1. **Introduction**

To assess, in general, is to determine the importance, size, or value of; to evaluate. In libraries, we assess by collecting, interpreting, and using data to make decisions and to improve customer service. We study internal processes, levels and quality of service, and library impact on institutional goals.

The number of assessment activities undertaken in libraries over the last decade has grown exponentially. Libraries of all kinds are looking more closely at how and how well they are serving their users. Since 2004, ARL has sponsored a program to assist libraries with the assessment of services that they offer their users and the processes that support those services. This visiting program has been part of a move away from measuring inputs and outputs and toward judging service quality by measuring outcomes and the value that library programs add to their communities. What may have begun as the occasional assessment duty assigned to the library staff member with the most interest or greatest statistical acumen, has blossomed at many institutions into a formalized library assessment position, committee, department, or all three. These programs may include such activities as statistics collection, conducting surveys, conducting focus groups, Web usability testing, and benchmarking, etc.

Although this growing area of library management has become recognized as a legitimate use of limited budgets and time, there is not as yet a good overview of precisely how library assessment activities are being implemented or developed. The purpose of this survey is to address that missing piece of the puzzle—to examine the current state of library assessment, as well as to provide a starting point for those seeking to develop a library assessment program at their own institutions. This data should help libraries assess where they are and identify best practices to help them build or expand their own programs.

This survey was designed by Lynda S. White, Associate Director, Management Information Services, University of Virginia, and Stephanie Wright, Natural Sciences Information Services Librarian/Management Information Librarian, University of Washington.

Please complete this survey and send the requested documentation by June 4, 2007. If you are not able to complete the survey in one sitting, you may return to the survey and resume where you left off. **NB:** You will need to use the same computer each time you access the survey.

An * indicates a required response.

As always, individual responses to the survey will be treated confidentially.

Questions can be directed to the SPEC survey staff.

* Select your institution:

* Please provide the following contact information.
  - Name:
  - Job Title:
  - E-mail:
2. Background

Does your library engage in any assessment of library activities (such as statistics collection, conducting surveys, conducting focus groups, Web usability testing, benchmarking, etc.) beyond collecting annual data for the ARL statistics?

Yes
No

[If the answer is “Yes,” skip to question 4. If it is “No,” continue to question 3.]

3. Only Assessment is ARL Statistics

Please briefly describe why there is no assessment of library activities beyond collecting annual data for the ARL statistics, then click “Next” to submit the survey.

[“Next” button skips to the last page of the survey.]

4. Assessment Activities

Please indicate which of the specific assessment methods below your library is currently using or has used in the past. Check “Currently Used” for methods that the library continues to use to assess activities. Check “Previously Used” for methods that were once used but are no longer used. Check “Never Used” for methods the library has never tried. Check one category for each row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>Currently Used</th>
<th>Previously Used</th>
<th>Never Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surveys</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities use studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally designed user satisfaction survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online user feedback (pop-up windows, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys developed elsewhere (e.g., CSEQ, LibQUAL+®)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worklife/organizational climate studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualitative Methods</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret Shopper Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion Box</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Statistics**

- Data mining and analyses
- Statistics gathering (e.g., e-resource usage, gate counts, ARL statistics, etc.)
- Statistics inventory

**Usability**

- User interface usability
- Web usability testing
- Wayfinding

**Other methods**

- Student learning outcomes evaluations
- Benchmarking
- Balanced Scorecard
- Unit cost analyses
- Process improvement
- Other method not included above

If you selected “Other method not included above,” please specify that assessment method:

---

5. **Assessment Activities cont.**

In what year did your library begin assessing library activities beyond the annual ARL data gathering? What was the first assessment activity (survey, focus group, usability test, etc.)?

Year:  
Activity:

What was the impetus for beginning these assessment activities at your institution? Check all that apply.

- Accountability requirements from your parent institution
- Desire to identify library performance objectives
- Desire to know more about your customers
- Desire to know more about your processes
- Institutional or programmatic accreditation process
- Investigation of possible new library services or resources
- Need to reallocate library resources
- Proposal from staff member with assessment knowledge
- Other (please specify)
### 6. Assessment Activities cont.

Please indicate which of the following departments/units your library has assessed since 2002 and what methodologies were used for those assessments. Check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Function</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
<th>Qualitative Methods</th>
<th>Statistics Collection &amp; Analysis</th>
<th>Usability</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Have not assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquisitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch Libraries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cataloging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation/Reserve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development/Fundraising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Initiatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial/Business Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interlibrary Loan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Systems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Catalog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity/Marketing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectors/Subject Liaisons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Collections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Training/Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Climate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please specify other library function that was assessed:

Please specify other assessment method(s) that was used:
7. Organization of Library Assessment Activities

Who has primary responsibility for coordinating and/or planning your library’s assessment activities? Check the one item below that best describes your organization.

