



Measuring the impact of new library services

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Impact / outcome

- *Outcomes are the results of library use as affecting the individual user*
- *Impact shows not the quality of the service, but the "quality" of individuals in consequence of using the service*





Impact / outcome of cultural institutions

- *knowledge*
- *information literacy*
- *academic or professional success*
- *social inclusion*
- *individual well-being*





Impact / outcome of library services

- *changes in skills and competences*
- *changes in attitudes and behaviour*
- *changes in the structure of the library's clientele*
- *higher social inclusion*
- *higher success in research, study, or profession*



Impact of a library's services on the outcomes of its parent institution

Outcomes of universities

- *recruitment and retention of students*
- *recruitment and retention of excellence*
- *effective teaching*
 - *high graduation rates*
 - *high grades in examinations*
 - *high employment rates after exit*
- *effective research*
 - *high renown and use of research results and publications*
 - *renown of faculties and research groups*
 - *high amount of special grants*
 - *awards, honours*

The library can support nearly all of these goals



Reasons for measuring impact of new services

accountability

- special funding needed: evidence of positive effects
- results-based budgeting
- justifying investment into change

management of resources

- rising expenses for new services
- higher workload when introducing new services
- increasing demand for new services
- new allocation of resources necessary

promotion of the library's role

- communication of benefits



New services

(includes services replacing or complementing traditional services)

Electronic services (examples)

- regional/national catalogue databases
- portals
- online ordering and delivery
- personalized services
- online reference
- digitized collections
- electronic publishing
- online self-paced training
- Internet access via the library

New non-electronic services (examples)

- group work areas
- study landscapes for problem-based learning



Methods of measuring impact of new services

Problems of measuring

- Most tested methods are **time-consuming**
- Data not available because of data protection rules
- Results of project not comparable because of different data collection methods
- Services have different impact for different user groups
- It is difficult to measure impact because of different competences or behaviour are involved

**Influences
on
individuals
are diverse**



Methods of measuring impact of new services

1

Use statistics as measures of impact

- **new electronic media**

- frequency of use

Users are familiar with the use of electronic resources and services

(searches, downloads)

before and after introducing

new service (e.g. online delivery)

- **change in traditional services**

- **change in remote use**

- **number of new users**

- that had not used the library

- that had not used the same service in traditional form

- **percentage of the primary user group using electronic services**



Methods of measuring impact of new services

2

Qualitative measures

- **Asking users:** print or online surveys, focus groups, interviews
 - What knowledge have they gained?
 - Use of services (frequency)
 - Did they find the new service useful?
 - What problems?
 - Did they get training for a new service? useful?
 - Have they improved skills by using a new service?

Exit surveys
most useful



Methods of measuring impact of new services

2

Qualitative measures

- **Asking academic teachers**

- Do new services support teaching and research?
- Do they encourage students to use new services?
- For what purpose do they use

- **Asking library staff**

- What help do users need for wh
- Was there a change of skills after the introduction of a new service?

Anecdotal evidence



Methods of measuring impact of new services

3

Other methods

- **tests:** can assess user skills before and after training on a new service
- **performance monitoring:** can document changes in service use
- **performance monitoring:** can document changes in service use
- **"user surveys":** can report on failures or success and improvements they perceived in their skills

expected outcomes – according to goals
unexpected outcomes

analysis of documents and bibliographies compiled by users: Is there a change in

- resources used
- accuracy of citations
- number of electronic resources cited?



Implementing a regional portal for academic libraries

Methods used: use statistics, surveys of academics

Statistical results

Higher percentage of external users

Higher use of most electronic resources

Survey results: Academics said they

change of competences, attitudes, behaviour

- became acquainted with new resources
- used more interdisciplinary search
- integrated the portal into teaching



Opening a group learning area

Methods used: use statistics

Statistical results

Physical visits to the library have increased

change in attitudes, behaviour, personal well-being

- work more frequently in the library
- work more frequently in groups
- learn from group members who attended library training on electronic services
- find working in the library more attractive



Changing the journal collection to electronic form

Methods used: use statistics, survey to faculty

Statistical results

- online versions were accessed 10 times more
- usage of an online article 5.4 times cheaper
- high decline in print usage
- remote use increased
- physical library visits decreased

change of attitudes and behaviour

- In 1998 a number of academics were sceptical as to E-journals
- In 2002 it was exceptional for faculty staff not to use the electronic version



Implementation of an inquiry-based instruction program

Method used:
Analysis of bibliographies in students' research papers

Results of the analysis

- increase in citation of scholarly journals
- no significant differences in topics
 - accuracy of citation
 - currency of resources
 - competence of judging

higher awareness of scholarly journals



Impact of new services on the library

Changes in organization and resource allocation

- investment of funds, room, staff time
- staff training
- user training
- change of workflows
- changes in organizational structure

Replacement of traditional by electronic services: possible improvements in

- speed of delivery
- accuracy of delivery
- ease of access
- relevance for users
- market penetration



Impact of new services on the library

Impact on costs

- Probably transforming a service from traditional to electronic form will not reduce costs
- But: Higher use will reduce cost-per-use

Impact on traditional services

- possible decrease in
 - circulation
 - copying
 - physical visits
- may be counterbalanced by
 - comfortable surroundings in the library
 - group working areas
 - good in-house IT equipment



eVALUeD: in "evidence base", University of Central England: Toolkit for evaluating electronic information services

<http://www.evalued.uce.uk/index.htm>

IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services): outcome-based evaluation of projects

<http://www.imls.gov/index.htm>

ARL New Measures Initiative: several projects

- Learning outcomes
- Higher education outcomes research review
- MINES (Measuring the impact of networked electronic services)

<http://www.arl.org/stats/newmeas/index.html>



IBEC: Information School of the University of Washington and University of Michigan School of Information: Toolkit for assessing the impact of information in communities

<http://ibec.ischool.washington.edu/default1024.aspx>

SCONUL and LIRG (Library and Information Research Group): impact initiative and mailing list

<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/archives/lis-impact.html>

IFLA Section Statistics and Evaluation: working group on outcome/impact; bibliography of literature and projects worldwide

<http://www.ulb.uni-muenster.de/outcome.html>



**Don't throw away the old bucket until you know
whether the new one holds water.**

Swedish Proverb

**A new broom sweeps clean,
but an old broom knows the corners.**

Virgin Islander Proverb

**Men learn little from success,
but much from failure.**

Arabian Proverb

**To change and to improve
are two different things.**

German Proverb

**No matter how much the world
changes, **cats** will never lay eggs.**

Bambara Proverb

