

## PROFESSIONAL READING: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

by Irene Mills, Vainney College

Hand in hand with the naming of competencies required for particular levels of responsibility within a library that is a current focus of ALIA [see *Incite* 15, 10 for draft competency standards] goes the measuring of the performance of the library. This brings together an assessment of the actual competencies of the personnel with an indication of the adequacy of the library's resources.

The following bibliography is by no means comprehensive, but aims to make available references to easily accessible resources on evaluating a library service. While none of the items deal directly with the evaluation of a theological library service, all have some relevance to us.

BORRELL, J; GARLICK, M; MAHER, E. "Performance measures: some New South Wales experiences". *Australasian Public Libraries and Information Services* 3, 2 (1990): 61-71.

ABSTRACT: Performance measures have been under discussion among public librarians for years. Increasing financial constraints and accountability requirements have given rise to greater interest and action in this field. This paper describes the background to some initiatives in NSW and provides details of two recent examples of performance measures developed at two large public libraries.

BYRNE, A. "Measuring collection performance" in *Libraries: the heart of the matter: proceeding f the Australian Library and Information Association 2nd biennial conference, Albury-Wodonga 27 September-2 October 1992*. Port Melbourne, Vic: Thorpe, 1992. pp.47-49.

ABSTRACT: Formal collection development policies are increasingly being employed to define the objectives of developing and managing library collections. Measures of success in collection development have tended to focus on the comprehensiveness of the collection without reference to other objectives. The Clapp-Jordan and Wainwright-Dean standards, for example, have been invaluable guides to the size of adequate library collections in suggesting the number of volumes that should meet the defined needs of a specified number of clients. Conspectus, similarly, measures the depth of collections against standard indicators of comprehensiveness in each field. However, such measures do not indicate the library's success in meeting the needs of clients or other objectives. An objectives based approach to performance measurement provides an experimental basis for developing a satisfactory suite of indicators of success in collection development.

HARRIS, M. *Measuring performance indicators in an academic library*. Perth: Library, University of Western Australia, 1989.

ABSTRACT: Performance indicators were derived from the goals of University of W.A. Library and practicable measures were then explored for these indicators. The advantages and disadvantages of user surveys were considered. The survey method developed had a novel feature and provided results not only in the broad service areas most in need of improvement, but also in specific areas in which improvements would be most useful.

HERNON, P; McCLURE, C.R. *Evaluation and library decision making*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Pub. Co., 1990

**ABSTRACT:** The authors define evaluation as "...the process of identifying and collecting data about specific services or activities, establishing criteria by which the success of those services can be measured, and determining both the quality of the service or activity and degree to which it accomplishes stated goals and objectives" They describe in detail the evaluation process and give case studies of areas evaluated - interlibrary loans and the use of indexing tools. This is a comprehensive book which which applies the results of evaluation to the management process.

**McINTYRE, B.** "Measuring excellence in public libraries" in *Achieving excellence: papers of the 5th annual conference of the Country Public Library Association of New South Wales, Queanbeyan, 5-7 May 1993*. Queanbeyan, NSW: City Council, 1993. pp.28-57.

**ABSTRACT:** Current problems in the measurement of public library performances are explored. Recent performances of public libraries in NSW and Victoria are used to demonstrate several of these difficulties. Public library performance is measured against the standards of ALIA. The analysis reveals several important deficiencies in the level of services provided. A new performance scorecard is created to assess public library performance. The E index is a combination of input, internal efficiency and output indicators.

**McLEAN, N; WILDE, C.** "Evaluating library performance: the search for relevance". *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* 22, 3 (1991): 198-210.

**ABSTRACT:** This paper is based on a brief historical survey of developments in library performance measurement and evaluation, together with a detailed examination of three recent manuals on the subject. It is an attempt by two practitioners to understand the complexities of assessing library performance in the belief that a theoretical understanding is a necessary precursor to the consideration of the practical means of measurement and evaluation.

**NOVAK, J.** "Performance indicators: why do we use them?" in *Libraries: the heart of the matter: proceedings of the Australian Library and Information Association 2nd biennial conference, Albury-Wodonga 27 September-2 October 1992*. Port Melbourne, Vic: Thorpe, 1992. pp.263-267.

**ABSTRACT:** Performance measurement has become a major issue within the Australian library community. As the discussion progresses there is an accelerating emphasis upon the need to use such measures. Frequently embedded within this approach is the hope that the resulting performance indicators will be comparable, and this in turn rests upon the assumption that one can look at a performance indicator and understand what it means. Performance measures should not be viewed as ends in themselves; only within this context do they have meaning. A six step evaluation model is proposed as an appropriate method for judging a library's performance.

