PROCEEDINGS OF THE
2008 LIBRARY ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE
BUILDING EFFECTIVE, SUSTAINABLE, PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT
AUGUST 4-7, 2008
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
LIBRARY

ASSOCIATION OF
RESEARCH LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY OF
WASHINGTON
Libraries
PROCEEDINGS OF THE
2008 LIBRARY ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE
BUILDING EFFECTIVE, SUSTAINABLE, PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT
AUGUST 4-7, 2008
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

EDITED BY
STEVE HILLER, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
KRISTINA JUSTH, ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES
MARTHA KRYRILLIDOU, ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES
JIM SELF, UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
Conference Overview

The 2008 Library Assessment Conference: Building Effective, Sustainable, Practical Assessment took place from August 4-7, 2008, on the campus of the University of Washington in Seattle. Interest in library assessment continues to grow and we were immensely gratified to see an increase in the number of registrants from 220 at the 2006 Conference in Charlottesville to 380 in Seattle! Indeed, participants were a part of the largest library assessment conference ever held—coming from 43 US states and Puerto Rico, 6 Canadian provinces, and 4 continents outside North America.

The exhilarating program included four days of presentations, workshops, engaging speakers, poster sessions, and many opportunities for informal discussion. Of course, the conference would not be possible without the contributions of our speakers, presenters and workshop leaders.

Among the conference highlights were:
- an opening keynote session featuring three University Librarians who are known for their forward looking and challenging perspectives: Betsy Wilson (U. of Washington), Rick Luce (Emory), Susan Gibbons (Rochester);
- a plenary session on evaluating quality with Paul Gregutt, noted Northwest wine author and columnist;
- the conference reception set in the stunning Olympic Sculpture Park against the backdrop of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains;
- and career recognition awards to three pioneers in library assessment: Amos Lakos, Shelley Phipps, and Duane Webster.

We view participants’ commitment to library assessment as critical to the process of demonstrating the impact and connection of the library to the research, teaching, and learning process. One of our primary goals has been to nurture and grow a library assessment community that serves as a catalyst and supports libraries in evaluating and measuring their contributions to the broader organization. This volume is testimony to the growth of that community and the diverse approaches used effectively in library assessment.

Other activities beyond the Library Assessment Conference that support the assessment learning community include:
- Library Assessment Forum—A community gathering organized by the Association of Research Libraries that takes place twice a year in conjunction with the American Libraries Association meetings (usually held on Fridays from 1:30pm to 3:00pm). Information on the Forum can be found at: http://www.arl.org/stats/statsevents/laforum/index.shtml.
- Library Assessment Blog—Post-conference discussion on library assessment issues takes place in the Library Assessment Blog. Discussion focuses on activities that seek to measure the library’s impact on teaching, learning, and research, as well as initiatives that seek to identify user needs or gauge user perceptions or satisfaction. The overall goal of these discussions is the data-based and user-centered continuous improvement of our collections and services. For more information or to join, go to http://libraryassessment.info.
- ARL-ASSESS E-mail List—This e-mail list is a communication mechanism for those individuals interested in ARL’s work to support a learning community of people
interested in assessment. For more information or to join, go to https://mx2.arl.org/Lists/ARL-ASSESS/List.html.

- Building "Effective, Sustainable, and Practical Library Assessment"—With the assistance of Visiting Program Officers Steve Hiller (University of Washington) and Jim Self (University of Virginia), ARL established a service for helping libraries develop effective, sustainable, and practical assessment activities. The service involves a site visit to each participating library, a report to each library with recommendations on practical and sustainable assessment, and follow-up assistance in implementing the recommendations. For more information, go to http://www.arl.org/stats/initiatives/esp/index.shtml.

- Service Quality Evaluation Academy—The Service Quality Evaluation Academy, originally established as an outcome from the widespread success of LibQUAL+®, addresses a community-wide need for new strategies and methods of library assessment by pursuing the following goals: (1) enhance the pool of librarians with advanced assessment skills by teaching quantitative and qualitative methods for assessing and improving outcomes and service quality; (2) create an infrastructure for libraries to design and develop outcomes-based library assessment programs; and (3) build capacity for assessment through advocating its use and providing model programs and projects to the broader library and museum communities. For more information, go to http://www.arl.org/stats/statsevents/sqacademy/index.shtml.

- The 2010 Library Assessment Conference will take place in the Washington, DC-area. Program information may be found online at http://www.libraryassessment.org.

Finally, we express our deep appreciation to the sponsoring organizations—Association of Research Libraries, University of Virginia Library, and the University of Washington Libraries—for their unstinting commitment to and support of assessment and this conference.

We look forward to seeing the community gather together again in 2010.

