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Report of the ALCTS Collection, Evaluation, And Assessment Interest Group Meeting. American Library Association Annual Conference, Chicago, June 2017

The ALCTS Collection Evaluation and Assessment Interest Group (IG) has been meeting twice each year in conjunction with the ALA Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference for nearly a decade. Volunteer led, trying to host a mix of topics that resonate with both academic and public librarians, who are the majority of the ALCTS membership, topics have varied widely as the role of collection evaluation and assessment has expanded and those associated with this work has also grown and intensified. Libraries have increased the role of assessment to nearly all functions and non-cost neutral activities to determine the role of importance and the priority or value that something has to overall library services. As long as library collections and materials are among the most expensive costs in library operations, collection evaluation and assessment becomes an even greater priority. The *ACRL Top Trends in Academic Libraries: A Review of the Trends and Issues Affecting Academic Libraries in Higher Education*, has identified Collection Assessment as among the top trends in the last several released editions. Public libraries have also identified Collection Assessment as a more important theme in their strategic planning.

The literature in collection evaluation and assessment is proliferating and this IG has invited speakers to address particular elements from articles or other presentations they have published or made in an informal more discussion-like setting where questions and exchanges can be entertained fostering learning and practicality. Usually a general theme is proposed and a call widely issued to attract potential speakers to address specific operational elements from their library on that topic. Like most IGs, the purpose is to share information widely with like-minded colleagues who are committed to the same values, purposes, and goals. Today, methodology and applications appear to trump theory, and evidence-based practices with data prove to be more compelling than just anecdotal experiences.

In addition, there are new software tools that assist in the assessment process and many of these have been shared and explained. Library collections have evolved from a print- or text-based resource to a range of online or digital products. Libraries are trying to confirm their relevance to their user communities and previous collection space has often been reallocated to other more active functions than the warehousing of books. Thus, much assessment has been explored about what books should be redirected to storage facilities, converted to e-book holdings to allow for repurposing of space or just withdrawn. Libraries have tried to explore the benefits and shortcomings of the "big deal" where the price point directs only upwards each year and a bigger commitment of

funding goes to a smaller number of journal publishing sources. Is the unused content important enough to be paid for in this way? The packaging of books by subject parameters is yet another example of different marketing strategies that libraries have explored and continue to evaluate. Concepts like rightsizing have been added to the assessment lexicon and is being studied regarding library collections. The role of consortia and the launch of different tools to use in predicting, as well as assessing what are the key factors in sustainable collection management are always of interest.

Attendance at these meetings is enriched by many factors as those engaged with collection assessment have expanded to include collection selectors and managers, information technology (IT), acquisitions and electronic services staff, assessment officers, library managers, and others. The last category also includes colleagues from the trade who have experience developing products that contribute to the evaluation and assessment process. Occasionally co-hosting sessions with related discussion groups from other ALA divisions or ALCTS sections has provided additional points-of-view and opportunities for collaboration.

Another general theme has been how to evaluate and assess usage data that is available in many different ways and how to create long-term data sets for comparison from year to year. The collection of usage data for print or media is very different than for digital or streaming products, especially when provided by third-party providers. Those examples suggest the variety of advances and current issues recent meetings have emphasized. Being open to presenting in different ways has also been important. We have had formal presentations, case studies, lightning talks, small group discussions with reporting back to the central group, parlor talks with informal debates between different positions on an issue and probably other formats. The important thing is to reaffirm that an IG must respond to how the attendees or membership want to operate for a given meeting.

The most recent meeting of this IG focused on decision making, purchasing power, and the impact of technologies related to assessment methods and practices with more focus on the role of the public library. The Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA) Resources Committee has a Community of Practice dedicated to assessment and this group co-sponsored the 2017 ALA Annual Conference meeting where the presentations were made. Each host handled the call for papers differently, but together announced and marketed the program. The ALCTS IG conducted an open call through many listservs directed to librarians engaged in different aspects of collection management and the current IG co-leaders served as jurors selecting submissions. The LLAMA group targeted public librarians working in collection assessment and invited participants to share their work.

