

Keys to Effective, Sustainable and Practical Library Assessment

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Charlottesville, Virginia

September 26, 2006

Making Library Assessment Work: Practical Approaches for Developing and Sustaining Effective Assessment

Association of Research Libraries Program

“Assess the state of assessment efforts in individual research libraries, identify barriers and facilitators of assessment, and devise pragmatic approaches to assessment that can flourish in different local environments”

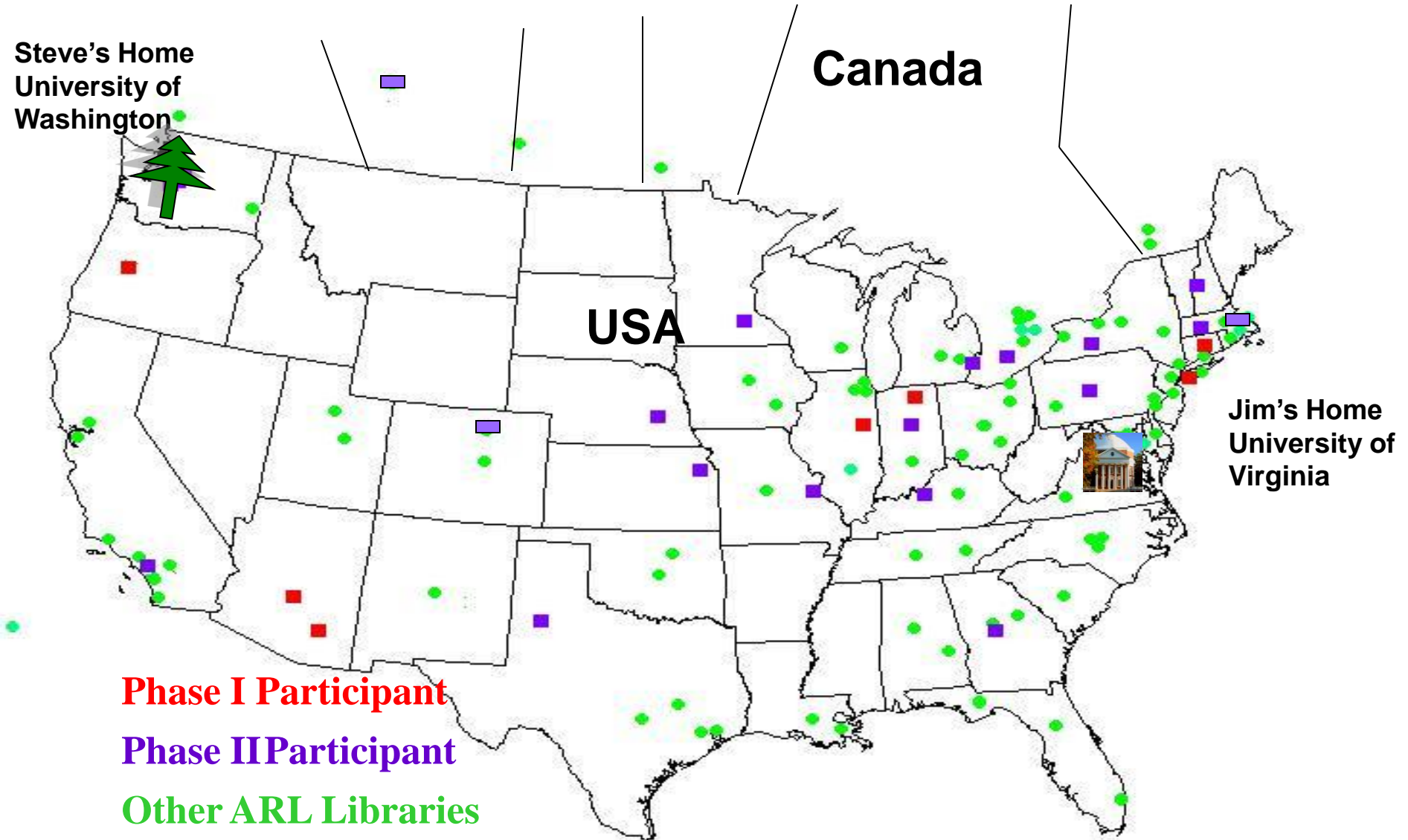
Funded by 25 participating libraries

– 22 visited since February 2005

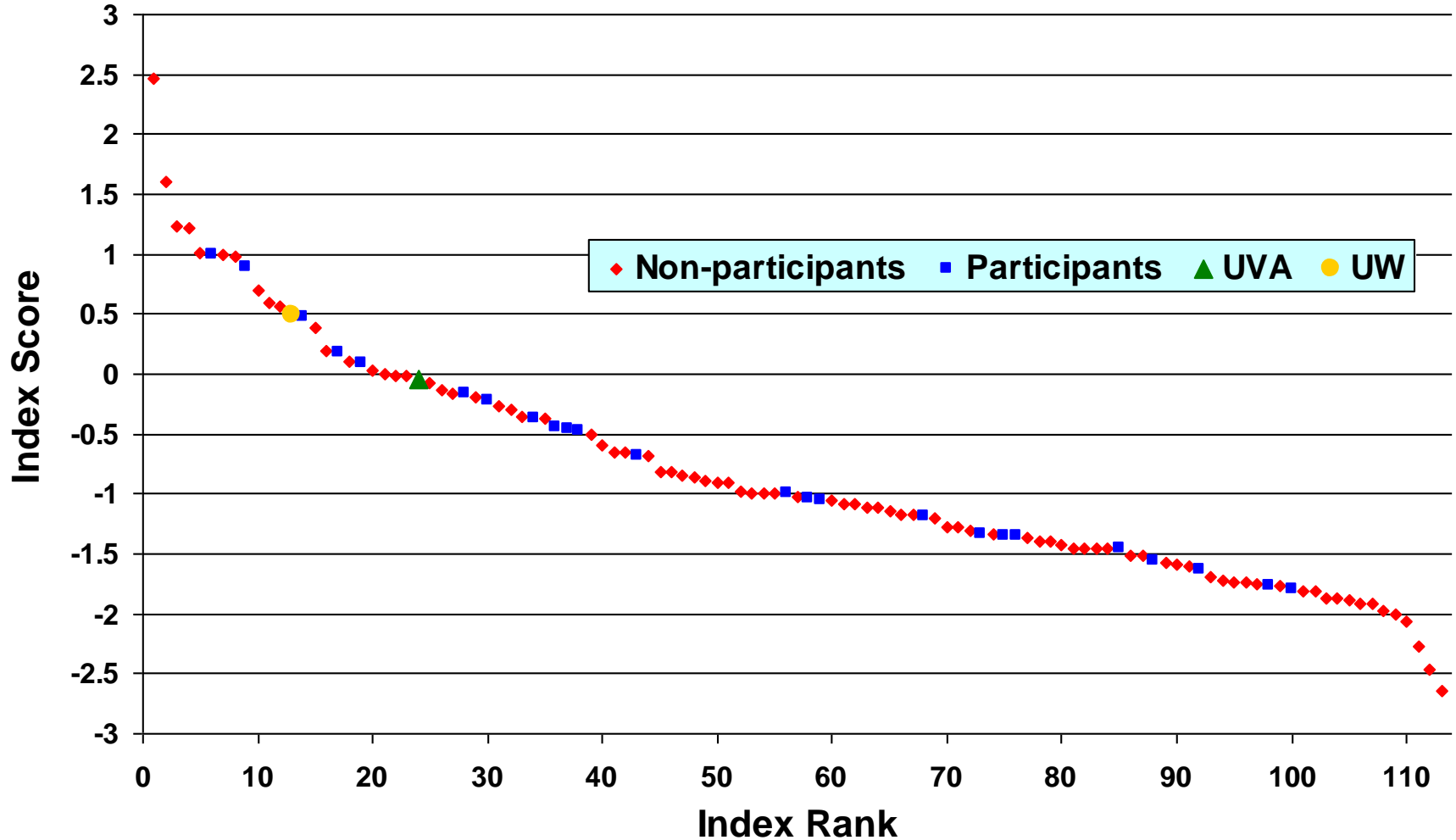
Keys to Effective Assessment Prior to Start of Program

- Library leadership
- Organizational culture and structure
- Identifying responsibility for assessment
- Library priorities
- Sufficiency of resources
- Assessment skills and expertise
- Analyzing and presenting results
- Using results to improve libraries