Best regards,
Steve Hiller, University of Washington, Conference Co-Chair
Martha Kyrillidou, Association of Research Libraries, Conference Co-Chair
Jim Self, University of Virginia, Conference Co-Chair

And the rest of the 2008 Conference Planning Committee:
Colleen Cook, Texas A&M University
Francine DeFranco, University of Connecticut
Margaret Martin Gardiner, University of Western Ontario
Debra Gilchrist, Pierce College
Irene Hoffman, OCLC Eastern
Kristina Justh, Association of Research Libraries
Megan Oakleaf, Syracuse University
Joan Stein, Carnegie Mellon University
Stephen Town, University of York
Stephanie Wright, University of Washington
Announcement

2010 Library Assessment Conference

The Association of Research Libraries, the University of Virginia Library, and the University of Washington Libraries are once again pleased to announce that the next Library Assessment Conference will be held in fall 2010 in the Washington, DC area.

The Call for Papers will be in October 2009.

Forthcoming information available at: http://www.libraryassessment.org
Contents
(as presented during the conference program)

Plenary Session
Keynote Panel and Reaction: The Most Important Challenge for Library Assessment…1

Broadening Library Assessment to Understand the “Why” ........................................3
Susan Gibbons, University of Rochester, USA

Raising the Assessment Bar: A Challenge to Our Community ..................................7
Rick Luce, Emory University, USA

Accelerating Relevance ................................................................................................13
Betsy Wilson, University of Washington, USA

Views from a Developing Country ..............................................................................17
Joan Rapp, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Reaction .......................................................................................................................21
Stephen Town, University of York, UK

E-Metrics
Measuring the Impact of Networked Electronic Resources: Developing an
Assessment Infrastructure for Libraries, State, and Other Types of Consortia .............25
Terry Plum, Simmons College, USA; Brinley Franklin, University of Connecticut,
USA; Martha Kyrillidou, Gary Roebuck, and MaShana Davis, Association of
Research Libraries, USA

Building Frameworks of Organizational Intelligence: Strategies and Solutions
from the Stemming Penn Libraries Data Farm Project ...........................................37
Joseph Zucca, University of Pennsylvania, USA

Place
LibQUAL+® and the Evolution of “Library as Place” at Radford University,
2001-2008 ..................................................................................................................43
Eric Ackermann, Radford University, USA

Using Evidence for Library Space Planning ..............................................................51
Michael Crumpton and Kathryn Crowe, University of North Carolina at
Greensboro, USA

Wayfinding Revisited: Improved Techniques for Assessing and Solving Usability
Problems in Physical Spaces .......................................................................................65
David Larsen and Agnes Tatarka, University of Chicago, USA
### Methods

**Under New Management: Developing a Library Assessment Program at a Small Public University**

Karen Jensen, Anne Christie, Lisa Lehman, and Diane Ruess, University of Alaska Fairbanks, USA

**In Our Visitors’ Footsteps: Using a “Visitor Experience” Project to Assess Services and Facilities at the Library of Virginia**

Suzy Szasz Palmer, The Library of Virginia, USA

**Standardized Survey Tools for Assessment in Archives and Special Collections**

Elizabeth Yakel, University of Michigan, USA; and Helen Tibbo, University of North Carolina, USA

### Information Literacy I

**Assessing Information Competence of Students Using iSkills™: A Commercially-available, Standardized Instrument**

Stephanie Brasley, California State University, USA; Penny Beile, University of Central Florida, USA; and Irvin Katz, Educational Testing Service, USA

**Measuring Student Information Literacy Learning Outcomes: Using the Program Review Process to Gather Evidence of Learning**

Gabriela Sonntag, California State University San Marcos, USA

### Assessment in LIS Education

**Assessment in LIS Education**

Megan Oakleaf, Syracuse University, USA; and Karin de Jager, University of Cape Town, South Africa

### Collections

**Use and Non-use of Choice-reviewed Titles: A Comparison between Undergraduate and Research Libraries**

Michael Levine-Clark, University of Denver, USA; and Margaret Jobe, University of Colorado at Boulder, USA

