What a difference a library makes:

lessons on impact measurement from the LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative

Philip Payne,
Librarian,
Birkbeck University of London

“Wert und Wirkung – Outcome in Bibliotheken”
Round Table
Dusseldorf, 30th. November 2006
• LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative
  – What was the Initiative?
  – What led to the Initiative?
  – What did the Initiative involve?
  – What were the outcomes of the Initiative?
  – Where now? [SCONUL VAMP Programme]

• Some final thoughts and conclusions
Can a library change your life?
This one can.
What was the LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative?
What was the LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative?

Assessing a library’s impact
Are we making a difference?

What was the LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative?

Can we demonstrate it?
What was the LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative

- Institution based projects
- Library interventions
- Costs covered by institutions
- Common impact measures
- Developing methodologies
- Supported by facilitators
- Sharing experience
- Common approach
What led to the LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative?
• **“Effective academic library” seminar**
  - Impact of libraries on learning, teaching, and research
  - Leeds, October 2001
  - Organised by Library & information Research Group (LIRG)

• **“Do libraries aid learning?” conference**
  - Scarborough, December 2002
  - Jointly organised by LIRG and SCONUL
What did the **LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative** involve?
The LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative

Phase 1
July 2003 - July 2004

Phase 2
July 2004 - Dec 2005

LIS-IMPACT mailing list

Mid-year review

End of phase review

Initial 2-day workshop

Selection

Two phases

Volunteers sought

End of phase review

Mid-year review

Initial 2-day workshop

Volunteers sought

Phase 1
July 2003 - July 2004

Phase 2
July 2004 - Dec 2005

LIS-IMPACT mailing list
Who was involved in the LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative?

- Birkbeck University of London
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- University of Gloucestershire
- University College, Chester
- Open University
- Northumbria University
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- University of Leeds
- University of Teesside
- Northumbria University
Who was involved in the LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative?

University of Birmingham
University of Glasgow
King's College London
Newman College
University College Northampton
Southampton University
University of Stirling
Bournemouth University
Brunel University
University of the West of England
University of Edinburgh
University of Glasgow
Impact of an online induction tutorial [Birkbeck]

Impact of an online information skills tutorial [Gloucestershire]

Information literacy strategy: awareness of the strategy and its impact [Glasgow Caledonian]

Information literacy: impact on students’ skills development and collaboration with academic staff [Leeds]

Information literacy strategy: awareness of the strategy and its impact [Leeds Metropolitan]

E-resources: impact on students’ skills development and collaboration with academic staff [Chester]

Information and IT skills: impact on confidence and competence in independent and lifelong learning [Northumbria]

Impact of library services to partner institutions [Teesside]

Impact of library support on the research process [Warwick]

Information literacy programme: impact on information literacy amongst students [Open University]
Institutional Repository & Scholarly Communications Advocacy
University of Birmingham

Increasing amounts spent on electronic information services (EIS) each year
University of the West of England

Library support for non-traditional students of modern languages
University of Southampton

Information skills for research postgraduates
Brunel University

Subject-specific electronic resources & the research process
University of Edinburgh

Support for widening participation
University College Northampton

Support for widening participation
Newman College

Integrated enquiry desks
King’s College, London

Single point of access for IT and Library enquiries
Staffordshire University

Subject-specific electronic resources & the research process
University of Glasgow

Student use of subject resources web pages
University of Stirling
The stages adopted in assessing impact (based on the LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative):

1. Choose intervention where library seeks to assess impact
2. Specify objectives for the intervention
3. Develop success criteria
4. Identify possible impact measures
5. Identify evidence needs
6. Select data collection methods
7. Collect and analyse data
8. Present results

Impact process model
An example
Information literacy framework

**Objective**
To raise awareness of the importance of information literacy amongst students and academic staff

**Success Criteria**
Every member of academic staff aware of the Information Literacy Framework

**Evidence & collection method**
Learning Advisers to carry out personal or telephone interviews to assess level of awareness
An example
Information literacy framework

**Objective**
To equip students with the skills to become independent seekers and discerning users of information in their studies

**Success Criteria**
More diverse range of information sources cited in bibliographies

**Evidence & collection method**
A team of Learning Advisers to review student bibliographies in partnership with selected academic staff
An example
Information literacy framework

**Objective**
To integrate information literacy into the student curriculum

**Evidence & collection method**
To use an Information Literacy teaching audit to assess current level of integration

**Success Criteria**
Evidence that information literacy is increasingly integrated within the curriculum
## Possible measures of impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased use of resources</th>
<th>Higher self-assessment of confidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wider range of resources used</td>
<td>Higher scores in tests or assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broader profile of users</td>
<td>More 'hits' on the web site or more downloads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased number of library resources</td>
<td>More mention of the Library in committee minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased numbers of information literacy in module outcomes or student skills portfolios</td>
<td>Broader profile of users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased citation of library resources in bibliographies</td>
<td>Higher levels of satisfaction</td>
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**Surrogate measures of impact**
Methods used to collect evidence in the LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative

