

Selective Bibliography on Library Performance Measures

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This selective bibliography is designed to provide a sampling of the vast literature on measures of library effectiveness. This broad topic includes writings on performance measures, output measures, library effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and library statistics. The subject is closely related to library goals and objectives, against which library effectiveness is often measured. Because of the wide-ranging nature of the topic, a comprehensive bibliography is not feasible. I have chosen to concentrate on the reasons for measuring library effectiveness, specific ways in which it can be done, and how measures have been used in particular types of libraries and for particular services. Note that these categories are not mutually exclusive, thus many of the writings can fall in more than one area. I have also chosen to restrict the bibliography to relatively contemporary writings. With few exceptions, the items included were published in the 1980s.

Review Articles

These two recent review articles provide introductions to the research on performance measurement, showing the development of the topic over time. For additional information on earlier research, see Evans et al. (1972) listed in the "Methods of Analysis" section of this bibliography.

Deborah L. Goodall, "Performance Measurement: A Historical Perspective." *Journal of Librarianship* 20 (April 1988): 128-45.

Nancy A. Van House, "Output Measures in Libraries." *Library Trends* 38 (Fall 1989): 268-97.

Using Performance Measures for Management Decisions

Performance measures are not made in a vacuum. The writings by Blagden (1980), DuMont (1980) and Orr (1973) discuss the rationale for performance measurement by showing how they

may be used by library managers to assist in making decisions and in justifying those decisions. The articles by Allen (1985), Christensen (1988), and Hernon (1989) discuss the collection and uses of statistics. Young (1989) gives an overview of library statistics compiled by federal and state governments as well as by library associations and organizations.

General Introductions

John Blagden, *Do We Really Need Libraries?* New York: Clive Bingley, 1980.

Rosemary Ruhig DuMont, "A Conceptual Basis for Library Effectiveness." *College & Research Libraries* (March 1980): 103-11.

Stuart Hannabus, "The Importance of Performance Measures." *Library Review* (Winter 1987): 248-53.

R. H. Orr, "Measuring the Goodness of Library Services: A General Framework for Considering Quantitative Measures." *Journal of Documentation* 29 (September 1973): 315-32.

Library Statistics

Geoffrey G. Allen, "The Management Use of Library Statistics." *IFLA Journal* 11 (1985): 211-17.

John O. Christensen, "Use of Statistics by Librarians." *Journal of Library Administration* 9, no. 2 (1988): 85-90.

Martin M. Cummings, "Cost Analysis: Methods and Realities." *Library Administration & Management* 3 (Fall 1989): 181-83.

Peter Hernon, "Research and the Use of Statistics for Library Decision Making." *Library Administration & Management* 3 (Fall 1989): 176-80.

Peter R. Young, "U.S. Library Statistics." *Library Administration & Management* (Fall 1989): 170-75.

Methods of Analysis

This section covers specific techniques that have been used to measure library effectiveness. The "Overviews" include general discussions of a variety of measures. The "Specific Measures"

section lists studies of specific ways to measure availability of materials and the degree to which users are able to locate and gain access to them and to satisfy their information needs. Note that the articles by D'Elia (1985 and 1988) and Van House (1988) were written in response to one another and, by reading them in sequence, you can follow the debate on the usefulness of a particular measure called "fill rates."

Overviews

Rosemary Ruhig Du Mont, and Paul F. Du Mont, "Measuring Library Effectiveness: A Review and Assessment." *Advances in Librarianship* 9 (1979): 103-41.

Edward Evans, Harold Borko, and Patricia Ferguson, "Review of Criteria Used to Measure Library Effectiveness." *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* 60 (January 1972): 102-10.

Philip M. Morse, *Library Effectiveness: A Systems Approach*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968.

F. W. Lancaster, *If You Want to Evaluate Your Library*. Champaign, Ill.: Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois, 1988.

G. Travis White, "Quantitative Measures of Library Effectiveness." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 3 (July 1977): 128-36.

Specific Measures

Thompson R. Cummins, "Demand Analysis: Inputs, Outputs, Outcomes, and Productivity." *Public Libraries* 27 (Spring 1988): 10-13.

George D'Elia, "Materials Availability Fill Rates — Useful Measures of Library Performance?" *Public Libraries* 24 (Fall 1985): 106-10.

—, "Materials Availability Fill Rates: Additional Data Addressing the Question of the Usefulness of the Measures." *Public Libraries* 27 (Spring 1988): 15-23.

—, "A Response to Van House." *Public Libraries* 27 (Spring 1988): 28-31.

George D'Elia and Sandra Walsh, "User Satisfaction With Library Service: A Measure of Public Library Performance." *Library Quarterly* 53 (April 1983): 109-33.

Frederick G. Kilgour, "Toward 100 Percent Availability." *Library Journal* (November 1989): 50-53.

D. H. Revell, "'Availability' as a Performance Measure for Academic Libraries." *Journal of Librarianship* 19 (January 1987): 14-30.

Gene K. Rinkel, and Patricia McCandless, "Application of a Methodology Analyzing User Frustration." *College & Research Libraries*

(January 1983): 29-37.

W. M. Shaw Saracevic, and P. B. Kantor, "Causes and Dynamics of User Frustration in an Academic Library." *College & Research Libraries* 38 (January 1977): 7-18.