Driving decisions: Collection development as Art, Science, Infrastructure, and business

Scott Warren, Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship and Natasha Cooper, Collection development and Analysis Librarian, Syracuse University Libraries.

After a brief background about the structure for collections at Syracuse, Scott Warren and Natasha Cooper introduced the types of evidence influencing decisions about collection resources. The six types that influence a collection that has a ratio of 25/75 print/electronic mix and where about $1.5M is directed toward book purchases, included:

- *User-driven*: academic model with heavier emphasis on acquisition conducted by evidence-based buying models
- *Data-driven*: responding to unmet access via turnaway and other forms of usage
- *Librarian-driven*: utilizing subject expertise of librarians familiar with publishing landscape, shaping approval plans, working with colleagues in consortia managed projects
- *Market-driven*: examining emerging purchase/payment/leasing models for packages, bundles, and trends from new sources and providers, taking into account new publishing opportunities, authentication, and distribution models
- *Business-driven*: taking fiduciary responsibilities for multi-year and existing commitments, leveraging opportunities for productive discounts in the marketplace, considering legal, licensing and IT terms, obligations, and requirements
- *Values-driven*: advocating for open access/open publishing and other cooperative/collaborative efforts that promote academic needs and scholarship, support preservation, and preparing for better space utilization, and long-term planning.

A serious emphasis was that usage does not always trump other indicators and that assessment is a combined process of input. The statement, "Collections are more than content" reinforced the complexity in each of these decision processes. There are major infrastructure costs associated with building and maintaining collections that reflect space, technology, and expertise to support the initial and long-term organization, discovery, access, and preservation of materials. Negotiating and licensing content are critical activities. The overarching philosophy assumes shaping a responsive research collection must demonstrate flexibility to meet current, as well as future needs that will blend the steady state of handling collections with a more transformative response to exposing the academic community to larger outputs of resources delivered in ways that are in high demand by users and will reflect the increasing interdisciplinary intersections of our academic community.

The concluding message reinforced the title of this presentation—that decision making is both an art and science. Numbers and data can be incomplete but still do define how librarians proceed in determining their priorities. But there are also nuanced and evolving business transactions that influence outcomes, and perhaps values and ethics play a more critical role than previously understood.

Can we live with this? Evaluating abstracting and indexing databases in a large research library

A team from the University of Toronto, led by Cristina Sewerin, Coordinator of Science Collections; Holly Inglis, Public Services Librarian at the Rotman Business Information Centre; and Klara Maidenberg, Assessment Librarian

The University of Toronto has 88,000+ students, 6,000+ faculty and is highly decentralized across 44 libraries, the largest academic library system in Canada with a materials budget over \$30M ranking it #4 on ARL's Investment Index. With fluctuation due to weakening currency over the last 5 years, many Canadian libraries had to take major cost-cutting measures. The need to build a culture of assessment to meet their goals of protecting full-text content where possible and identify lower value databases that could be potential cancellation targets evolved by creating disciplinary teams of collection managers to collaborate and consult to determine "Can we live without this?"

Examining the structure of each database, the methodology employed to collect the data was intensive noting: existence of links to full-text holdings; proportion of

Abstracting & Indexing (A&I) content with no ISSN; proportion where content was selective; and which databases are available from multiple platforms.

The benefits of this complex exercise were many and included: strengthened "de-selection" muscles; enhanced familiarity with holdings; increased staff capacity and experiences with collections assessment; improved communication among a large network of libraries and staffs; identified "bad deals;" and created and documented justifications for database subscriptions.

Toronto used a collaborative approach to reach their goals and reduce the spend on A&I services. Using electronic research management tools like Gold Rush˚ from the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries, they were able to mine data that lent to critical decisions.

The final two presentations were both from the Jacksonville, Florida Public Library.

PLA Project Outcome: Understanding and sharing the true impacts of public libraries

Richard Mott, Manager for Strategic Initiatives, Jacksonville Public Library (JPL).