**Library Strategy in the Transition Away from Print**

Roger Schonfeld, Ithaka, USA

### Management Information

**Assessment-based Strategies for Building Connections with Academic Departments**

Yvonne Belanger, Duke University, USA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library Investment Index—Why Is It Important?</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brinley Franklin, University of Connecticut, USA; Colleen Cook, Texas A&amp;M University, USA; Martha Kyrillidou, Association of Research Libraries, USA; and Bruce Thompson, Texas A&amp;M University and Baylor College of Medicine, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-based Management: Assessment to Plan to Budget to Action</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie Epperson and Gary Pitkin, University of Northern Colorado, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Literacy II</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Cycle or Circular File: Do Academic Librarians Use Information Literacy Assessment Data?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan Oakleaf, Syracuse University, USA; and Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voices of Authentic Assessment: Stakeholder Experiences Implementing Sustainable Information Literacy Assessments</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Bussett, University of Washington Bothell/Cascadia Community College, USA; and Sue Phelps and Karen Diller, Washington State University Vancouver, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Methods</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personas and a User-centered Visioning Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zsuzsa Koltay and Kornelia Tancheva, Cornell University, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterns of Culture: Re-aligning Library Culture with User Needs</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Turner, Syracuse University, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing Methods, Bridging Gaps: An Ethnographic Approach to Understanding Students</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Todd White, James Madison University, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Culture I</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees as Customers Judging Quality: A Quality Focus for Enhancing Employee Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Harer, East Carolina University, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward Transformation: Using Staff Reflections on Organizational Goals, Culture, and Leadership for Organizational Assessment and Development</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping a Finger on the Organisational Pulse: Surveying Staff Perceptions in Times of Change</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Jordan, University of Queensland, Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data into Outcomes
Assessment for Impact: Turning Data into Tangible Results........................225
Paul Rittelmeyer, Laura Miller, and Tim Morton, University of Virginia, USA

What If We Don’t Provide the Computers?: Assessment for Reduction............235
Donna Tolson and Matt Ball, University of Virginia, USA

Turning Results into Action: Using Assessment Information to Improve Library
Performance ...........................................................................................................245
Steve Hiller and Stephanie Wright, University of Washington, USA

Statistical Data
Adding Context to Academic Library Assessment: Using the Integrated
Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for Institutional and
Comparative Statistics.................................................................253
John Cocklin, Dartmouth College, USA

Online Statistics for Asian Academic Libraries: A Pilot Project....................259
Cathie Jilovsky, CAVAL Collaborative Solutions, Australia

Making Incremental Improvements to Public Library Comparative Statistical
Practices ...........................................................................................................263
Ray Lyons, Independent Consultant, USA; and Jason Holmes, Kent State
University, USA

Impact/Evaluation
A Meta-assessment of Statewide Program Evaluations: Matching Evaluation
Methods to Program Goals.................................................................273
Jeffrey Pomerantz and Carolyn Hank, University of North Carolina at Chapel
Hill, USA; Charles McClure and Jordon Andrade, Florida State University,
USA; and Jessica McGilvray, American Library Association, USA

Research Evaluation: Changing Roles for Libraries?..............................283
Patricia Brennan, Thomson Reuters, Scientific, USA

Student Research Behavior: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Findings
Presented with Visualizations.................................................................289
Daniel Wendling, National Library of Medicine, USA; Travis Johnson, Librarian,
USA; and Neal Kaske, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, USA

LibQUAL+®
Item Sampling in Service Quality Assessment Surveys to Improve Response Rates
and Reduce Respondent Burden: The “LibQUAL+® Lite” Example....................307
Bruce Thompson, Texas A&M University and Baylor College of Medicine,
USA; Martha Kyrillidou, Association of Research Libraries, USA; and Colleen
Cook, Texas A&M University, USA
Contents

Does Size Matter? The Effect of Resource Base on Faculty Service Quality
Perceptions in Academic Libraries.................................................................317
   Damon Jaggars, Columbia University, USA; Shanna Smith, Teachers
   College, Columbia University, USA; and Fred Heath, University of Texas at
   Austin, USA

Bench-marking on a National Scale: The 2007 LibQUAL+® Canada Experience....323
   Sam Kalb, Queen’s University, Canada

Organizational Culture II
Keeping Assessment Results on the Radar: Responsibility for Action............331
   Margaret Martin Gardiner, The University of Western Ontario, Canada

Collaborative Design and Assessment: Learning ´With and For´ Users.............337
   Mary Somerville, University of Colorado Denver, USA

Creating a Culture of Assessment: Cascadia Community College Student and
Faculty Focus Groups...................................................................................347
   Amanda Hornby and Julie Planchon Wolf, University of Washington
   Bothell/Cascadia Community College, USA

Plenary Session
Reflections on Library Assessment: A Conversation with Duane Webster, Amos
Lakos, and Shelley Phipps.............................................................................357
   Julia Blixrud, Association of Research Libraries, USA

Reference
Using the READ Scale® (Reference Effort Assessment Data): Qualitative
Statistics for Meaningful Reference Assessment..........................................361
   Bella Karr Gerlich, Dominican University, USA; G. Lynn Berard, Carnegie
   Mellon University, USA; Jean McLaughlin, University at Albany/SUNYA, USA;
   Sue Leibold, Clarke College, USA; and Gretchen Revie, Lawrence
   University, USA

Systematic Quantitative and Qualitative Reference Transaction Assessment: An
Approach for Service Improvements ..........................................................375
   Ellie Buckley, Kornelia Tancheva, and Xin Li, Cornell University, USA

