

Building A Community of Practice: The Library Assessment Conference

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<http://libraryassessment.org/>

Charlottesville, Virginia 2006



Seattle, Washington 2008



Baltimore, Maryland 2010



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Food For Thought and Action

“What I take in at the Library Assessment Conference is all “grist to the mill” (Canadian participant)

“Conference proceedings and accompanying online presentations are my assessment encyclopedia” (U.S. participant)

Building Community

"I Don't Want To Belong To Any Club That Will Accept People Like Me As A Member." (Marx, 1959)

Role of Conferences in Developing Emerging Fields

“Conferences . . . can help provide the critical mass and focus that can trigger field evolution that leads to both individual interaction and resultant institutional change as well as the emergence of newly defined body of inquiry and practice.” (Lampel and Meyer, 2008)

“Professional conferences, both academic and non-academic, are an under-researched domain. Given their importance and frequency in the life of those who attend, it is remarkable that they have been the focus of so little study.” (Jacobs and McFarlane, 2005)

What Makes a Good Conference?

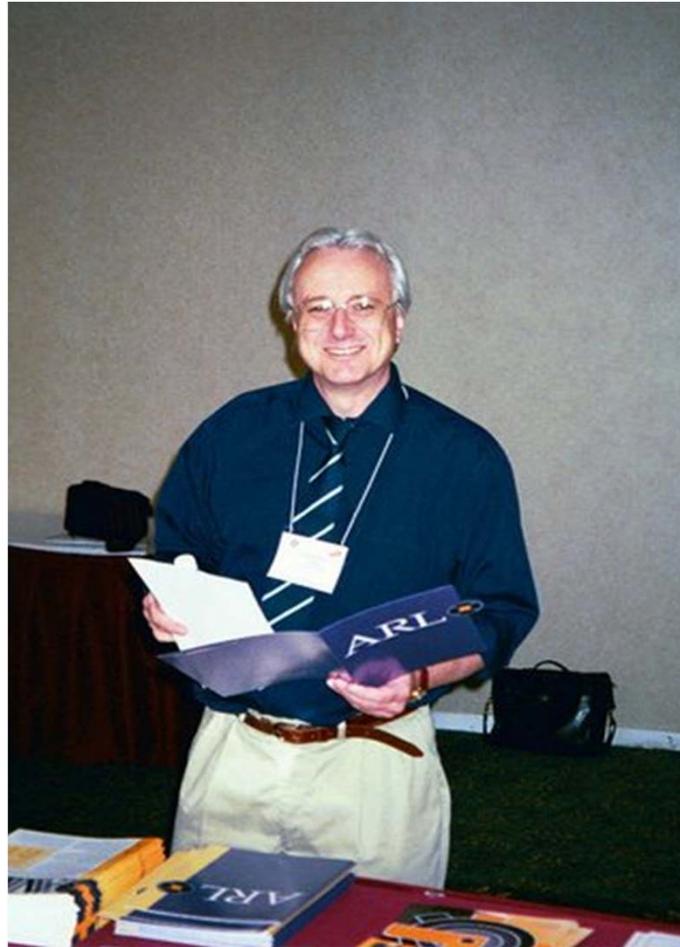
- New research, developments and information presented
- Participants balanced between new & experienced
- Time for informal exchanges, gossip & networking
- Mix of papers, panels, posters, discussions & workshops
- Provocateurs and contrarians for different perspectives
- Interesting and desirable location
- Great organizers and smooth logistics
- Buzz!

value of Specialist Library Conferences

- Opportunity to present results and developments
 - Lack of a strong publishing tradition for practitioners
- Isolation of sub-fields within individual libraries
 - Opportunity to network, meet others with similar interests
- Emergence of learning communities/organizations
 - A learning community is a group of people who share common values and beliefs, are actively engaged in learning together from each other.
- Discovery

