



ARL Task Force on New Ways of Measuring Collections

Presented by

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Committee Members

- Shirley Baker, Washington-St. Louis
- Dale Canelas, Florida
- Colleen Cook, Texas A&M
- Carol Pitts Diedrichs, Kentucky
- Eileen Hitchingham, Virginia Tech
- Mod Mekkawi, Howard
- Lou Pitschmann, Alabama
- Alice Prochaska, Yale
- Jennifer Younger, Notre Dame
- Brinley Franklin, Chair, Connecticut



Data Trends



1. Most Important Issues

- Data is not expressing uniqueness of materials
- Relevance to teaching, learning, research not adequately reflected (elusive, but need to answer this question)
- Collections go beyond printed volumes
- Research library is more than collections – include its services; ARL is not telling the story



2. Purpose of Measuring?

- Historical significance of long dataset to show trends
- Accounting for university's investment
- Evaluate collections
- Comparison; benchmarking



3. Local Uses of Variables and Index

- Used to go to the administration for money
- Current statistics give perception that size matters (measures “tonnage”)
- Three times as many directors found the index not helpful rather than helpful; index is a membership criteria, for others not helpful
- More concerned with how libraries serve their community



5. How to Define Content and Distinguish Between That Which is Owned and Not Owned

- Concern about measuring content from user perspective vs. library perspective
- Call to measure what you can deliver just in time
- Users more concerned about when I can get it
- Obligation to preserve
- Credit for being a provider beyond local library (loaning, partnering, collaboration, local digitization)
- Measure use



Very Preliminary Recommendations

- Membership Committee
 - Clarify purpose of use of membership index in current research library environment; ask Membership Committee to review/revise 5 variables
- Statistics Committee
 - Needs to address changing nature of collections more aggressively
 - Develop pilot grid of what measures we would like to see



Very Preliminary Recommendations ...

- Measurements
 - Reassess all measures currently collected
 - Measure outcomes (somehow)
 - Measure contributions to local community
 - Separate print and electronic counts
 - Research library is more than collections (e.g., services); ARL needs to tell the library story
 - Define “collections”; what can we deliver just in case/just in time



Very Preliminary Recommendations ...

- Rankings
 - Dropped, except for local use
 - Use collections budget
 - Expenditures might be valid measure (for collections, services)



Very Preliminary Recommendations ...

- Develop a membership profile (useful to Membership Committee: “what is a research library”)
 - Use
 - Collections (strength)
 - Quality of service
 - Provide to the national community (ILL, preservation, digitization)
 - Partnerships
 - Unique contributions
 - Good local stewardship needs to be described



Very Preliminary Recommendations ...

- Published statistics
 - Submit different information to Chronicle of Higher Education
 - Or submit no information at all