Build meaning
Take a snapshot
Tell a story

“building blocks” by Elisa Maser is licensed under CC BY 2.0
1. Define the problem
2. Environmental scanning
3. Prepare the plan
4. Collect data
5. Analyze data
6. Interpret and report
Process

Data analysis spiral

Procedures

- Representing, Visualizing
- Describing, Classifying, Interpreting
- Reading Memoing
- Data Managing

Examples

- Matrix, Trees, Propositions
- Context, Categories, Comparisons
- Reflecting, Writing Notes Across Questions
- Files, Units, Organizing

Data Collection (text, images)

Define the problem

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

User in context

“Family Is Looking Up” by Troy Tolley is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0 Peru, Indiana
Define the problem

Community perspective
Define the problem

Ask the right question(s)

There is such a thing as a stupid question.

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

#libdata4impact
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?

"What went wrong??" by Jerry McFarland, Licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0
What’s your vision for the library’s future?
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
Questions and Discussion

#libdata4impact

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Thank you!
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