The limits of evidence: proving value and impact

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Summary
- The limitations of current measurement for value, and hence for both planning and advocacy
- Progress in value and impact measurement
- The Library future value proposition emerging from scenario planning
- The development of a value scorecard which demonstrates transcendent value

RIN Report on academic library challenges

“...there is a strong feeling among senior librarians that they have failed effectively to communicate the value of their services [and]...in rigorously demonstrating the value of their activities”

“The focus of performance indicators up to now has tended to be on inputs and outputs ... rather than addressing the much harder issues relating to impact and value. ... we believe it is essential that more work is done to analyse the relationships between library activities ... and learning and research outcomes ...”

A QUEST FOR VALUE MEASUREMENT

The distinction between Quality and Value


Recent work on impact & value
- SCONUL/LIRG Impact initiative (2003-05)
- SCONUL VAMP initiative (2005-)
- 8th Northumbria paper (2009)
- IMLS LibVALUE project (2010-)
- ACRL’s ‘Value of academic libraries’ (2010)
- 3rd LAC paper (2010) see Library Quarterly
- Neal’s “polemic” and return to “virtues” (2011)
The Arguments *(see Library Quarterly)*

- Cross-pressures and failure to prove worth
- Worth is about value (and impact)
- The value sought is transcendent
- Library assessment has been about (mainly) quality rather than value
- Value is linked to values
- Values provide the key and route to proof of worth

The Transcendent Library

*The transcendent library is one in which the value can be judged beyond immediate needs and demands, through contribution to less concrete aspects of institutional or societal intent*

INSTITUTIONAL SCENARIOS AND CONSEQUENT VALUES

Scenario Planning in Libraries

- In use since mid ‘90s
- US & UK Health Libraries
  - “Knowledge Animal” for future Health Librarian
- Various academic libraries
  - Reading University Library
- Academic Library collective organisations
  - ARL to 2030
  - SCONUL to 2050

“Each scenario has a gap where the library can fill itself in ....”

ARL Scenarios 2030

- What values are assumed in the scenarios?
- How does this link to value?
- What is the resulting library value proposition?
Value proposition analysis

• Overarching cultural values
• Consequences for value-added in:
  - Content
  - People
  - Relationships
  - Relevant services
• An ‘organism/persona’ vision for the future Library?

Scenario 1: Research Entrepreneurs

• Competition and outsourcing
• Information value high
• Personality cult relationships
• Linking stores and discovery

Scenario 2: Reuse and Recycle

• Collaboration
• Information value low
• Relationships across groups
• Research management and professional training

Scenario 3: Disciplines in Charge

• Specialised Universities
• Data stores high value
• Political skills valued
• Research information decoupled & disaggregated

Scenario 4: Global Followers

• End of Western hegemony
• IP looser?
• Relations with East critical
• Global communal library?

SCONUL Library Scenarios 2050

Axes:
• Open or Closed Society/HE Values
• Market or State HE provision
### Resulting scenarios

- **‘Beehive’**: Open/State
- **‘Wild West’**: Open/Market
- **‘Walled Garden’**: Closed/Market
- **Discarded**: Closed/State

### Characterisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Characterisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beehive</td>
<td>Community good; state control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild West</td>
<td>Competition; consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walled Garden</td>
<td>Insularity; information protection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

• Traditional value measure tools will only provide a partial answer
• Some economic value tools may only reflect instrumental aspects
• Value requires assessment of more intangible benefits

A possible institutional set (U of York)

• Excellence
• Internationalisation
• Inclusivity
• Sustainability

A potential Library set (U of York)

• Service
  - Customer focus
  - Welcoming and stimulating environment for L & R
• Scholarship
  - Collaboration with academic partners
  - Committed to supporting L & R in self and others

A potential Library set (U of York)

• Style
  - Continuous improvement through creativity and innovation
  - Openness, honesty and inclusivity in communication
• Respect
  - Promotion of equality of opportunity
  - Respect for each other and for individual contributions

Unmeasured assets?

Corrall & Sriborisutsakul

Indicators for:
• Human
• Structural
• Relational
• Collections and service assets linked to institutional objectives

An expression of the full worth of the academic research library

A VALUE SCORECARD

The Value Scorecard
Dimension 1: Relational Capital

- Competitive position capital
  - Reputation
  - Reach
- Relational capital
  - External relationship development
  - Internal institutional relationship development

The Value Scorecard
Dimension 2: Library Capital

- Tangible capital
  - Collections
  - Environments
  - Services
- Intangible capital
  - Intangible assets formed around the above (meta-assets)
  - Organizational capital
  - Human capital

The Value Scorecard
Dimension 3: Library Virtue

- Social Capital developed beyond the Library
  - Contribution to research
  - Contribution to learning
  - Contribution to employability
  - Contribution to professional and vocational intent
  - Contribution to inclusivity
  - Contribution to other common goods

The Value Scorecard
Dimension 4: Library Momentum

- Capital saved or gained by progress
  - Capital assets developed early
  - Facilitation of research capital
  - Facilitation of learning capital
  - Facilitation of quality
  - Capital saved by sustainability

Comparison with Balanced Scorecard

- Financial - broadened to capital development of all kinds
- Process - broadened to capital development intent
- Customer - beyond immediate satisfaction
- Learning - fundamental to human capital development but requires focus on intent
Tests 1?

- Transcendent?
- Values linked?
- Cultural and behavioural effect?
- Coherent and full?

Tests 2?

- Strategic relevance?
- Institutional relevance?
- Societal relevance?
- Necessary and sufficient?
- Balanced or choice of imbalance?

Next Steps, Conclusions and Questions

- Population of the framework with existing value measurement methods, and identify what is missing
- Will this extend the limits of our current evidence gathering towards strategic planning and decision-making in terms of the key areas for future investment, and hence capital accumulation?

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