Evaluation Metrics
Building a Resource for Practical Assessment: Adding Value to Value and
Impact.............................................................................................................387
   Stephen Town, University of York, UK
Planning to Action
From Data to Action: Setting Goals to Respond to Customer Wants and Needs
Raynna Bowlby, Library management consulting, USA; and Daniel O’Mahony, Brown University, USA

Integrating Assessment and Planning: A Path to Improved Library Effectiveness
Wanda Dole, Donna Rose, Maureen James, and Suzanne Martin, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, USA

Making a Difference: From Strategic Plan to Business Plan
Susan Bailey, Eric Bymaster, Charles Forrest, and Chris Palazzolo, Emory University, USA

LibQUAL+® Comments
Analyzing LibQUAL+® Comments Using Excel: An Accessible Tool for Engaging Discussion and Action
Elizabeth Chamberlain Habich, Northeastern University, USA

Are They Really That Different?: Identifying Needs and Priorities across User Groups and Disciplines at the University of Notre Dame through LibQUAL+® Comments
Sherri Jones and Jessica Kayongo, University of Notre Dame, USA

Examining the Overlooked: Open-ended Comments from 6,108 Invalid 2007 LibQUAL+® Survey Responses
Gordon Fretwell, University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA

Applying ATLAS.ti and Nesstar Webview to the LibQUAL+® Results at UBC Library: Getting Started
Margaret Friesen, University of British Columbia, Canada

Usability
If They Build It, Will They Come?: Implementing Students’ Conceptions of an Ideal Library Home Page
Joan Stein, Carnegie Mellon University, USA

Usability Process: Measuring the Effectiveness of Facets
Kathleen Bauer, Yale University, USA

Information Literacy III
Information Competence Assessment Using First Year and Upper Division Writing Samples
Debra Hoffmann and Amy Wallace, California State University, Channel Islands, USA
Library Instruction Assessment Made Easy: Practical Tips to Get You Started without (a lot of) Training, Money, or Time ................................................................. 485
    Marvel Maring and Nora Hillyer, University of Nebraska at Omaha, USA

Digital Library
DLF Aquifer’s American Social History Online Enables Easier Searching and Use of Digital Collections ................................................................. 503
    Katherine Kott, Digital Library Federation, USA

In Search of a Standardized Model for Institutional Repository Assessment: How Can We Compare Institutional Repositories? ........................................ 511
    Charles Thomas, Florida Center for Library Automation, USA; and Robert McDonald, Indiana University, USA

Assessment Plans
Library Assessment Plans: Four Case Studies ........................................ 519
    Agnes Tatarka, University of Chicago, USA; Kay Chapa, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, USA; Xin Li, Cornell University, USA; and Jennifer Rutner, Columbia University, USA

Information Literacy IV
Assessment Immersion: An Intensive Professional Development Program for Information Literacy Assessment ........................................ 527
    Megan Oakleaf, Syracuse University, USA; Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA; Debra Gilchrist, Pierce College, USA; and Anne Zald, University of Washington, USA

Assessment Tool or Edutainment Toy: Using Clickers for Library Instruction Assessment ......................................................... 529
    Patrick Griffis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, USA

It’s Just a Click Away: Library Instruction Assessment That Works ............... 535
    Sarah Blakeslee, California State University, Chico, USA

Plenary Session
Conference Perspectives: A Look Back and a View Forward .......................... 541
    Deborah Carver, University of Oregon, USA; Paul Beavers, Wayne State University, USA; Debra Gilchrist, Pierce College, USA; Peter Hernon, Simmons College, USA; and Crit Stuart, Association of Research Libraries, USA
Abstract
Prompted by new leadership in both the library and the university, the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Rasmuson and BioSciences Libraries recently established a strategic planning process that included the creation of a general assessment program for the libraries. The library administrative team felt that it was time to assess our program and come up with a new action plan. The purpose of these efforts is to ensure that spending and staffing priorities match current user needs, to respond to university-required performance measures, and to help with strategic planning. The assessment program includes gathering library user and use data, systematic collection analysis, and implementation of an ongoing campus-wide community survey.

This paper describes how a task force of four UAF librarians recently adapted and implemented surveys of faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students, modeled on a process conceived by the University of Washington Assessment Program. The UAF libraries’ surveys yielded response rates of 25% (243/943), 19% (143/750), and 8% (431/5086) among the three groups, respectively. Included are an overview of the assessment program, the survey planning and implementation process, and a summary of results and action plan. Recommendations for conducting small-scale surveys are provided.