**RALLI, T.** 'Performance measures for academic libraries'. *Australian academic and research libraries* 18 (March 1987): 1-9.

**ABSTRACT:** The author examines some of the issues raised by performance measurement for academic libraries, specifically as they apply to libraries in Australia. External forces and internal reasons for measuring performance are introduced and contrasted as to how these lead to realization. The importance of specifying the purpose or goal to be achieved, selecting what measures or units are appropriate and what will be done with the measurements are the major issues explored. These specific areas are investigated: the collection of data;

document delivery capability; reference service evaluation; exposure to users; and the user population as well as input measures. The author stresses that comparison between different libraries have to be made very carefully because of broad ways to measure performance.

SCHMIDT, J. "Practical experience of performance measurement at the State Library of New South Wales". *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* 2, 2 (1990): 65-77.

ABSTRACT: Performance measurement involves the evaluation of a program or service in relation to its appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency. The author describes the evaluation of 2 programs - binding and serials - at the State Library of New South Wales, and concludes that the exercise is well worth the effort.

"SELF-evaluation in the one-person library: an exercise". *The One-Person Library* 5, 1 (1988): 1-2.

ABSTRACT: One of the problems of working alone is the lack of professional judgement by one's peers. A list of questions is provided to help the librarian focus on areas where change might be needed and to step back and assess the service provided.

SHAPIRO, B.J. 'Access and performance measures in research libraries in the 1990s'. *Journal of library administration* 15,3/4 (1991): 49-66.

ABSTRACT: The article reviews the efforts of ARL and others in the development of appropriate access measures for academic libraries. The author then proposes a set of access measures that are applicable to the conditions faced today. The author focuses primarily on access measures and performance measures. Access measures are defined as those indicators measuring physical and bibliographic access to resources owned by an individual library, and the extent to which the library serves as a gateway to information and resources owned by others. Performance measures are defined as those measures quantifying the effectiveness of a service and measuring user satisfaction.

SHAUNESSY, T.W. 'Assessing library effectiveness'. *Journal of library administration* 12, 1 (1989): 1-8.

ABSTRACT: The author suggests that the increasing occurrence of assessment of library effectiveness presents library managers with an opportunity to focus staff attention on service quality. He also proposes that if assessment of quality were to become a central theme characterizing the library organization, the overall quality of libraries would improve, i.e. a culture in which quality becomes important would serve libraries well. Various assessment techniques are described, including 1) queries to users to discover a library's reputation, 2) examination of an institution's resources based on statistical measures, 3) focusing on outcomes, 4) the value-added method, and 5) application of performance measures such as those developed by Paul Kantor, which allows tracking over time of progress in areas such as availability of library materials, accessibility, and patron activity. The author stresses staff involvement in the form of self-assessment.

VAN HOUSE, N.A. 'Output measures in libraries'. *Library trends* 38 (Fall 1989): 268-279.

ABSTRACT: This article traces briefly the history of the use of performance measures in libraries and discusses some issues in the use of such measures for decision-making and problem solving. Issues studied include the definition of library effectiveness, perspectives of significance, information needs and uses, measurement, sampling and statistics, and user surveys. The determinants of output measures as well as cross-library comparisons are also provided.

## JOURNAL REVIEW:

College and undergraduate libraries. Editor: Alice Harrison Bahr. Binghamton, N.Y.: The Haworth Press, 1 (1994) +. 2 issues per year. ISSN 10691316.

Something for everyone! The first issue of Haworth Press's new journal for librarians has just that! The editor, Alice Harrison Bahr, introduces CUL as a "vehicle enabling undergraduate librarians to help one another".

CUL aims to provide articles of practical value, on subjects of interest to librarians in the smaller academic library, faced with the universal problems of shrinking budgets, minimal staffing, and the eternal struggle to keep abreast of state-of-the-art technologies. A user or reader education program - its design or appraisal; dealing with the relationship between information available on CD-ROM databases and what is actually available in the library collection; aspects of automation - in this instance barcoding and planning for the implementation of automation; the Internet - these are just some of the subject areas addressed in this initial publication.

The editor clearly aims for an interesting mix of the serious with the humorous. The approach is not heavily academic, but essentially practical.

For the theological librarian working alone in an institutional library, this newcomer to the library journal title listing offers practical information about services and operations, focussing on daily problems and providing for the exchange of creative and practical ideas. It is a potentially valuable resource for the provision of library and information services in our theological libraries.

*Lynn Pryor, Churches of Christ Theological College, Mulgrave, Vic.*