2011


Sarah Passonneau

Iowa State University, spassonn@iastate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/libreports

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation

http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/libreports/2
Library Assessment Trends Report

2010-2011

Introduction
The field of library assessment continues to grow. The annual Library Assessment Trends Report provides a brief synopsis of the more important trends in library assessment. It is hoped these brief reports will facilitate the Dean of the Library’s understanding of assessment trends. These reports provide information that supports data driven decisions. Additionally, the reports are an outreach method that supports a greater institutional understanding of library assessment. Library assessment supports strategic planning, improved processes, and a greater understanding of our users’ needs.

Web Analytics
Web analytic tools continue to be important for libraries interested in making data driven decisions. Google Analytics (GA) is a popular tool. Many academic libraries use GA. For a variety of reasons this library does not use GA except for a few select pages.

Like any web analytics tool GA numbers are not exact. Issues related to terminology definitions, and data collection practices, make web analytics data less than 100% accurate. This library created a web analytics page using LibStats. The graphics for this application are less impressive than GA. The IT staff understands and can explain the issues and strengthens of LibStats while the strengths and weaknesses of GA are unclear.

The collaboration between the Associate Director of IT and the Assistant to the Dean makes the implementation of LibStats into a graphical interface a positive move in assisting the library in culling and using its library website statistics to inform data driven decisions.

Data Aggregators
Academic libraries’ interest in finding a good tool to gather data has spawned the development of data aggregator packages. The packages facilitate the gathering and/or generating of library data. The most well-known library data aggregator packages are LogiXML, Counting Opinions, and ACRLMetrics.

LogiXML gathers several different data sources and facilitates the manipulation and comparison of various data sets. LMS, ARL statistics, and public services data can be uploaded on a LogiXML server. This is an expensive application renewed annually. Libraries that have implemented this product are Texas Tech., Purdue, and New York University.

Counting Opinions is a suite of applications that includes LibSat, LibPAS, and Libraries411.com. LibSat and Libraries411.com focus on public library needs. LibPAS provides a variety of applications that allows a user to gather, access and report data. This service is less expensive than LogiXML and is renewed annually. A list of library customers includes Rutgers University, Texas Tech University, University of Alberta, University of Denver, University of Richmond, and University of Toronto Libraries.

ACRLMetrics provides longitudinal data, from 2000 to the present, for academic libraries. This product uses ACRL and NCES statistics. A user can generate a variety of reports and simple graphs. It is possible to compare data between peer libraries. This product is renewed annually. The present cost is $200 a year.

Library data aggregator packages are gaining momentum. ACRLMetrics is the only package created specifically for academic libraries. If ISU Library were to purchase a package, I would recommend ACRLMetrics.
Ethnographic Studies
Libraries use ethnographic methods for assessing library users’ needs. ACRL sponsored a continuing education class in the summer of 2010. The class was titled “Know Your Users: Employing Ethnographic Methods in User Needs Research and Library Assessment.” Libraries employ ethnographic methods because the methods are easy to implement.

Some studies ask students to keep a journal detailing their library use and research practices. Others employ in-depth observational studies, interviews, and/or recording student behaviors. The potential to gather quick and meaningful data about library users is important for ISU library. Additionally, there is potential for ISU library to partner with educational or psychology faculty. If ISU wanted to focus on knowing what users are doing inside and outside the library related to research, an ethnographic study using education or psychology students would allow for a powerful collaboration.

Value Added
Megan Oakleaf, with ACRL support, wrote “Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report.” The purpose of the report is to inform

“leaders and the academic community with 1) a clear view of the current state of the literature on value of libraries within an institutional context, 2) suggestions for immediate “Next Steps” in the demonstration of academic library value, and 3) a “Research Agenda” for articulating academic library value. It strives to help librarians understand, based on professional literature, the current answer to the question, “How does the library advance the missions of the institution?”

The 182 page report published in fall of 2010 is an essential read for any librarian interested in assessment. Oakleaf focuses on the impact value and the financial value libraries bring to their parent institution. Additionally, the report reviews value research that examines school, public, and special libraries.

The “Academic Library Value Checklist” is a useful guide for assessment activities. The checklist will inform assessments related to user groups, the library strategic plan, and service centers. Appendix A is a copy of the “Academic Library Value Checklist”
APPENDIX A-ACADEMIC LIBRARY VALUE CHECKLIST

Outcomes

☐ Define library outcomes in the context of institutional mission.
☐ Map library outcomes to institutional, department, and student affairs outcomes as well as accreditation guidelines.