Introduction
The University of Alaska Fairbanks libraries recently embarked on putting together a new strategic plan, with the old plan “Rasmuson 2001” several years out of date and not encompassing the many changes in academic libraries in recent years. In keeping with the goal of creating a new document to guide library planning and development, specifically a plan more aligned with a new University-wide strategic plan (UAF 2010),1 library management decided to put together a multi-faceted library assessment program. The program would include a variety of analyses using data and information about collections, circulation, online resource use, interlibrary loan, the library science core course, citation reports, and new user surveys, and would support not only the strategic plan process but assist ongoing efforts to better allocate staff and financial resources. As with other academic libraries, we hope to move from a “culture of speculation to a culture of assessment,”2 in planning our collections and services, making library operations and decision-making more evidence-based.

Institutional Context
The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), America’s northernmost university, is the flagship campus in the University of Alaska system. Serving a vast geographic area, it includes the main campus near the city of Fairbanks, as well as 6 rural campuses, some more than 1000 miles from Fairbanks. As a land, sea, and space grant institution, UAF offers a comprehensive array of classes in science, engineering, social sciences, and arts and humanities, comprising approximately 70 undergraduate majors and 60 masters programs. The university is relatively small compared to its peer institutions with around 5000 undergraduates, awarding approximately 800 undergraduate and certificate degrees and 200 graduate degrees annually. UAF is the single doctoral granting institution in Alaska, offering 18 programs with an emphasis on science and engineering. It is the major research institution for the state, with its unique arctic and cold-weather research programs.

The Rasmuson Library is the largest library in Alaska with a collection of 1.1 million volumes and a staff of 13 librarians and 52 para-professionals. Librarians serve as liaisons to several departments, teach an introductory-level core Library Science course, and have other library management responsibilities, including collection specialties such as government documents, employee supervision, and oversight of library service areas. Most of the
librarians also have faculty tenure requirements.

The UAF libraries currently have a healthy materials budget, holding steady with small increases annually for journal price inflation. Library funding is partly dependent upon the state legislature and on enrollment; full student enrollment is a challenge, so the library budget picture can change at any time. The collections budget split is about 80% periodicals, serials, and electronic resources, and 20% monographs.

Special collections focus on Alaska and Polar Regions. In addition to traditional academic library work, the library staff and professionals create, support, and oversee a number of unique content library products: the Alaska/Polar Periodical Index, the Alaska Digital Archives, Project Jukebox—an oral history database—and the Wenger Eskimo Database; see Addendum for access to these Web treasures.

Building the Assessment Program

Data
The central component of the library’s assessment program is data. With the increasing focus in higher education on performance-based budgeting, the libraries need performance measures to satisfy administrators and legislators. Ideally, these measures will prove the library is successful in meeting its goals and quantitative data is often viewed to be more satisfactory by administrators. In an early attempt at formulating performance measures, the library selected traditional use information such as gate counts, Web page hits, and materials processed—none of which accurately measure library performance in a meaningful way for library patrons. At times these measures are even significantly misleading. For example, one night each week the library showed very high gate counts, and it wasn’t Sundays, which the night staff know anecdotally as the busiest day of the week. After examining the security camera footage of the gates, it was discovered that the custodians were vacuuming the carpets near the gate counters, tallying up a tremendous number of patrons with each pass of the machine! Obviously these gate count figures are not terribly useful and demonstrate the difficulty of using simplified quantitative means for measuring the library’s performance.

The library needed additional quantitative measures in order to form a more comprehensive approach to library assessment (Figure 1).

Quantitative data that we could readily gather and analyze included the following:

- **Electronic resource use statistics, including periodical packages, ebooks, and reference resources.** The library does not yet have an Electronic Resources Management System to assist with compilation of use statistics, but this will definitely be part of the future.

- **“Cost per use” as one measure of collections.** Although cost per use of electronic collections should not be considered in isolation from other measures, it is one more piece of information which can be factored into decision-making. These figures are obtained mainly from vendor statistics, some of which conform to COUNTER or SUSHI standards and others which don’t, so it is still challenging to accurately determine what is being measured.

- **Collection analysis data.** Collection information can be obtained through OCLC’s WorldCat Collection Analysis (WCA) tool, much more easily than was possible with the WLN conspectus, which took much more staff time and effort. This OCLC product is proving useful for a variety of ways of examining collection data.

- **Circulation data.** These data are available through integrated library system reports; the library uses Sirsi Unicorn. Circulation data can also be obtained through OCLC Circulation Analysis but the Sirsi Unicorn ILS does not function with OCLC WCA at this time.

- **Interlibrary Loan data.** These data are extracted from several sources, including reports from ILLiad, WorldCat Analysis, and the Copyright Clearance Center.

- **Journal citation data.** Web of Science is one tool that can be used to find which journals UAF researchers are publishing in and what they are citing.

Compilation and analysis of the collections assessment data now forms a large part of the Collection Development Officer’s work. These additional data provide library management with more information about user behavior in relation to collections than ever before, adding the challenge to integrate and interpret it all in a meaningful way for decision-making.