Conference *value*

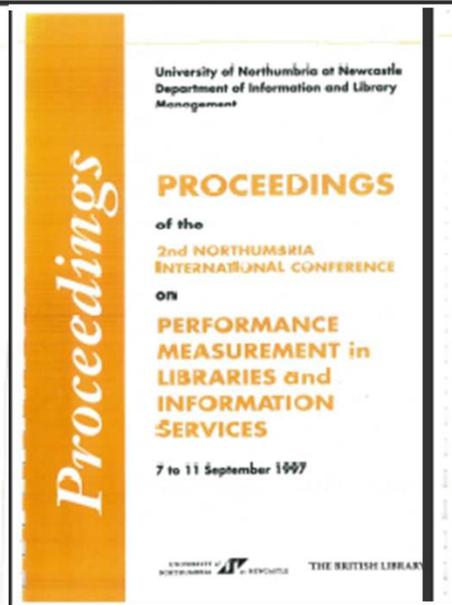
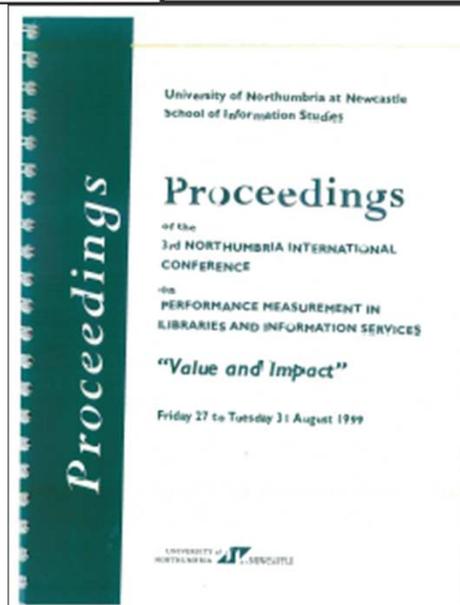
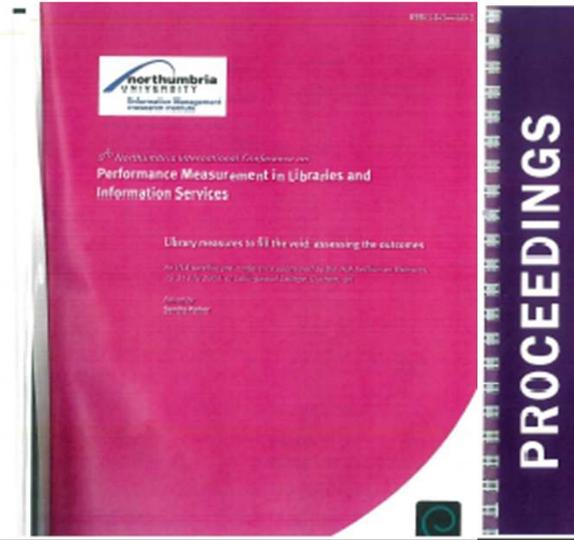
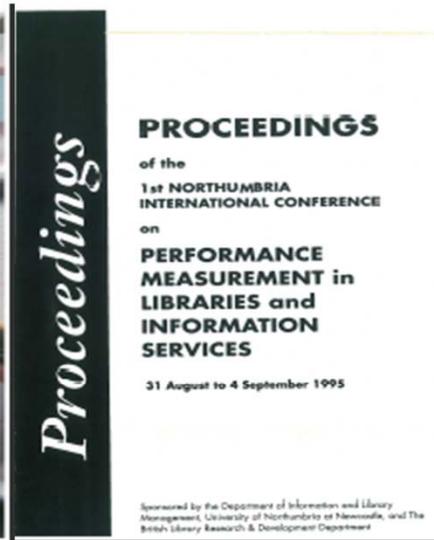
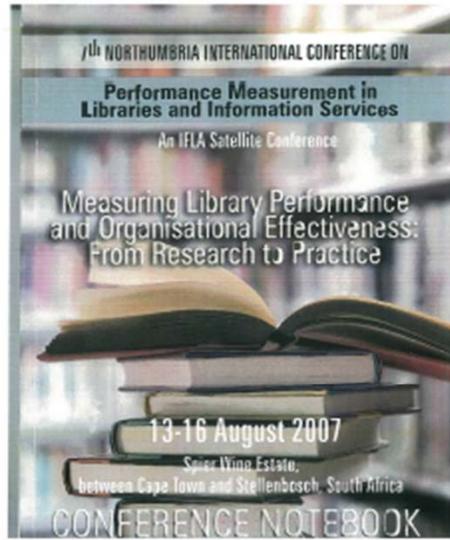
Stephen Discovers A New World (PM 4, Pittsburgh 2001)



