Introducing "New Measures"
ALA ALCTS CMDS session at the ALA Annual Conference
Orlando, Florida
June 27, 2004

Remarks by

Martha Kyrillidou
Director
ARL Statistics and Measurement Program

I am going to take a rather personal approach in introducing New Measures to you today, partly because I want to do it through the different people that have shaped my own thinking and work over the last decade and recognize, through their influence, the evolution of the New Measures work and the ARL Statistics and Measurement Program.

Please also recognize that I have limited time. There are many people that have influenced me that I may not be able to mention. The first person I would like to mention here today is Julia Blixrud, Assistant Executive Director for External Relations at ARL, with whom I have worked very closely over the last five years. Julia would have been talking to you here today had she been able to attend this ALA, and she would appreciate hearing from you and knowing that she is in our thoughts as she is overcoming the health issues that prevented her from being here. Julia has very eloquently documented the recent work on the New Measures in a double issue of the ARL Newsletter. I have some copies here and additional copies are available at the ARL booth. I will try not to repeat what's in there.

In many ways, I am here today because, as others have said, I had the fortune to stand on the shoulders of giants. The assessment movement is not new to ARL – it actually predates ARL's birth in 1932, since descriptive data on research libraries have been collected since 1908. This information is known as the Gerould Statistics, which Bob Molyneux, currently Director of the Statistics and Measurement at NCLIS, has documented.

I met Bob by phone in the early 90s, and he was the person who connected me with Kendon Stubbs, retired Deputy Librarian at the University of Virginia. At that time Kendon was a consultant to the ARL Statistics and

Measurement Committee. Kendon was one of the people who mentored me and recommended me for the ARL position in 1994 by bringing my name to the attention of Duane Webster, ARL's Executive Director.

Duane's work in establishing the Office of Management Services has also been very influential in the development of ARL services, and he has an affinity for the work of the ARL Statistics and Measurement Committee. The SPEC Kit Program that was established as part of the Office of Management Services has been one of the main sources for identifying what libraries are doing in user-based evaluation and management at a practical level, and as a publication that libraries use to share management information.

Kendon's work, on defining what a research library is, is extremely important because he developed the ARL membership criteria index that is published annually in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Kendon recently retired after having worked for 42 years at the University of Virginia. He has been very influential to a number of us who have worked in this assessment area, including Jim Self, another panelist here who has worked under Kendon's tutelage. Although mostly known for his work on ARL Statistics, Kendon's driving mandate was to deliver to users the information they need when and where they need it.

Soon after I arrived at ARL in the mid-90s we initiated a series of training activities on how libraries can engage users in an extensive dialogue and use user surveys to actually improve their organization – to engage people into 'deep' listening. Among those who were involved in those training activities is the current chair of the ARL Statistics and Measurement Committee, Brinley Franklin, Director of Libraries at the University of Connecticut.

I personally had a strong interest in user-based assessment, as this was the driving force that brought me from Greece to the US – I wanted Greek libraries to listen to me as a user and change. I had worked on implementing a user-based assessment protocol in Greece in the late 80s, while working on my Master's thesis at Kent State University; I implemented a user survey protocol for the library of the English Department at the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Do "new measures" have Greek roots? The answer is affirmative, at least in terms of the enlightenment, experimentation, and collaboration that the

Greek spirit symbolizes through its culture and games – that is, the Olympic Games! Although I am told that these days we are better known for our recent success in the European championship soccer games!

New Measures [apart from having some Hellenic heritage] has its roots in earlier thinking at ARL about the need to develop different approaches to library measurement. A number of very important and notable people were involved in establishing the annual ARL statistical surveys, including Deanna Marcum, Carol Mandel, and Gordon Fretwell.

In 1994 ARL adopted a new strategic objective to "to describe and measure the contribution of research libraries in research, teaching, scholarship and community service."

