Collaborative Assessment and Survey Administration:
A MISO Survey Case Study

Katherine Furlong
Bucknell University, USA

Kevin Reynolds
Corning Museum of Glass, USA

David Consiglio
Bryn Mawr College, USA

Joshua Wilson
Longsight, USA

Kevin J. T. Creamer
University of Richmond, USA

Ellen Yu
Union College, USA

Craig I. Milberg
Willamette University, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Managing Information Services Outcomes (MISO) Survey was originally developed in 2005 at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, USA by staff from a consortium of higher education institutions to assess library and technology services using a single instrument. Since then, the survey has grown and changed under the collaborative management of an all-volunteer team of library and IT professionals from various participating institutions throughout the United States. The survey has been implemented at 171 institutions. This chapter reviews the guiding principles, ongoing partnerships, and the value of working across departments, across campuses, and across cohorts of participating institutions to leverage local expertise, reduce costs, and create a culture of collaboration and assessment. In an environment where libraries are increasingly dependent on information technology, assessing library services in the context of IT brings layered intelligence to data-informed decision making.

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) published the *Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report*. The study represented the Association's recognition of the importance of libraries in the conversation on assessment, accountability, and value across higher education that had been brewing for decades (Oakleaf, 2010). The same trend, pushing higher education to adapt more data-informed practices, challenged library and information technology (IT) organizations serving all types of institutions. A group of small liberal arts college library and IT professionals have been working collaboratively for almost 20 years in order to meet this challenge through the use of an instrument called the Managing Information Services Outcomes (MISO) Survey. The following case study will review the history, guiding principles, and ongoing partnerships of the survey, while exploring the value of working across departments (library and IT), across campuses, and across cohorts of participating institutions to leverage local expertise, reduce costs, and create a culture of collaboration and assessment. The MISO Survey provides academic libraries and IT organizations comprehensive data on library and technology services in an economic environment where every decision counts.

The chapter will also introduce the MISO Survey Leadership Team's process in developing a collaborative research agenda as well as some recent insights from the data. It will conclude by addressing issues of sustainability and discussing the difficulties of maintaining a volunteer group of experts in a collaborative project during an era of increasing financial austerity. The chapter will also touch upon the question of the future of online surveys in the context of higher education.

While the MISO Survey Leadership Team was developed to fit the needs of a unique set of circumstances, it can provide a model of inter-institutional collaboration to better serve the needs of higher education library and IT communities.

ASSESSING LIBRARY AND IT ORGANIZATIONS

Academic libraries have a long history, and the first higher education institution, University of al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco, arguably has the oldest academic library still in existence, founded circa A.D. 859 (Oswald, 2017). Many institutions of higher education in the United States have started with the gift of a library. Just as John Harvard's personal book collection formed the basis of his eponymous university's first library, libraries have been, and continue to be central to the creation of a university, although funding for their continuance was never assured (Shiflett, 1981). As part of the growth of higher education in the United States following the Morrill Act (Britannica, 2019), libraries grew alongside their respective universities, and size became arguably the easiest way to assess collections. But size, especially for smaller libraries, was not a good indicator of the usefulness of, or satisfaction with, library and IT services. General academic surveys such as those produced by The Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium might include a limited set of library questions, but do not provide enough context to truly assess the full range of library and IT service offerings. As Charles Henry, President of the Council on Library and Information Resources, (CLIR) wrote, the "collecting numerical statistics—the counting of books, journals, digital objects, subscriptions, datasets, staff, and dollars—is inadequate to capture the dynamic response of modern research libraries at the analog-digital boundary" (Henry, 2013).

12 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/collaborative-assessment-and-survey-administration/313678

Related Content

Cluster Validation
Ricardo Vilaltaand Tomasz Stepinski (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 231-236).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/cluster-validation/10826

Classification Methods
Aijun An (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 196-201).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/classification-methods/10820

Can Everyone Code?: Preparing Teachers to Teach Computer Languages as a Literacy
Laquana Cooke, Jordan Schugar, Heather Schugar, Christian Pennyand Hayley Bruning (2020). *Participatory Literacy Practices for P-12 Classrooms in the Digital Age (pp. 163-183).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/can-everyone-code/237420

Fuzzy Methods in Data Mining
Eyke Hüllermeier (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 907-912).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/fuzzy-methods-data-mining/10928

Data Preparation for Data Mining
Magdi Kamel (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 538-543).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/data-preparation-data-mining/10872