The library continues to collect gate counts, reference statistics, and evaluations of the Library Science 101 (LS 101) course.
User Feedback
The essential missing piece in the library’s expanded assessment efforts was more direct feedback and input from library users. Most critical was the need to create a comprehensive patron survey for fall 2007 to get current patron feedback. This information would help provide action items for the library’s strategic plan related to patron service and collection needs. Prior library user surveys were outdated, and none were designed for implementing more than once. With an updated survey plan, patron data would serve as the starting point for the larger “assessment program” and feed directly into the library’s new strategic plan.

The Library Dean assigned librarians from a variety of service areas needing special patron feedback including one librarian each from Collection Development, Outreach and Marketing, the Library Science Department, and the BioSciences Librarian, who heads a branch library in one of UAF’s most research-intensive subject areas. This task force of four librarians was charged with creating three separate surveys for faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates, so that in less than four months survey results could be used in the library’s spring 2008 strategic plan.

Planning the Survey
The library assessment task force evaluated a number of survey options. In an ideal situation, money and staffing would have no bearing on the design or selection of a user survey, but for the UAF libraries these items were key in the selection of a survey instrument that we could use on a regular basis to gather longitudinal data. Our prior library user surveys were all home-grown for similar reasons, but because they all contained different questions and queried the user population as a whole, these surveys offered no means of examining changes from year to year, or for analyzing different user groups and needs. They were difficult to administer in paper form and required more effort to summarize without the benefit of the online communication and Web tools now available. In the current survey, we wanted to make the most of what technology could offer to streamline the entire survey process.

Rather than reinvent the wheel with another original questionnaire and because we wanted to spend the bulk of our limited time on analysis and an action plan, we looked at library surveys that were already written including the well-known LibQUAL+® library assessment tool (LibQUAL+®, 2008). We found that LibQUAL+® did not include many of the questions we wanted to ask, and it was also more time-intensive to administer and analyze.
We wanted the granularity of knowing for example, whether or not faculty in the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences were satisfied with collections, or whether faculty and researchers in the Geophysical Institute preferred electronic or paper journals. We determined that with the unique questions we needed to include, writing our own questions was the best option. Given the library’s limitations in personnel with survey design skills, we looked for other existing surveys.

We adapted with permission, a field-tested set of surveys that the University of Washington had made available on their Library Assessment Web page.4 Questions were modified to reflect local information, and revised to ensure clarity and reduce bias. Although UAF’s final survey design has some flaws, it represents the kind of data we wished to collect.

The final drafts of the surveys were tested by volunteer library staff, faculty, and students. It became apparent that some questions were not clearly worded and needed revision. Our campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) indicated that approval was not required for the project as we were not planning to publish any results with unique identifying information. A budget was developed to cover the cost of survey software, and design and production of publicity materials, and incentive prizes.

Marketing
The first element of the public relations and promotion plan was to gain campus administrative support. Getting the word out to all segments of campus was very important in order to obtain maximum survey participation, and to reduce the tendency of users to simply delete e-mails without review, since an e-mail distribution was planned.

The Dean presented the library’s proposal to implement campus-wide surveys to the Provost’s Council and the Graduate School Dean. The task force contacted graduate school staff about their e-mail distribution list and publicizing the surveys on their Web site. The task force also notified undergraduate student government leadership about the library surveys. Before the survey was distributed, the Dean sent an e-mail message to all campus Deans and Directors asking them to encourage their faculty and students to participate. The task force contacted the faculty senate president who sent an e-mail message to faculty senators asking them to encourage their departments and colleagues to respond to the survey.

The task force targeted as many publicity points as possible including advertisements in the student newspaper and the university newsletter, table tents in the student center and the libraries, and posters in various classroom buildings; publicity was prepared by the library’s graphic designer to create an eye-catching professional product. Library liaisons were given sample e-mail messages about the surveys to adapt as they wished and asked to send these messages to the faculty and graduate students in their departments before the surveys were distributed.

The library had used prizes in previous surveys to encourage participation with great success. In this instance survey participants’ names were entered in a drawing for a 4GB iPod Nano, one Nano for each participant group. Information about the incentive was included in all survey promotions and the winners were announced with permission on the library Web page.

Implementation
The surveys were implemented online as a previous online survey of media equipment users had been successful. The online option also eliminated costs and complexities of printing, distribution, and collection of paper surveys. The media survey had been generated using a php shareware tool but the task force opted to use SurveyMonkey, a commercial Web application. This tool would allow us to quickly write, edit, modify, test and distribute a survey, and offered a number of ways to download the results for manipulation and analysis. SurveyMonkey is now widely used, and has many of the features the library needed to protect user privacy, isolate particular elements of data, and assemble the output for use in a variety of reports, all for a relatively small license fee.