Nancy A. Van House, "In Defense of Fill Rates." *Public Libraries* 27 (Spring 1988): 25-27.

—, "A Response to D'Elia." *Public Libraries* 27 (Spring 1988): 32.

Public Libraries

Much of the work on output measures has focused on public libraries. Several manuals have been developed to aid public libraries, and these have inspired much of the discussion on the general topic of output measures. Lynch (1983) compares two of these publications, *Performance Measures for Public Libraries* (1973) and *Output Measures for Public Libraries* (1982). A second edition of *Output Measures for Public Libraries* was published in 1987. Childers and Van House (1989) show the multifaceted nature of library effectiveness by identifying sixty-one distinct indicators that can be classed into eight separate dimensions. They point out that procedures have not been developed to measure many of the most important of each indicators.

Manuals

Ernest DeProspero, et al. *Performance Measures for Public Libraries*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1973.

Nancy A. Van House, et al. *Output Measures for Public Libraries: A Manual of Standardized Procedures*. 2d ed. Chicago: American Library Association, 1987.

Douglas Zweigig, and Eleanor Jo Rodger. *Output Measures for Public Libraries*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1982.

Discussion

Thomas Childers, and Nancy Van House. "The Grail of Goodness: The Effective Public Library." *Library Journal* 14 (Oct. 1, 1989): 44-49.

Mary Jo Lynch, "Measurement of Public Library Activity: The Search for Practical Methods." *Wilson Library Bulletin* (January 1983): 388-93.

Charles R. McClure, et al., "Output Measures: Myths, Realities, and Prospects." *Public Libraries* (Summer 1986): 49-52.

Jane Robbins, and Douglas Zweigig. *Are We There Yet? Evaluating Library Collections, Reference Services, Programs, and Personnel*. Madison, Wis.: School of Library and Infor-

mation Studies, University of Wisconsin, 1988.

Terry L. Weech, "Validity and Comparability of Public Library Data: A Commentary on the Output Measures for Public Libraries." *Public Library Quarterly* 8 (1988): 7-18.

Academic and Research Libraries

Kantor (1984) provides academic libraries with a practical manual demonstrating a series of measures appropriate for evaluating academic and research libraries. A new manual by Van House et al. was published in summer 1990 and is discussed in Tiefel (1989). The article by McClure shows one of the difficulties in conducting these measures: skepticism on the part of library staff regarding the validity and uses of performance measures.

Manuals

Paul B. Kantor, *Objective Performance Measures for Academic and Research Libraries*. Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 1984.

Nancy A. Van House, et al. *Measuring Academic Library Performance: A Practical Approach*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1990.

Discussion

Mary J. Cronin, *Performance Measurement for Public Services in Academic and Research Libraries*. Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 1985.

Charles R. McClure, "A View from the Trenches: Costing and Performance Measures for Academic Library Services." *College & Research Libraries* 47 (July 1986): 323-36.

Virginia Tiefel, "Output or Performance Measures: The Making of a Manual." *College & Research Libraries News* 50 (June 1989): 475-78.

School Libraries

Evelyn H. Daniel, "Performance Measures for School Librarians: Complexities and Potential." *Advances in Librarianship* 6 (1976): 1-51.

Special Libraries

The following article stresses the importance of evaluating corporate libraries and recommends modifying public library measures for this purpose.

Charles R. McClure, and Betsy Reifsynder. "Performance Measures for Corporate Information Centers." *Special Libraries* 75 (July

1984): 193-204.

Reference Services

Evaluating reference services produces special challenges because many aspects of reference are difficult or inappropriate to quantify. These issues are discussed in the sources listed below.

Peter Hernon, "Utility Measures, Not Performance Measures, for Library Reference Service?" *RQ* 26 (Summer 1987): 449-59.

Peter Hernon, and Charles R. McClure. *Unobtrusive Testing and Library Reference Service*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1987.

Bill Katz, and Ruth A. Fraley. *Evaluation of Reference Services*. New York: Haworth Press, 1984. Also published as *The Reference Librarian* 11 (Fall/Winter 1984).

Ronald R. Powell, "Reference Effectiveness: A Review of Research." *Library and Information Science Research* (1984): 4-19.

Interlibrary Loan

Thomas J. Waldhart, "Performance Evaluation of Interlibrary Loan in the United States: A Review of Research." *Library & Information Science Research* 7 (1985): 313-31.

Cataloging

Measurement in the area of cataloging has focused on two areas, cataloging costs and the relationship between quality and quantity. The best introduction to this topic is Mandel (1988).

George Harris, "Historic Cataloging Costs." *Library Quarterly* 59 (January 1989): 1-21.

Carol A. Mandel, "Trade-offs: Quantifying Quality in Library Technical Services." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 14 (September 1988): 214-20.

Richard Reeb, "A Quantitative Method for Evaluating the Quality of Cataloging." *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly* 5 (Winter 1984): 21-26.

Counterpoint

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age each and every one of us to care enough about the job we do to do it well. You can't mandate exceptional performance, but you can achieve it with a lot of hard work and a commitment to excellence. You don't get that commitment with good performance measures, you get it with good management skills.