At that time, largely driven by the work that Sarah Pritchard, currently director at Santa Barbara and former ARL Deputy Director, had supported at ARL, the adoption of that objective was driven to a large extent by the recognition that we need different approaches to measurement.

When I came on board in 1994, I had the good fortune to work closely not only with Kendon Stubbs but also with Bill Crowe. From 1994-1997, under the leadership of Bill Crowe, who at that time was Director of Libraries at the University of Kansas, we ensured that both the established data collection activities were supported and that we moved our thinking forward into new directions, including user-focused evaluation methods.

By 1999, Julia Blixrud had joined ARL and the chair of the ARL Statistics and Measurement Committee was Carla Stoffle, Dean of Library at the University of Arizona. Carla is a very dynamic person who was determined to not only move our thinking into new measures, but our actions as well.

Following a retreat in Tucson, Arizona, New Measures was established as an action agenda. White papers were written and projects emerged as different groups within ARL coalesced around different approaches to measurement.

In January 2000 we held a meeting in San Antonio that launched LibQUAL+™ at 12 ARL libraries under the leadership of Fred Heath, currently at the University of Texas and former Dean of Libraries at Texas A&M University, and Colleen Cook, currently Dean of Libraries at Texas A&M and former Executive Dean and Director at Texas A&M.

A subsequent meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona, gave birth to the E-metrics project under the leadership of Sherrie Schmidt, Dean of Libraries at Arizona State, and Rush Miller from the University of Pittsburgh.

The Kent State team brought SAILS, their standardized instrument of information literacy skills, into the New Measures toolkit.

Related and more inclusive work is underway by the Learning Outcomes working group.

Currently, emerging approaches to evaluating libraries include working with COUNTER to establish auditing procedures for electronic usage statistics.

Measuring the Impact of Networked Electronic Services (MINES) – a pop-up user survey that users complete as they download online articles – provides information on the purpose of use, demographics, and the importance of the resource used. MINES is currently implemented across 16 libraries in Ontario Canada through the OCUL consortium (Ontario Council of University Libraries).

E-QUAL or digiqual – defining what constitutes service quality in the digital environment – is another project that has been funded by the National Science Foundation, National Science Digital Library (NSF/NSDL).

These elements are what makes the New Measures initiative new – innovation, creativity, and collaboration. Ultimately we have experienced what many who are engaged in collaborative work with a strong commitment to action witness: real progress. We now have new ways for evaluating libraries. These methods definitely have their contextual limitations, but we are further along compared to where we were ten years ago. Although it is not yet 2008, the work we are bringing together will germinate a legacy not unlike the one Gerould established for research libraries in the past century. The next generation of librarians and information specialists a century from now will definitely look at our work with some historic and archaeological interest, as they continue to engage in innovative, collaborative, and progressive projects to define value for the user in the new information environment.

We have succeeded in establishing a community that is engaged and proactive in establishing the value of the services we provide to our users. After just five years, we feel we have met and often exceeded expectations. We continue to readjust our expectations and move forward.

It is not unlike the little kid who sets up a competition to test his or her jump roping skills. The following video shows my 6-year old daughter jumping rope. First, she addresses the idea of competition: "We are here to do the competition so I can see how much I can jump." Then she moves on to experimentation: "If I do a mistake we start all over." Then she sets a goal: "OK, we are trying to get 20 or more, let's go!" She meets her goal ("I did 39!") and then adjusts her expectations: "If that's possible, we will try again." Finally, she sets a new goal ("…to get 39!"). Thus the cycle of never-ending improvement continues across generations, across libraries, and with new measures!

Web References

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<http://www.arl.org/stats/>

Activities Reports
<http://www.arl.org/arl/activities/index.html>

ARL Statistics and Measurement Committee
<http://www.arl.org/arl/cmte.html>

New Measures Initiatives
<http://www.arl.org/stats/newmeas/index.html>

LibQUAL+™
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SAILS
<http://sails.lms.kent.edu/index.php>

Learning Outcomes
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