- A single individual working full-time as an assessment coordinator [continue to Q8]
- A single individual working part-time as an assessment coordinator [skip to Q9]
- A department/unit that is charged with assessment [skip to Q10]
- A standing committee(s)/team(s) that is charged with assessment [skip to Q11]
- An ad hoc committee that is charged with assessment [skip to Q12]
- Other [skip to Q13]

8. Full-time Assessment Coordinator

Please provide the following information about the full-time assessment coordinator.

Position title:
Year position was created:
By how many reporting levels is the full-time assessment coordinator removed from the library director? (e.g., Director > Dept Head > Assessment Coordinator = 2)

1 2 3 4 5+

For which functions below is the full-time assessment coordinator responsible? Check all that apply.

- Analyzes, interprets, and reports on data collected in assessment activities
- Approves assessment projects throughout the library
- Consults with staff on assessment methods and needs
- Coordinates collection of data across the library
- Coordinates the reporting/archiving of the library’s statistical data
- Fills requests for library data
- Monitors/coordinates assessment projects throughout the library
- Performs assessment activities
- Provides training on assessment topics
- Submits external surveys (ARL, ALS, NATC, American Library Directory, etc.)
- Other (please specify)

Does this position collaborate on assessment activities with other non-library departments, agencies, or units within the institution?

Yes
No

If yes, please list the department(s), agency, or unit(s).

[“Next” button skips to Q14.]

9. Part-time Assessment Coordinator

Please provide the following information about the part-time assessment coordinator.

Position title:
Year position took on assessment responsibility:
By how many reporting levels is the part-time assessment coordinator removed from the library director? (e.g., Director > Dept Head > Assessment Coordinator = 2)

1  2  3  4  5+

For which functions below is the part-time assessment coordinator responsible? Check all that apply.

- Analyzes, interprets, and reports on data collected in assessment activities
- Approves assessment projects throughout the library
- Consults with staff on assessment methods and needs
- Coordinates collection of data across the library
- Coordinates the reporting/archiving of the library’s statistical data
- Fills requests for library data
- Monitors/coordinates assessment projects throughout the library
- Performs assessment activities
- Provides training on assessment topics
- Submits external surveys (ARL, ALS, NATC, American Library Directory, etc.)
- Other (please specify)

Does this position collaborate on assessment activities with other non-library departments, agencies, or units within the institution?

Yes
No

If yes, please list the department(s), agency, or unit(s).
10. Assessment Department/Unit

Please provide the following information about the assessment department/unit.

Name of department/unit:
Position title of department head:
Year department/unit was created:
Number of staff in the department/unit:
By how many reporting levels is the department/unit head removed from the library director? (e.g., Director> Dept Head>Assessment Department/Unit Head = 2)
1 2 3 4 5+

For which functions below is the assessment department/unit responsible? Check all that apply.

- Analyzes, interprets, and reports on data collected in assessment activities
- Approves assessment projects throughout the library
- Consults with staff on assessment methods and needs
- Coordinates collection of data across the library
- Coordinates the reporting/archiving of the library’s statistical data
- Fills requests for library data
- Monitors/coordinates assessment projects throughout the library
- Performs assessment activities
- Provides training on assessment topics
- Submits external surveys (ARL, ALS, NATC, American Library Directory, etc.)
- Other (please specify)

Does this department/unit collaborate on assessment activities with other non-library departments, agencies, or units within the institution?

Yes
No

If yes, please list the department(s), agency, or unit(s).
11. Standing Assessment Committee/Team

Please provide the following information about the standing assessment committee/team.

Name of standing committee/team:
Position title of standing committee/team leader:
Year standing committee/team was created:
Number of standing committee/team members:

For which functions below is the standing committee/team responsible? Check all that apply.

- Analyzes, interprets, and reports on data collected in assessment activities
- Approves assessment projects throughout the library
- Consults with staff on assessment methods and needs
- Coordinates collection of data across the library
- Coordinates the reporting/archiving of the library’s statistical data
- Fills requests for library data
- Monitors/coordinates assessment projects throughout the library
- Performs assessment activities
- Provides training on assessment topics
- Submits external surveys (ARL, ALS, NATC, American Library Directory, etc.)
- Other (please specify)

Does this standing committee/team collaborate on assessment activities with other non-library departments, agencies, or units within the institution?

Yes
No

If yes, please list the department(s), agency, or unit(s).

