

Why libraries have to demonstrate their value and impact? ... and how could it be done?

**Report back from the Innovative Research
Universities - Libraries**

Value and Impact Workshop

Brisbane 23rd-24th September 2009

Fine red dust covering Brisbane

23 September 2009 – various parts of the city



Presenter, Aim, Outcome

- **Steven Town, the Director of Information and University Librarian at the University of York, UK and an international expert on performance measurement, management and strategy**
- **to explain, illustrate and engage with potential methods of value and impact measurement**
- **the expected outcome was to prepare participants for making decisions about impact and value measurement in their own institutions**

Terminology

- **Impact** is an effect or consequence of an action, but also shock, violent interaction, collision.
- **Value** refers to cost efficiency, cost effectiveness, cost comparison for benchmarking, financial management process, standards and audit, financial allocation, valuation, value added, return on investment, best value programmes, etc.

It refers also to excellence, usefulness, or desirability. It is not based on logic or data, but on choices, which are manifested by conduct. Values rationalise actions, they tell us how to do things.

Why libraries have to demonstrate their impact and value? – broad scene

The higher education environment is expansive, competitive, customer oriented, focused on quality, commercial and demanding

Academic libraries

- have changed from storehouses to service oriented units, with the latest challenge to integrate library content and access with faculties, including access to local unique resources, and support for distance learning and teaching
- they have to demonstrate their relevance and impact on teaching, learning and research, mainly through economic values
- they are pressed for accountability

Why libraries have to demonstrate their impact and values? – in short

- **to justify the continuation of existing services and the development of new services - advocacy purposes**
- **to successfully benchmark with similar institutions – service improvement**
- **to meet the national / institutional costing requirements – service improvement**

In search of the magic bullet 1

Inability to prove value and impact is one of the top concerns for libraries (SCONUL survey 2005)

SCONUL initiatives and tools

- **Value and Impact Measurement Program (VAMP)**
- **Quality assurance guidelines (to assess integration)**
- **SCONUL statistics & interactive services**
- **HELM national performance indicators**
- **E-measures project**
- **Benchmarking manual (to measure efficiency and comparability)**
- **SCONUL Satisfaction Survey**
- **SCONUL LibQUAL+ Consortium (to measure satisfaction)**
- **LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative**
- **Information Literacy Success Factors (to measure impact)**

