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Making Assessment Matter: Questions to Ask When Asking Questions

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Making assessment matter:
Questions to ask when asking questions

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Albertsons Library

Pacific Northwest Library Association
2013 Annual Conference
What is assessment?
(choose all that apply)

- Gathering data about a project or service.
- Something you do before asking for money.
- A way to ascertain the success or failure of a project or service.
- A group of methodologies aimed at determining how to proceed with a project or service.
- Something that your supervisor (library board/administration) makes you do on top of your real job.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Id</th>
<th>Timestamp</th>
<th>Query</th>
<th>Source</th>
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Assessment

FAQ query outcomes

- Over half of patron queries now result in an FAQ match.
- 10 percent of queries segue into questions via the form on the FAQ results page.
- The rest (31%) are abandoned.

Abandoned queries=failure + opportunity

- These are queries for which the user neither clicks on an FAQ entry nor asks a question.
- Given that our goal is to help people find what they need, abandoned queries (and the trends thereof) warrant extra attention.
- The chart to the right shows groupings of abandoned queries grouped into types.
- Below are definitions, examples and some analysis.
How are data and assessment different?

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<thead>
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<td>8/6/2013 16:50</td>
<td>1971 yearbook</td>
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- Below are definitions, examples and some analysis.
What is a research question?
What do you plan to do differently based on the results?

in 2012 we will deliver

IMPROVEMENTS TO MONUMENT WAY AND BROAD LANE

I love Tottenham

One of our 12 pledges for Tottenham in 2012

1. Stop
2. Change
3. Implement

“If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses.” (Henry Ford)
Should we continue to offer a 24/7 chat reference service?

What are we really looking for?

- Budget
- Other assessment results
- Quality

Is this a research question?
Bottom line?

Unicorns $1000
Hippopotomonktes-$2
CAT $5
VALUE
VALUE = \{\text{BENEFITS} - \text{COSTS}\}
What information would help you with the chat reference assessment?

Research question: What is the value of the library’s 24/7 chat reference service?

VALUE = \{\text{BENEFITS} - \text{COSTS}\}
Information you already have

- Computers & systems
- Your library & organization
- Other local organizations
- Professional organizations
- Other professional organizations
- Library professional organizations
- Data sets
- Other libraries
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Transaction info</th>
<th>Issues</th>
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<th>Score (X/10)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Good (8-10+)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Resolution (-2)</td>
<td>Policy page (-2)</td>
<td>Extra mile (+2)</td>
<td>Unacceptable (≤4)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Website (-2)</td>
<td>Contact info (-1)</td>
<td>Need anything else? (+1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>FAQ (-2)</td>
<td>Incorrect (-3)</td>
<td>Acceptable (6-7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Incomplete (-2)</td>
<td>Follow-up? (+1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
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</table>
Information you gather
Methods: more quantitative

- Statistics
- Pre/post tests
- Usability
- Surveys
Methods: more qualitative

- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Observations
- Photo journaling
- Retrospective research interviews
Sometimes you can break the rules. This is not one of those times.
Assessment can be an entire job

Is it yours?
On analyzing statistics

There are lies, damned lies and statistics
(attributed to Mark Twain)
Make it happen, cap’n
On tilting windmills
Resources
We’d like to thank . . . 

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Thank YOU for participating!

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