- Face-to-face Interviews
- Telephone Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Analysis of coursework & bibliographies
- Analysis of records
- Use statistics (incl. e-measures)
- Observation & recording of behavior
- Analysis of enquiries
- Evidence of reflection in progress files
- Diagnostic tests & assessment
- Web page hits
- Questionnaires
What were the outcomes of the *LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative*?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Tutorial Type</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birkbeck</td>
<td>On-line induction tutorial</td>
<td>High use of induction package. Improvement in knowledge of the Library but no consistent improvement in information searching techniques.</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Gloucestershire</td>
<td>Information skills tutorial</td>
<td>Integrated, context driven approach, to information skills has had a positive effect on student skills. Sub-standard referencing needs attention across all areas of the University.</td>
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What did participants in the *LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative* find?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Introduction of information literacy framework</th>
<th>“More sharply focussed” appreciation of importance of information literacy skills amongst alumni than current students.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow Caledonian University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leeds Metropolitan University</td>
<td></td>
<td>Around 50% of academic staff received the booklet outlining the framework. 20% had not read it. Initial results show that information skills teaching has led to an improvement in student bibliographies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Leeds</td>
<td>Information literacy initiatives</td>
<td>Evidence that students can improve their information literacy skills using generic e-learning resources. Online tutorials revised and improved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northumbria University</td>
<td>Students’ confidence and competence in information and IT skills</td>
<td>Students’ use of information resources was strongly influenced by their academic tutors and was largely assessment driven.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What did participants in the *LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative* find?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of West of England</th>
<th>Availability of electronic information resources</th>
<th>Clear evidence that the impact of electronic information services will increase as a result of the University’s developing e-learning culture.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University College Chester</td>
<td>E-resources availability</td>
<td>Number of electronic resources cited in reading lists was disappointingly low. Most links from VLE modules to e-resources were in those departments where the librarian had been working with academics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“We gained some tangible evidence of the impact of EIS, and clearly demonstrated how this is likely to increase as a result of UWE’s developing e-learning culture. This represents valuable information for the strategic planning of the library service.”

Dianne Nelson, Faculty Librarian, University of the West of England (UWE)
University of Stirling
Measuring the impact of subject resource web pages

“Although time-consuming, our participation in the initiative has provided staff with new skills, raised the profile of evaluating services within the service and allowed us to design web pages which reflect student needs.”

Alasdair Stewart, Faculty Librarian, University of Stirling
What did participants in the *LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative* achieve?

- Deeper understanding of how the Library supports academic processes
- Improved dialogue with academics and stakeholders
- Supported the management of change
- Contributed to the development of library staff
- Raised the profile of the Library within the organisation
Issues identified in the *LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative*
Developing a community of practice

- Consolidate outcomes as training materials – tools, tips, case studies
- Provide information about institutional context in which tools were developed
- Badge web site as clear outcome but link to other relevant material
- Encourage others to measure impact and deposit materials on web site – across all sectors
- Disseminate the outcomes more widely
- Run more courses on practitioner research
Where next?
• **LIRG**
  – *Impact Initiative with HLG and Information Management Associates*

• **SCONUL**
  – *Value and Impact (VAMP) Programme*
SCONUL VAMP Project

• Members’ top concerns. Demonstrating value and impact.
• Being taken forward by SCONUL WGPI
• Funding allocated by SCONUL Executive Board
• Small project group
• Project Manager: Stephen Town (Cranfield University)
SCONUL VAMP Project

- Focussed on influencing stakeholders rather than internal management
- Development of web-based framework/toolkit for librarians to use
- Draws upon existing SCONUL WGPI performance and evaluation tools
- Gap analysis
- Commissioning of new products
Phase 1 (March-June 2006)

- Critical review of relevant initiatives – across sectors and worldwide (Evidence Base at UCE)
- Survey of SCONUL members (LISU at the Loughborough University)
- Synthesis of findings and gap analysis
- SCONUL conference workshops
SCONUL VAMP Project

Phase 2 (July – December 2006)
• Review of existing tools
• Development of new tools

Phase 3 (January-April 2007)
• Development of web site
• Encouraging ‘Community of practice’
• Sustainability strategy
SCONUL VAMP Project

• Value and impact guidelines
  – VFM/Economic Impact
  – Impact on Teaching and Learning
  – Impact on Research

• Staffing and operational measures guidelines
  – Staff costing
  – Staff added value
Some final thoughts and conclusions
Assessing impact is not easy and it is not an exact science. We are dealing with a changing environment where people, services, and needs are constantly evolving. Any research will inevitably provide a snapshot of what is happening at a particular point in time.


Library and Information Research News, 25(81), Winter 2001, p.21

People
Their awareness
Their knowledge
Their competencies
Their confidence
Their behaviour
Their attitudes
Some thoughts when assessing impact

- What are you trying to achieve?
- Who are you trying to influence?
- Who are you going to involve?
- What resources are you going to need - time/expertise/costs?
- How are you going to use the findings?
Some thoughts when assessing impact

- Not all impacts are positive
- Not all impacts are intended
- Not all impacts are immediate
- Difficulty in separating library impact from other influences
Why the need to demonstrate impact?

• Libraries are expensive. Do they provide value for money?

• Libraries are changing. Are we making the right choices?
SCONUL web site
http://www.sconul.ac.uk

LIRG web site
http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/research

Special issue of *Library and Information Research* [no. 91, Spring 2005]
http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/research/puk
eVALUEd toolkit

http://www.evalued.uce.ac.uk/

LIS-IMPACT mailing list & file store
Interested in joining LIRG?

Interested in subscribing to Library and Information Research?

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