Also

significant work has been done in the US, UE, Australia, and South Africa

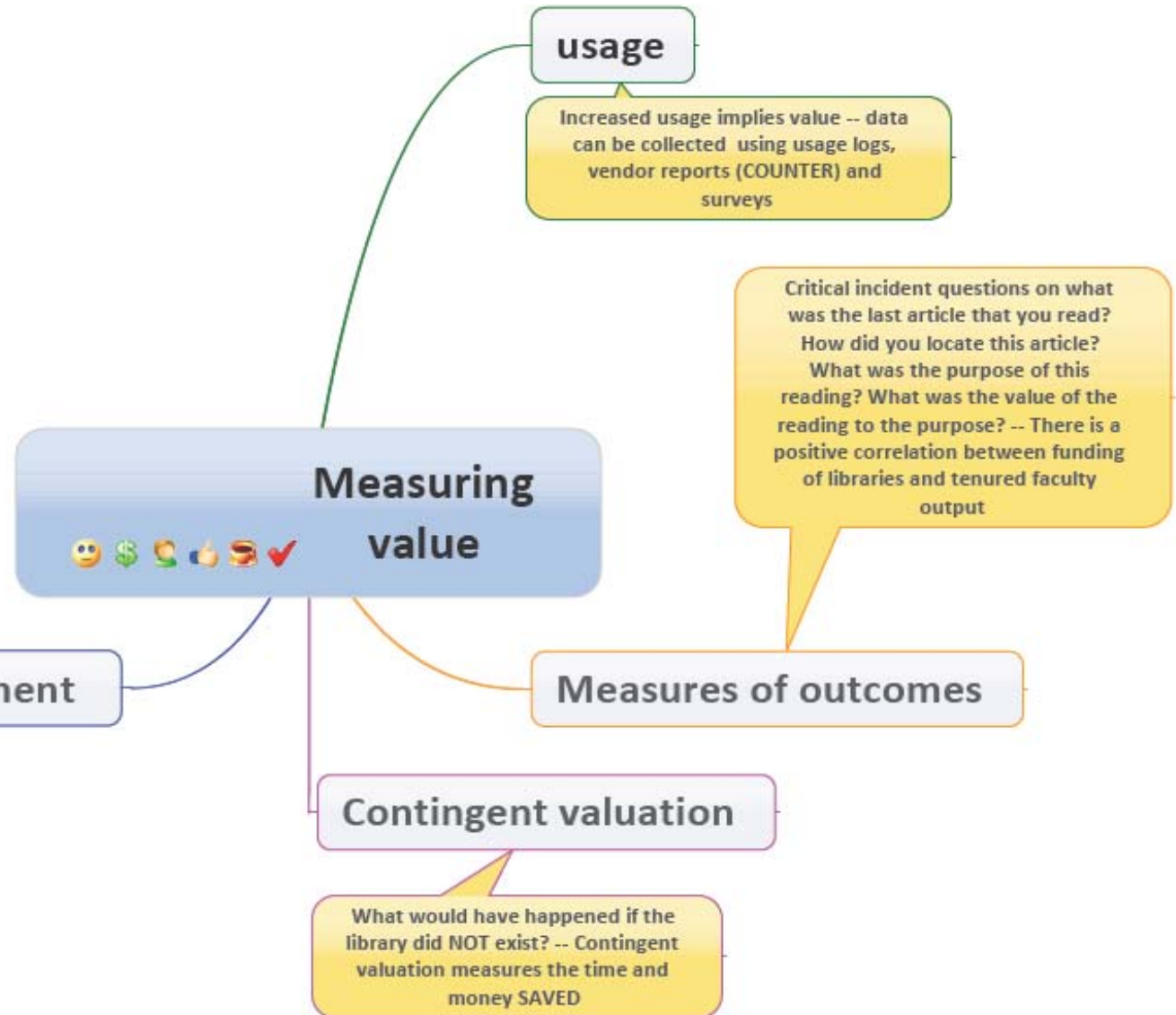
In search of the magic bullet 2

- **What has to be demonstrated?** - change in people that is their affection, behaviour, knowledge, or competence
- **How can it be done?** - social science research methods, such as questionnaires, tests that assess changes in user skills, performance monitoring, observation, citation analysis in coursework or publication, focus groups, interviews, etc can be used for gathering the evidence of change.

Challenge of impact measurement

... to move away from thinking about library services and methods of their delivery (*what do we have to do and how?*) to focus on the outcome of a particular service expressed as a service objective - *what do we want to achieve in offering a particular service?*

Methods of measuring value (based on Carole Tenopir presentation at VALA 2010)



Example of value measurement

The British Library - library services and products were priced and return on investment (ROI) expressed as the amount of money generated/saved to every pound spent (£4.40 generated to every £1 spent)

Impact project- group work at the Brisbane workshop

Aim: to identify a library service or product of high strategic importance for the Library and to demonstrate its impact and value for the University

How: use the IMA process to outline the project

How to identify a library service or product of high strategic importance?

Boston Box method

High Importance / High Certainty	High Importance / Low Certainty
Low Importance / High Certainty	Low Importance / Low Certainty

How to measure the impact and value of the identified service or product?

IMA process

- Objectives definition for the service or product
- Success criteria – changes in people
- Impact indicators for the success criteria
- Evidence gathering

Example – Information Literacy program for distance learners

1. Objectives:

- to enable students to operate effectively in an e-environment and
- to provide appropriate IL support for distance learners

2. Success criteria: look for changes in people!

3. Impact indicators:

- students cite e-resources in their assignments
- students use the IL resources made available to them

4. Evidence gathering: tests, questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, usage statistics, etc

Value project - group work at the Brisbane workshop

Questions

- **What are your institution's values statements?**
- **Are these different to the Library's espoused values?**
- **Do the Library values inform day-today behaviours and actions?**

...

La Trobe institutional values

La Trobe University values are included in the Strategic Plan 2008-2012:

“In planning for the future, whether by building on existing strengths, changing current practices, or embarking on new initiatives, La Trobe University will be guided by the core values of: **Responsibility; Relevance; Critical inquiry; Integrity; Participation, and; Excellence**”

Value project - group work at the Brisbane workshop

- Complete a framework or a scorecard for value measurement of a library service or product
- Consider the elements of intangible values (non-economic) and design a value project based on intangible value for offensive use.
.....challenging

Issues and suggested actions for La Trobe and for IRU

- Establish impact measures that demonstrate the effectiveness of the Library (La Trobe)
- Use the impact measurement method practised during the workshop on selected initiatives for 2010 (La Trobe)
- IRU to work together on a project (e.g. value of institutional repositories)

Communities of practice, frameworks, models ...

- SCONUL Working Group on Performance Improvement
- **SCONUL performance portal**
- **VAMP programme for value and impact measures**

- European Framework for Quality Management (EFQM)
- **Australian Business Excellence Framework**
- **European Business Excellence Model**