The *value* of the Northumbria Conferences

“Since the first Northumbria conference in 1995, library professionals have recognized that **the traditional library measures of "goodness" that count collections and transactions no longer provide an adequate picture of the library's contributions to its constituents. Each successive conference has focused on the evolving research and practice in the developing and testing of new measures . . . and the importance of presenting the library's contributions in terms of impacts and outcomes.**“ (Joan Stein, 2002)

valued Source of Information



Whence a North American Library Assessment* Conference?

- Conference idea arose in Summer 2005 based on insights gained from ARL assessment consulting service (MLAW) visits
- Emergence of LibQUAL+® as standard assessment tool
- Success and *value* of the Northumbria conferences, especially Pittsburgh in 2001
- Absence of any similar conference in North America
- First conference set for September 2006 in Charlottesville, Virginia

*Assessment used as it is part of the higher education vernacular in North America

Early Insights from ARL Consulting Visits

- Strong interest in using assessment to improve
- Uncertainty on how to establish and sustain assessment
- Lack of assessment knowledge among staff
- More data collection than data utilization
- Finding assessment methods appropriate to need
- Need to demonstrate *value* to stakeholders
- Great interest in what other libraries were doing

Library Assessment Conference Goals (2005)

- Nurture an active learning community for library assessment
- Focus on practitioners
- Provide a forum for high quality presentations on effective, practical and sustainable assessment
- Encourage informal interaction among participants,
- Build the knowledge base of participants
- Make it fun!

LEARN SHARE CONNECT

DEMONSTRATE VALUE

Library Assessment Conference

Building Effective, Sustainable, Practical Assessment

Charlottesville, VA

September 25–27, 2006

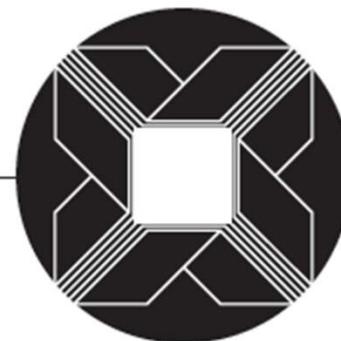
Join us in historic Charlottesville to help build a learning community of practitioners and leaders interested in library assessment. The conference will focus on using data to improve library service and will include sessions on customer surveys, focus groups, learning outcomes, organizational climate surveys, performance metrics, evaluating electronic services and resources, and related marketing and management issues.

Co-sponsored by the University of Virginia and the University of Washington.

Register now at: www.arl.org/stats/laconf

Association of Research Libraries

www.arl.org



**Save the
Date!**

2nd Library Assessment Conference

Building Effective, Sustainable, Practical Assessment

University of Washington

August 4-6, 2008

Call for Papers, October 2007

Come to Seattle, Washington, and join a learning community of practitioners and leaders interested in library assessment.

This first Library Assessment Conference held in Charlottesville, Virginia in September 2006 was so successful that we're doing it again . . . this time in Seattle! The first conference brought together more than 200 participants to focus solely on library assessment. They had the opportunity to attend panel, paper and poster sessions covering all aspects of assessment, engage in informal discussion with colleagues, participate in three half-day workshops, and were challenged to show how the library adds value.

For more info: www.arl.org/stats/statsevents/laconf/

Comments from 2006 conference participants:

The sessions were rich and there were many opportunities for networking.

Excellent conference. You really do make assessment "fun."

A wonderful learning experience. I feel as though every minute was devoted to what I was there to learn.

A real value for money conference. Every session I attended was informative - something I haven't said before about a conference.

Plenary sessions were wonderful and enjoyably provocative.