Richard Mott's presentation looked at how well a collection satisfies the needs of its users, its relationship to programs and curricula, its physical condition, age and use. The Public Library Association (PLA) launched Project Outcome "…to give libraries simple tools and supportive resources to help turn better data into better libraries." (http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/performancemeasurement). Mott defined what an outcome is as answering the question, what difference did it make and how does it benefit the patron? Data *per se*, is not an outcome, but can be both quantitative and qualitative. Libraries want to learn the impact of library collections and services contribute to their patrons' knowledge, skills, attitudes, behavior, and condition or status. Project Outcome is a free toolkit that "helps libraries measure four key patron outcomes—knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness in seven key library service areas: Civic/Community Engagement; Digital Learning; Economic Development; Education/Lifelong Learning; Early Childhood Literacy; Job Skills; and Summer Reading."

Conducting a broad community survey provides the outcomes to better assess goals and determine if funding, programming, and collections are sufficient. Measuring outcomes of collections continues to be a challenging effort and is what most libraries want to accomplish. By revising or tweaking the survey instrument, libraries better understand their user communities and what its needs are. The first Project Outcomes Annual Report issued in 2016 (https://www.projectoutcome.org/annual-report) illustrates the value of conducting a survey of this nature to assess the perceived success levels by actual users and offer the ability to shift priorities in your collections to meet those goals.

Collection analysis reports: Excel and beyond at jacksonville public library (JPL)

Charlene Adkins, Collection Manager

Charlene Adkins explored how to conduct collection analysis across multi-branch public library systems. Jacksonville is the largest city in area in the continental United States extending across 841 square miles and serving a growing population of 850,000+ inhabitants across one Main Library and 20 branch libraries. The library collection is a popular materials focus serving the age continuum from early learning through public school age to the general community. Beginning in March 2009, JPL was influenced by

Tony Greiner and Bob Cooper's 2007 book, *Analyzing Library Collection Use with Excel* (ALA, 2007), and as a member of the Northeast Florida Library Information Network adopted using Excel to analyze collections that could track workflows and processing, circulation, holdings, offer Notepad output, and be an instrument for decision making about weeding. It was not foolproof because there were the obvious issues of changes in call numbers, and being able to retrieve specific ranges, and it was labor intensive. However, it allowed for annual comparisons, could easily compute percentages based on changes in holdings statistics, and could measure how much of the collection circulated. When the emphasis of a collection is current use rather than a research focus, data about titles that are outliving their usefulness as "shelf-sitters" is essential.

What was helpful was that it documented a need to expand the large print collection and better focus on needs of foreign language content. JPL conducted surveys of their users that will reveal ongoing needs and offers performance indicators across branches. Today they are in the process of implementing collectionHQ, a data analytics platform based on evidence-based stock management. This software is available through Baker and Taylor and is being used by many public libraries. More powerful than Excel, it integrates with ILS data and can drill down to various circulation transactions. The transition from using Excel to current practices will demonstrate how important collection assessment is in meeting the needs of library users.

To review the actual slides of these presentations, please consult the ALCTS website at http://www.ala.org/alcts/mgrps/cms/grps/ats-cmdigcea?year=2016. A chronology of themes from earlier meetings is found at http://connect.ala.org/node/156064.

Going forward, we envision more collaboration, introducing topics that will dig deeper in to assessment activities that have tested and validated strategic planning goals that illustrate new service patterns that contribute to a meaningful and relevant library collection. The notion of sustainability remains central to how this IG interprets collection evaluation and assessment. You are certainly invited to enthusiastically participate in these discussions and share how you are engaged in these activities at your library.

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Report of the ALCTS Book and Paper Interest Group Meeting. American Library Association Annual Conference, Chicago, June 2017

The ALCTS Book and Paper Interest Group (BPIG), part of the Preservation and Reformatting section, held their annual program at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago on Sunday, June 25. "Risky Collections: Preservation,