The surveys were e-mailed to individual accounts in early October 2007 allowing four weeks for responses. Surveys were also made available on the library’s Web page and the Dean’s office e-mailed a reminder after two weeks.

Early survey responses indicated that the e-mail distribution method had resulted in some confusion that we had not anticipated. E-mail lists of faculty, undergraduates, and graduate students had been used but because student e-mail addresses at UAF don’t change when an undergraduate becomes a graduate student, many graduates had replied to the undergraduate
surveys. Since questions had been included which were applicable to the specific groups additional messages had to be sent to graduate students with correct survey information. A similar problem occurred with research staff on grant funding who were not part of the faculty e-mail list maintained by the computing department. Despite these problems, the surveys were successful in reaching most of campus through these various communication efforts. Some of the result errors could be eliminated in the final outcome reports through SurveyMonkey.
Response rates were 25% for faculty (243/943), 19% for graduate students (143/750), and 8% for undergraduates (431/5086)

**Reporting the Survey Results**

In order to compile aggregate survey results, the task force created PDFs from SurveyMonkey and uploaded them to a library staff wiki. Relevant individual patron comments on specific library service areas such as circulation, media equipment, Interlibrary Loan, or the BioSciences Library, were included separately, so that department managers and staff could address any problem areas and also share any positive feedback about those areas.

Most library managers have not yet taken action on the results, but, based on faculty responses indicating high interest, one manager did prioritize programming of an RSS feed for new library books. The task force is continuing to analyze comments in further detail in order to highlight priority action items.

The SurveyMonkey software provides the ability to drill down, allowing the examination of individual responses. In order to protect patron privacy, some survey comments were shared only with those who had a service-related need to know. Aggregate responses are the only information shared outside the library.

The task force wrote summary reports for each of the user groups describing the relevant data. The Dean shared survey feedback and the library’s resulting action plan with various campus organizations and groups including the Provost’s Council, Deans and Directors, the Graduate School, the university’s Research Working Group, student government leadership, and faculty governance. The summary data from SurveyMonkey were posted on the library’s Web page while the task force continues to publicize survey results publicity to campus, including an advertisement in the student newspaper describing our action plan.

**Acting on the Survey Results**

Overall, the surveys were very worthwhile and provided needed data to inform library decision-making. All three user groups expressed high satisfaction with the libraries, although there was some dissatisfaction with collections (Figure 2). Individual comments from graduate students and faculty helped create specific collection goals in order to address the perceived gaps, and it was found that some of the collection dissatisfaction was caused by a lack of patron knowledge of how to search the collections and how to make suggestions for book purchases. A greater outreach effort is necessary to address these issues.
Figure 2. Library Satisfaction Results

Another key finding was a high regard for the Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery Service which may account for the high satisfaction with the library as a whole, despite some dissatisfaction with library collections. Other results indicate that library users appreciate that reference service is available but they don’t use it much for help with term papers or other research projects. A number of undergraduate students were dissatisfied with LS 101, complaining both about the requirement and the curriculum. Some respondents were dissatisfied with services outside the library’s control such as printing and photocopying and the university’s parking system.

Surprises

Some responses in all three surveys were surprising but this information was helpful in providing greater understanding of the library’s user base as well as input necessary for planning services. For example, some faculty did not know about using RSS or search alerts in our databases and more than 25% of the faculty did not know that librarians do library instruction for classes upon request, presenting librarians with a user-education opportunity.

Defining Action Items

Both the quantitative survey results and the individual comments provided a number of actions items for inclusion in the strategic plan as well as serving as a guide for day-to-day library work. Each potential action item was weighed on several counts: how many respondents requested or commented on it, and how much money and staff time it would take to accomplish. For example, one faculty respondent commented that the library lacked current books in Scandinavian history. This observation proved to be accurate, was easy to correct and was promptly addressed. However, even though more than 50% of faculty respondents indicated a desire for an Institutional Repository (IR), due to the large scale of such a project, it will take much longer to accomplish. An IR will go on the to-do list and is included in our overall strategic plan, but may drop down in priority based on the library’s current ability to get it done. The immediate action plan (Figure 3) emphasized the “low hanging fruit.”
## Figure 3. Action Plan Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Collection Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Survey showed a majority preference for electronic content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action: Continue to expand electronic access to primary research journals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Survey showed specific collection gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action: Purchase additional specific subject materials including women’s studies, genetics and molecular biology and poetry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Service-Related Issues and Library Space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Survey showed users had problems navigating library collections and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action: Create web page FAQs explaining finding tools and emphasizing reference assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Survey showed patron desire to be better able to browse film collection (not housed in public area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action: Improve the locally designed Web DVD browser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Survey showed desire for coffee and food area in library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action: Work on plan for providing coffee in the library, starting with vending machines, moving to a coffee house when possible (added to library’s strategic plan as part of library development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Survey showed need for increased group study space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action: Still under consideration, may be part of library development effort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Strategic Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Survey showed little use of or interest in reference services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action: Create task force to review reference services and develop new service model as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Survey showed significant student dissatisfaction with Library Science 101 core course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action: Create task force to review and update curriculum and outcomes assessment measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Survey showed need for significant technological development of library services and collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action: Create library technology plan, including exploring development of an Institutional Repository</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Survey items requiring greater effort and cost, such as library coffee house, more group study, more technological expertise and equipment, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action: Create a library development professional position in order to boost funding for special projects and meet more long-term strategic goals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focusing on the Future
Continuing Analysis of 2007 Surveys
The task force continues to analyze the survey results, focusing on a more thorough consideration of responses to share with subject liaisons and individual academic departments. We may use focus groups to follow up on some of the user feedback provided in the surveys. In some cases, there wasn’t sufficient response data to analyze individual departments so the next set of surveys or user assessments will be designed to collect the missing data from these areas. For example, none of the music faculty or graduate students responded so additional effort will be made to follow up with this group.