Conference sponsored by

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Libraries

2010 Library Assessment Conference

Building, Effective, Sustainable, Practical Assessment



Baltimore, Maryland | October 25-27, 2010

Five Themes

1. Library Service Quality
2. Performance Measures and Balanced Scorecard
3. Assessment of Library Spaces
4. Information Literacy
5. Value and Impact

Keynote Speakers

- Fred Heath**, University of Texas at Austin
- Joe Matthews**, San Jose State University
- Danuta Nitecki**, Yale University
- Megan Oakleaf**, Syracuse University
- Stephen Town**, The University of York (UK)

Join us in Baltimore for the 3rd Library Assessment Conference. A call for paper and posters will be issued in December 2009 with proposals welcome on the five themes as well as other assessment-related topics. Conference registration will open Spring 2010.

To join our ongoing discussion on library assessment issues, visit the library assessment blog or subscribe to arl-assess@arl.org.

The conference goal is to support and nurture the library assessment community through a mix of invited speakers, contributed papers and posters, workshops, and engaging discussion. The conference is geared toward library and information professionals and researchers with an interest in library assessment

For more information go to
<http://www.libraryassessment.org/>



Library Assessment Conference Basics

	2006 Charlottesville, VA	2008 Seattle, WA	2010 Baltimore, MD
Registrants Registration Fee	217 \$375	377 \$390	460 \$390
Presentations (papers) Poster sessions Workshops	44 20 3 (half day, offered 2x)	60 40 6 (half-day)	68 80 2 (full-day) 4 (half-day)
Proceedings (published within 10 months of conference)	452 pages	552 pages	788 pages (PDF only)

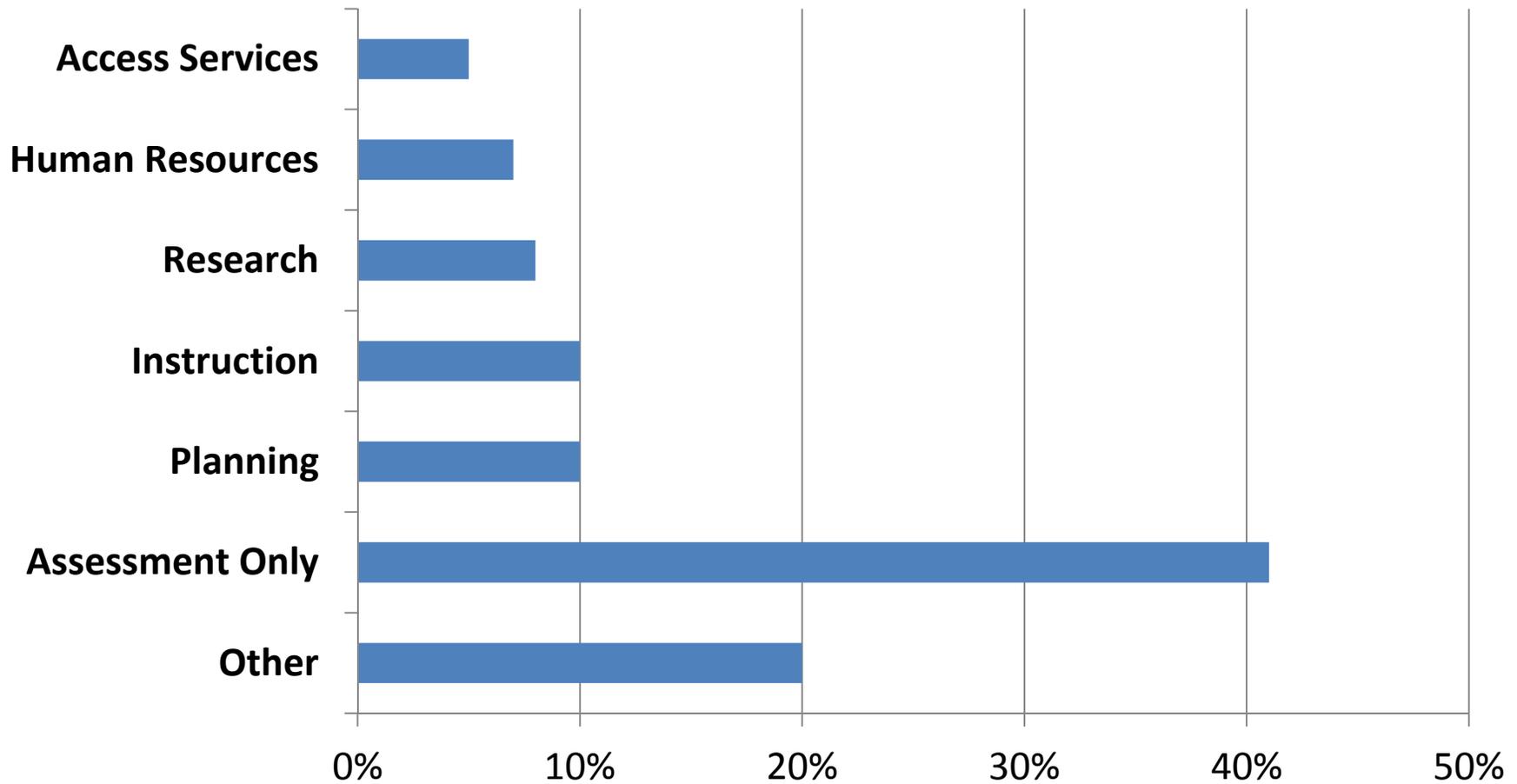
Where Do LAC Registrants Come From?