The Geographic Distribution of Participants



Distribution Of Participants by 2004 ARL Index Ranking (Mean 51.5 Median 49.5)



Data Collection Methods

Pre-visit

- Survey on assessment activities, needs etc.
- Telephone follow-up
- Surfing library and institutional web pages

Visit

- Presentation on effective assessment
- Group meetings

Follow-up and report

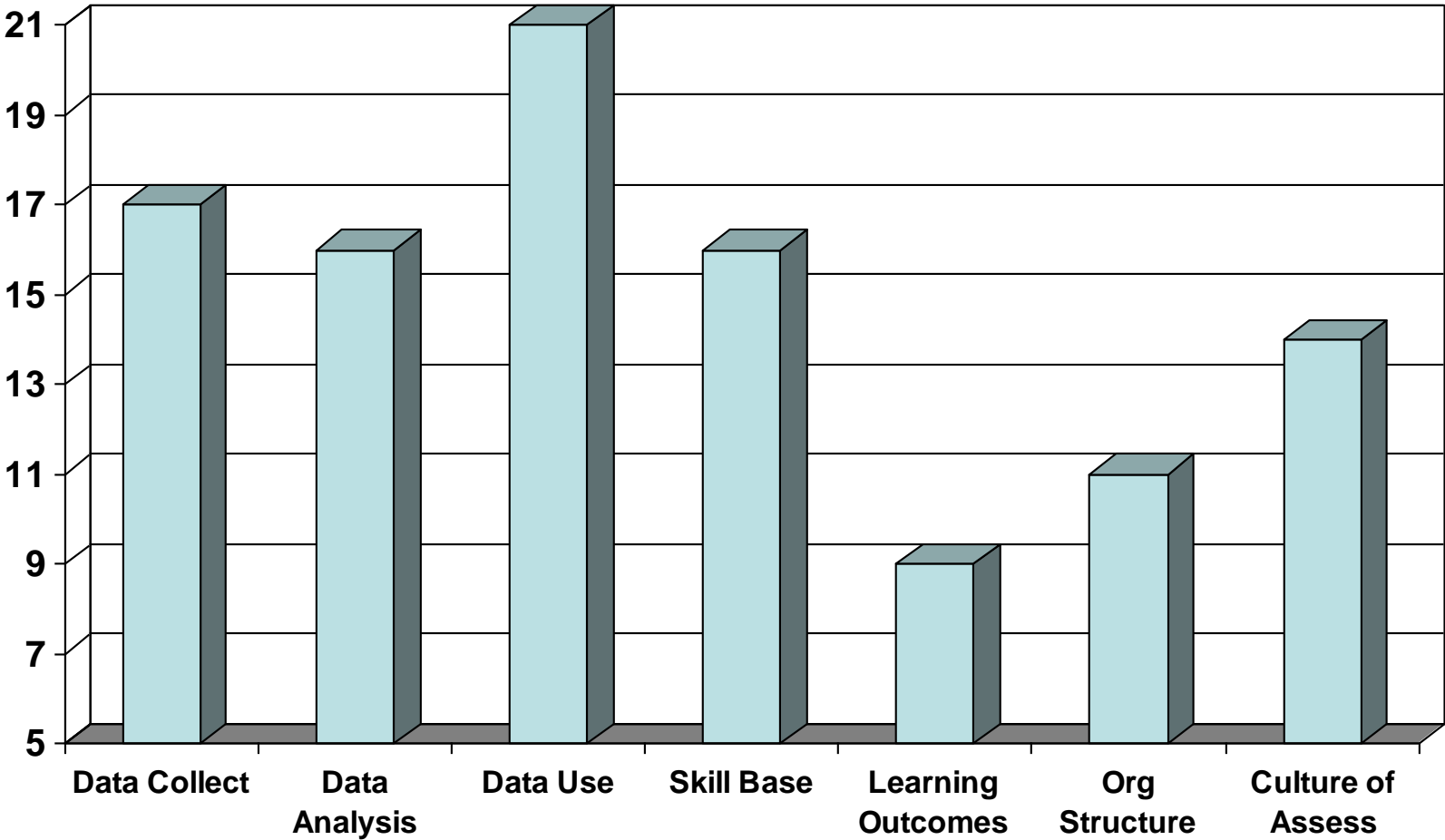
Pre-Visit Survey

- Summary of recent assessment activity
- Inventory of statistics
- Important motivators
- Organizational structure for assessment
- What has worked well
- Problems or sticking points
- Specific areas to address
- Expectations for this effort
- Follow-up project