Data Management

☐ Create a library assessment plan.
☐ Conduct an institutional impact audit (Oakleaf, Are They Learning? 2011). Conduct an existing data audit.
☐ Develop or purchase an assessment management system.
☐ Populate the assessment management system with outcomes and available data.
☐ Develop systems to track individual user behavior (after removing personally identifiable information from data to protect user privacy).
☐ Organize and present assessment results in ways that resonate with stakeholders (MacEachern, 2001).

Student Enrollment

☐ Collect data demonstrating the library's role in recruiting prospective students and matriculating admitted students.

Student Retention and Graduation Rates

☐ Collect data demonstrating the library's role in retaining students until graduation.
☐ Pair institutional retention and graduation data with academic library data (e.g., NCES IPEDS data, National Student Clearinghouse data, Academic Library Survey data).

Student Success

☐ Collect data demonstrating the library's role in helping students do well in internships, secure job placements, earn salaries, gain acceptance to graduate/professional schools, or obtain marketable skills.

Student Achievement

☐ Collect data demonstrating the library's role in contributing to student GPA or professional/educational test scores.
☐ Conduct test audits; identify test items that measure information literacy skills.

Student Learning

☐ Collect data demonstrating the library's role in producing student learning.
☐ Conduct "help" studies targeting various user groups.
☐ Review course and co-curricular content to analyze the integration of library services and resources into student learning environments.
☐ Use products like MINES for Libraries to determine what library services and resources enable students to do.
☐ Participate in higher education assessment initiatives like the AAC&U VALUE rubric assessment project.
☐ Assess student learning using authentic, integrated, performance assessments - with results recorded and organized in assessment management systems.
Student Experience, Attitude, and Perception of Quality
- Collect data demonstrating the library’s role in improving student experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of quality.
- Integrate library services and resources into high-impact practices.
- Augment national engagement surveys with information literacy or library questions.
- Augment senior and alumni surveys with information literacy or library questions (MacEachern, 2001).

Faculty Research Productivity
- Collect data demonstrating the library’s role in supporting faculty research productivity.
- Investigate the library's role in assisting faculty to gain tenure and higher education professionals to attain promotion.
- Use products like MINES for Libraries to determine what library services and resources enable faculty to do.

Faculty Grants
- Collect data demonstrating the library's role in developing faculty grant proposals.
- Conduct citation analysis of institutional grant proposals focusing on the role of the library in providing cited resources.

Faculty Teaching
- Collect data demonstrating the library's role in enriching faculty teaching.
- Document integration of library services and resources into faculty teaching (e.g., guest lectures, online tutorials, and LibGuides) and collaborations with faculty on curriculum, assignment, and assessment design.

Institutional Reputation or Prestige
- Collect data demonstrating the library's role in augmenting institutional reputation or prestige.
- Document how library services and resources help recruit faculty, earn awards, impact institutional rank, and support institutional engagement in service to their communities.

Library and Institutional Leaders
- Communicate clear expectations regarding assessment (Keeling, et al. 2008, 94).
- Integrate assessment into planning, budget, and reward structures. Communicate how the library and information literacy fits into broader strategic initiatives (Saunders, Future of Information Literacy 2009, 110)
- Dedicate assessment personnel.
- Provide resources for assessment efforts and professional development. Create regular collaborative opportunities for employees from different units (Keeling, et al 2008, 94)
- Communicate assessment results to stakeholders.

Higher Education Conversations
- Participate in Tuning USA, NILOA, VSA, VFA, U-CAN, and AHELO initiatives. Attend and present at higher education assessment conferences; publish in higher education assessment Journals.
- Provide liaison librarian services to key institutional decision makers. Engage in institutional accreditation processes.
☐ Work to infuse information literacy into accreditation guidelines. Encourage academic library journals to become indexed in databases that include higher education literature and vice versa
☐ Encourage academic library conferences to include presentations and proceedings in library literature databases.

Financial Perspective
☐ Collect evidence to demonstrate excellent management of financial resources.
☐ Demonstrate financial value of services and resources (e.g., special collections).
☐ Capture library value data that can be expressed in financial terms (e.g., grant funding or faculty time saved).

Professional Development
☐ Inventory librarian assessment skills (Oakleaf, Are They Learning? 2011). Encourage attendance at ACRL Assessment Immersion or the ARL Library Assessment Conference.
☐ Engage in professional development (e.g., invite consultants, participate in webinars, and establish assessment resource collections).
☐ Replicate research on library value included in this report.
☐ Investigate areas of library value included the Research Agenda.