

College Library Statistics:

Under Review

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Purposes

- Preparing reports to administration
- Identifying areas for process improvements
- Analyzing trends for strategic planning
- Documenting changes in staff and work flows

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"Do librarians collect the appropriate statistics?"

- accurate?
- comparable among similar libraries?
- asking valid questions?

"...above all, do we know how to manipulate and interpret statistical information?"

Steve Hiller and James Self. "From Measurement to Management: Using Data Wisely for Planning and Decision-Making. *Library Trends* (Summer 2004): 129-155

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College Students' Perceptions

- 72 percent of college students begin their research with a search engine
- 2 percent of college students begin their search on the library website
- Survey sample: 396 students aged 15 to 57

Cathy DeRosa, et al., College Students' Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources. (Dublin, Ohio: OCLC, 2006) www.oclc.org/reports/perceptionscollege.htm

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Statistics collected

- Budgets
- Collections
- Services
- Staffing

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Budgets

- 1986 ACRL Standards
6% of the institutional education and general budget should be assigned to the library*
- 2004 ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education

* Frank W. Goudy. "Academic Libraries and the Six Percent Solution: A Twenty-year financial overview. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 19:4 (2003):212-215.

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Current ACRL standards

Suggested Points of Comparison: Input Measures

- Ratio of volumes to student & faculty FTE
- Ratio of volumes added per year to S&F FTE
- Ratio of material/information resource expenditure to S&F FTE
- % of total budget spent on: materials, staff, and all other operating expenses

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Inputs continued

- Ratio of students attending library instructional sessions to total number of students in targeted groups

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ACRL Standards, continued

Output Measures

- Ratio of circulation to S&F FTE
- Ratio of ILL requests to S&F FTE
- Ratio of ILL lending to borrowing
- ILL/document delivery and lending turnaround time, fill rate, and unit cost
- Ratio of reference questions to S&F FTE

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ACRL Standards as a tool

- Establishing individual goals within the context of their institutional goals
- Documenting the library's contributions to institutional effectiveness and student learning outcomes
- Suggested points of comparison for peer and longitudinal comparison, and *encourage the development of other measures* [emphasis mine]

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Collections

- Print books vs ebooks
 - Purchase or leasing
 - Ebooks – count in ratio of volumes added per year?
- Curriculum support
 - Size of collection vs. collection that supports current curriculum

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Electronic Journals

- Multiple formats, multiple counts?
- Aggregators
- Bundled subscriptions instead of single title purchases
- Usage statistics – institutional needs not for national reporting

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Libraries as publishers

Current counts in ALS:

- Books, serial backfiles and other paper materials
- E-Books
- Microforms
- Audiovisual materials
- Current serial subscriptions
- Electronic reference sources and aggregation services

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Services

Defining reference transactions

ALS: “an information contact that involves the knowledge, use, recommendation, interpretation, or instruction of one or more information sources by a member of the library staff” and includes transactions “in person, by phone, by e-mail, by the Web”

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ALS Survey on Information Literacy

Does your institution have the following or has it done the following?

- A definition of information literacy or of an information literate student
- Incorporate information literacy in the institution’s mission
- Incorporated information literacy in the institution’s strategic plan
 - An institution-wide committee to implement the strategic plan for information literacy
 - The strategic plan formally recognizes the library’s role in information literacy instruction

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More on services

- Interlibrary loan – patron initiated
- ILL processing time versus time to process a book for the collection
- Impacts on staffing

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Staffing

- Count staff positions, but not staffing changes
- New services versus demands - where do we put our energies?
- Example: Web sites
 - 2 percent of students start at the library web site
 - 48 percent end up at a library web site via a search engine
 - 10 percent felt library collection fulfilled their information needs*

*College Students’ Perceptions (OCLC, 2005)

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Inputs versus Outcomes

“the ways in which library users are changed as a result of their contact with the library’s resources and programs.”

ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education (2004)

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Purposes

- Process improvements?
- Strategic planning?
- Annual reports?
- Staffing adjustments?

Encouraged to develop new measures

Ultimate Question

***“Would you recommend
us to a friend?”****

Tom Storey, “Are you asking the ultimate question?” *NextSpace* (December 2006):
6-11.

Conclusion

**We’re encouraged to develop new
measures...let’s do it.**

Thank you!