Assessment Methods Commonly Used

- LibQUAL+ (20/22 libraries)
- Usability testing
- Locally developed user surveys
- Locally developed project based surveys
- Room counts
- E-metrics, use statistics
- Performance measures

Needs Identified by 22 Libraries



Catalysts for Assessment

- Accreditation
- Facilities renovation
- Data driven university administrations
- University focus on learning outcomes
- LibQUAL+ results
- Desire to ‘tell our own story’

Our Perception of Visits

- Positive reception
- Spirited, informative discussions
- Every library is unique
- Diverse cultures offer opportunities and challenges
- Much library assessment work is going on
 - Not always recognized or credited
- Our visit increased interest in assessment
 - Creation of new assessment positions and groups

Keys to Effective Assessment

Prior to Start of Program

(not in priority order)

- Library leadership
- Org culture and structure
- Assessment responsibility
- Library priorities
- Sufficiency of resources
- Assessment skills
- Sustainability
- Data analysis & presentation
- Using results for improvement

After Visits to 22 Libraries

- Library leadership
- Customer-centered library

And a few others after those 2 . . .

- Organizational culture
- Assessment responsibility
- Link to and integration with related activities
- Presenting results
- Acting on results

These are all interrelated

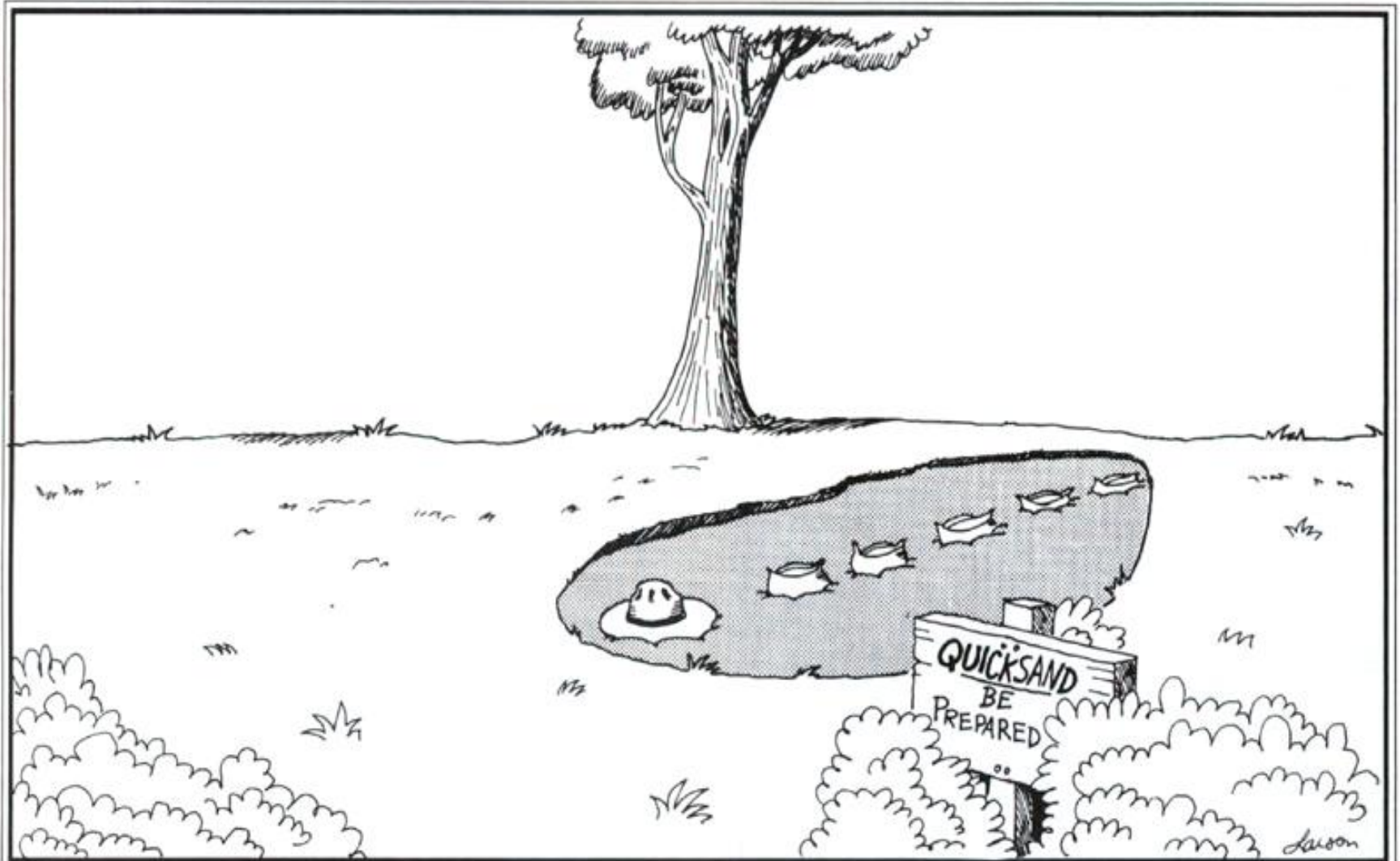
Customer-Centered Library

- All services and activities are viewed through the eyes of the customers
- Customers determine quality
- Library services and resources add value to the customer

User-centered libraries “collect data and use them as the basis for decision-making rather than rely on subjective impressions and opinions”

(Stoffle, Renaud and Veldof, “Choosing Our Futures”, *C&RL*, 1996)

Sometimes the Evidence Isn't Enough



Library Leadership

- Customer-centered
- Strong support from University Librarian **AND** other library administrators and managers
- Willing to commit resources/staff for assessment
 - AND PROVIDE TIME TO DO IT
- Evidence of data-based decision making
- “Walk the Talk”; make assessment visible in library