	2006 217 registrants	2008 377 registrants	2010 460 registrants
ARL institutions	70%	45%	47%
Other higher ed	25%	48%	43%
Other organizations	5%	7%	10%
USA	92%	85%	85%
Canada	5%	8%	10%
Outside USA & Canada	3%	7%	5%

Registrant Positions by Conference

	2006 (n=217)		2008 (n=377)		2010 (n=460)	
Library administrator	61	28%	84	22%	111	24%
“Assessment” in job title	15	7%	32	8%	61	13%
Educators/Students	8	4%	10	3%	17	4%
From the organizers (ARL, UVA, UW)	25	12%	38	10%	25	7%
Others	111	51%	218	58%	247	54%

2010 Assessment Positions (61) Other Responsibilities in Job Title



Registrant Program Participation

Number of registrants who:	2006		2008		2010	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Presented papers or led workshops	82	38%	97	26%	99 (53 ARL)	22%
Presented posters only	24	11%	47	12%	89 (39 ARL)	19%
Did not present	107	51%	233	62%	272	59%

Number of Presentation Sessions by Theme

	2006	2008	2010
Collections		1	1
Data/Statistics		2	1
Digital library	1	1	1
Effective library assessment programs	3	3	3
Evaluation and assessment methods	1	1	
Information services		1	1
LibQUAL+®	2	2	1
Organizational climate/culture	2	2	1
Organizational planning/performance	2	1	3
Place	1	1	2
Qualitative studies	2	2	2
Teaching and learning	2	4	2
Value and impact	1	2	3

Reasons for Success

- Association of Research Libraries, U.Va and UW
 - Martha, brand name, banker, publisher, publicity, Web site and so much more
 - U.Va. and UW staff and our university librarians support
- Growth of the assessment community and activity
- Conference evaluations/using results for improvement
- Focus on practitioners – effective, sustainable, practical
- Affordable! Good *value!*

Conference *value* From the Participants

- You almost always learn something that is unexpected, and in a way I think the unexpected things are most memorable
- I learn that almost anything can be assessed and learn new techniques for looking at and thinking about our work with users, our use of space, and our in-house infrastructure
- A presentation spurred us to develop a set of personas that have been useful in designing web pages & addressing virtual access issues
- The conferences offered me the opportunity to **share information** with our assessment committee, the entire library staff and our **University Office of Institutional Effectiveness**
- Being assured that **there is no magic bullet** that I alone am missing

More *value* from Participants

- **Bottom line: I would not have had the career I've had if it weren't for the LAC and the support of the assessment community.** This community has enriched and informed my professional life in profound ways. I feel indebted to the community, and am committed to continuing my participation, and contributing any value I can while it continues to grow and evolve
- **It's been a major opportunity to connect with people...find research partners, meet with people who have read my work, etc.** So it's really made a **unique and hugely significant contribution to my professional work**

Live from Charlottesville!
At The Historic Paramount Theatre!
It's the 2012 Library Assessment Conference!

2012 Reception and Plenary Sessions



Delivering Value in Challenging Times

See You in Charlottesville October 29-31, 2012