Future Surveys
The survey instrument and specific questions were designed to be repeated every three years to allow long-range comparisons among patron groups. In order to streamline future survey efforts the task force kept notes on a wiki about changes that would be needed to improve response rates and obtain more targeted information in future surveys, as well as problems that arose as a result of the wording of survey questions.

There were several obvious issues to consider for revision in the next surveys. It was apparent that the lists of campus departments and programs used in the survey were not adequate as a number of faculty and students did not seem to identify with the official departmental names. In revising the surveys, we will need to make clear to survey takers what information is needed in defining departments and majors. This will make it possible to more accurately compare and contrast results between different groups in the same departments and programs.

Selecting appropriate rating scales with adequate granularity was also problematic for some questions. For example, it is possible that some portion of the high overall satisfaction ratings may be due to the scale selected, with no step between “Satisfied” and “Dissatisfied.” For some questions, numerical points should have been used to enable easier comparison of results from survey to survey. Results also indicated that some question wording may have been leading to particular answers.

Some obvious question content was omitted in this set of surveys and will need to be included in future assessments, such as feedback on electronic books, and more specifics on reference service needs.

In order to avoid the difficulties encountered with incomplete or inadequate campus e-mail lists, future solicitation messages will include links to all user surveys, so that users can self-select the appropriate survey. Additional user groups such as university staff and the general public, who use the library extensively yet are not core patron groups, may be included in the next survey.

The survey marketing strategy will need some improvement to increase response rates, especially from undergraduates. It is hoped that publicity about the current surveys will encourage future respondents to participate by demonstrating that library survey results are put to good use. Future surveys will be conducted in the spring semester when faculty and students new to campus will have greater familiarity with library services and collections.

Although library staff tested the draft surveys, future efforts will include more staff input before implementation. Greater staff participation should result in a better instrument as well as increased involvement of staff in marketing the project to faculty and students at key service points.

Recommendations
Following are some recommendations for smaller libraries that are considering implementing a user survey to support a library assessment program. First, take into account the survey’s purpose; what does library management need to know about your users, collections, and services? What do the library’s financial backers want to know? What is unique about the institution that requires special feedback from users? Is benchmarking needed to see how library services and collections rank against larger libraries? Are peer comparisons of interest?

Assess the amount of funding, local expertise, and staff time that will go into the effort. Although the UAF libraries opted for a home-grown survey, other libraries might do well to further research and evaluate existing survey tools such as LibQUAL+®, to see if they might provide the kind of feedback required. Devote as much time into the planning process as possible, including getting buy-in and input from all library staff; more involvement might result in greater response from library managers in using feedback to make changes in service and collection areas. Involving library staff to a significant degree could also help with
marketing the survey, as front-line staff communicates its importance to the users on a daily basis. Develop a broad-based communication plan so that survey information reaches all possible users. Ensure future participation and library staff enthusiasm by actually using the results in a viable action plan, making the surveys worth everyone’s time and effort.

—Copyright 2008 Karen Jensen, Anne Christie, Lisa Lehman, and Diane Ruess

**Addendum**

**Alaska / Polar Periodical Index**—for periodical and newspaper articles.
http://goldmine.uaf.edu/aprindex/.

Alaska’s Digital Archives—to view selected historical photographs, archival film, oral histories, rare maps, historical documents, and museum objects. http://vilda.alaska.edu/.


Wenger Eskimo Database—written literature about Inuit/Eskimo peoples. Contains nearly 200 titles—primarily books and journal articles. Best used with Internet Explorer.
http://www.wenger eskimodb.uaf.edu/.

**Endnotes**