- Help shape organizational culture

Organizational Culture

- Customer-centered
- Forward looking
- Open to change and improvement
- Inclusive, non-territorial . . . “we” not “I”
- Positive about themselves, the library, and the institution
- Stimulate, recognize and reward initiative and innovation

Assessment Responsibility

INDIVIDUAL

- Understand libraries and higher education
- Standing and established relationships within the organization
- **Customer-centered/advocate for customers**
- Passionate about quality service and assessment
- Time to do assessment
- Questioning/skeptical
- Willingness to learn
- Coordination/Awareness of other assessment efforts
- Advocate for best practices

Assessment Responsibility

GROUP

- Representative . . . (not only by area)
- Advocates for assessment within organization
- Help expand staff knowledge and skill base
- Awareness of assessment-related efforts in library
- Liaison with other groups and departments
- Ability to prioritize; put aside self-interest
- **Customer-centered**

Link to Related Library/Institutional Activities

- Library statistics
- Strategic planning
- Performance measures
- Project support
- Liaison with relevant groups and committees
- Coordinate and review other assessment efforts
 - Repository for assessment-related data
- Institutional assessment/accreditation/data warehouse

Presenting and Using Results

- Make results understandable
 - Keep it simple; less is more
 - Effective presentation better than detailed analysis
 - Graphics work better than extensive tables/text
 - Adapt presentation to audience
 - Use existing publication and presentation venues
 - Be timely
- Use Results to Improve Libraries
 - Identify action items
 - Make changes
 - Publicize actions internally and externally

Current and Future Support

- Best practices toolkit
- Assessment learning community
 - Website
 - Proceedings
 - Blog
 - Conferences
- Focusing on developing skills
 - Service Quality Evaluation Academy
 - Training and Consultation services

THE FAMILY CIRCUS BIL KEANE



9-8

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"No, I hafta go back tomorrow."



What's Next?