12. Ad hoc Assessment Committee/Team

Please provide the following information about the ad hoc assessment committee/team.
Name of ad hoc committee/team:
Position title of ad hoc committee/team leader:
Year ad hoc committee/team was created:
Number of ad hoc committee/team members:

For which functions below is the ad hoc committee/team responsible? Check all that apply.

- Analyzes, interprets, and reports on data collected in assessment activities
- Approves assessment projects throughout the library
- Consults with staff on assessment methods and needs
- Coordinates collection of data across the library
- Coordinates the reporting/archiving of the library’s statistical data
- Fills requests for library data
- Monitors/coordinates assessment projects throughout the library
- Performs assessment activities
- Provides training on assessment topics
- Submits external surveys (ARL, ALS, NATC, American Library Directory, etc.)
- Other (please specify)

Does this ad hoc committee/team collaborate on assessment activities with other non-library departments, agencies, or units within the institution?

Yes
No

If yes, please list the department(s), agency, or unit(s).

[“Next” button skips to Q14.]

13. Other Assessment Activities Organization

Please briefly describe the organization of assessment activities in your library.

[“Next” button continues to Q14.]
14. Library Assessment Results

What methods are used to distribute data/analysis/results of library assessment activities? Check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E-mail announcements</th>
<th>To Library Staff</th>
<th>To Parent Institution</th>
<th>To General Public</th>
<th>Not Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library newsletter articles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus newsletter articles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print reports (e.g., annual report)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please specify other distribution method(s):

If your library has either a staff-only or publicly accessible library assessment Web site, please indicate which kind of information is published there. Check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis of assessment activity results</th>
<th>Staff-only Web site</th>
<th>Publicly accessible Web site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General library statistics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to other library assessment sites or information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online assessment tools (e.g., surveys)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please specify other information that is published on the staff-only Web site:

Please specify other information that is published on the publicly accessible Web site:
15. Assessment Outcomes

Please describe up to three demonstrable outcomes that have been made to your library’s programs, policies, or services based on information collected via assessment activities

Outcome 1:

Outcome 2:

Outcome 3:

16. Professional Development

Does your library provide assessment training for library staff?

Yes, training is provided by the library
Yes, support is given for training provided by our parent institution
Yes, support is given for training provided outside of our institution
No, there is no particular training provided

If training is provided by the library, what kinds of topics are covered? Check all that apply.

Assessment methods
Basic statistics
Data analysis
Data presentation
Report writing
Survey construction
Sampling techniques
Value of assessment
Other (please specify)

For each of the following assessment-related professional development events that assessment staff have attended, please indicate whether they would or would not recommend the event to others as a good way to learn and network about assessment. Check “Have Not Attended” if no assessment staff have participated in an event. Check one category in each row.
### 17. Culture of Assessment at Your Library

Please rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

(Adapted from “Culture of Assessment I.Q. (Institutional Quotient)” by Betsy Wilson, University of Washington.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment is evident in our library planning documents such as the strategic plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment is a library priority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library administrators are committed to supporting assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff accepts responsibility for assessment activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is support and/or rewards for staff who engage in assessment activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment results are used to improve my library | | | | My library evaluates its operations and programs for service quality | | | | Staff have the necessary assessment expertise and skills | | | | Staff development in assessment is adequate | | | | My library has local assessment resources and experts | | | | 

Does your library have assessment plans for departments/units or a library-wide assessment plan?

Yes, the library has an assessment plan for every department/unit
Yes, the library has an assessment plan for some departments/units
Yes, the library has a library-wide assessment plan
No, the library has no assessment plan

Comments:

18. Additional Comments

Please enter any additional information regarding assessment activities at your library that may assist the authors in accurately analyzing the results of this survey.

19. Call for Documentation

Please provide the URLs for the following documents.

If these documents are not available on the Web or if the URL is for a page that is accessible only by the library staff, mail or e-mail the document(s) by June 4, 2007 to:

ARL SPEC Surveys  
21 Dupont Circle NW  
Suite 800  
Washington, D.C. 20036

OR

spec@arl.org

Job description of assessment coordinator
Job description of assessment department/unit head
Job description of assessment committee/team leader
Assessment committee/team charge
Publicly accessible assessment data Web site
Assessment committee or department Web site
Assessment committee or department mission statement
Sample assessment reports
Organization chart showing reporting structure for assessment coordinator or department

Check here if print documentation will be sent by mail or e-mail.

Thank You

Thank you for your contribution to this survey!

Questions can be directed to the SPEC survey staff.

This work is licensed by the survey authors under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 United States License.