Building the Library Assessment Community

- Meetings
 - ALA Midwinter Seattle
 - 4th International Evidence-Based Library and Information Practice Conference, May 4-11, 2007, Chapel Hill, Durham
 - <http://www.eblip4.unc.edu/>
 - 7th Northumbria International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services, 13-16 August, 2007, Stellenbosch, South Africa
 - Library Assessment Conference 2, Seattle Summer 2008
- Library Assessment SPEC Kit (2007)
- MLAW Final Report
- Ongoing Program
 - Building Effective, Sustainable and Practical library assessment

Where are the most critical assessment needs and opportunities?

- Developing impact studies on user success, economic value, and community return on investment.
- Moving target: what is a digital library and what is success?
- E-Resources: understanding and describing usage.
- Gaining acceptance and use of standard measures for e-resources.
- Building a climate of assessment throughout library.

Interpreting Evidence

$$1 + 1 = 2$$

What are the lessons learned?

- Understanding changes in users approach to information resources.
- Service quality improvement is a key factor.
- Understanding the impact of e-resources on library services - TRL.
- Learning how to compete with Google.
- Upfront investment in design and development.
- Making the assessment service affordable, practical, & effective.
- Assessment needs to be satisfying and fun.



ARL STATISTICS & MEASUREMENT PROGRAM

...serving the objective of describing and measuring the performance of research libraries and their contribution to teaching, research, scholarship, and community service. . .

About the Program

ARL Statistics

Annual Salary Survey

Survey Information

New Measures Initiatives

Workshops



[ARL Home](#)

[Statistics & Measurement Home](#)

Other Links:

ARL serves a leadership role in the development, testing, and application of academic library performance measures, statistics, and management tools. Grounded in the tradition of the North American research library environment, the ARL Statistics and Measurement Program collects and reports quantitative and qualitative indicators of library collections, personnel and services by using a variety of evidence, gathering mechanisms, and tools.

[ARL Statistics](#) is a series of annual publications that describe the collections, expenditures, staffing, and service activities for the member libraries of the [Association of Research Libraries](#). Statistics have been collected and published annually for the members of the Association since 1961-62. Important implications regarding the costs of serials and monographs as well as funding for research libraries are being monitored through a variety of well-known graphs.

The [ARL Annual Salary Survey](#) covers salaries for more than 12,000 professional positions on an annual basis. These data are used to determine whether salaries are competitive, equitable across institutions and personal characteristics, and keeping up with inflation. The survey also tracks minority representation in ARL US libraries and reports separate data for law and health sciences libraries. Statistics have been collected and published annually since 1980.

New [models](#) for measurement and evaluation that address issues of

QUICK LINKS

[StatsQUAL \(TM\)](#)

[ARL STATISTICS](#)

- [ARL Interactive Statistics](#)
- [Academic Law Library Statistics](#)
- [Academic Health Sciences Library Statistics](#)
- [Preservation Statistics](#)
- [Supplementary Survey](#)
- [University & Library Expenditures](#)
- [Library Materials Budget Survey](#)

[NEW MEASURES INITIATIVES](#)

- [LibQUAL+\(TM\)](#)
- [DigiQUAL \(TM\)](#)
- [MINES for Libraries \(TM\)](#)

Read www.washingtonmonthly.com

StatsQUAL™



StatsQUAL™

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StatsQUAL™ is a gateway to library assessment tools that describe the role, character, and impact of physical and digital libraries. Through StatsQUAL™, libraries gain access to a number of resources that are used to assess library's effectiveness and contributions to teaching, learning, and research. StatsQUAL™ presents these tools in a single powerful interactive framework that integrates and enhances data mining and presentation both within and across institutions. StatsQUAL™ includes instruments and data such as LibQUAL+™, DigiQUAL™, and MINES for Libraries™, as well as a growing dataset of survey results.

StatsQUAL™ operates under the leadership of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), which has a long-standing role in the development, testing, and application of performance measures, statistics, and management tools. Using traditional benchmarks as well as new models for measurement and evaluation, StatsQUAL™ addresses the urgent demand for libraries to demonstrate outcomes and contributions.

LibQUAL+™



LibQUAL+™ is a rigorously tested Web-based survey that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinions of service quality.

DigiQUAL™



The DigiQUAL™ project is modifying and repurposing the existing LibQUAL+™ protocol to assess the services provided by digital libraries.

MINES for Libraries™



MINES for Libraries™ is an online transaction-based survey that collects data on the purpose of use of electronic resources and the demographics of users.