Putting a Price on Insight

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Putting a Price on Insight

“What gets measured matters”

but

“Not everything that can be counted counts”

Thinking about Return on Investment

It’s not just us! Many professional services worry about demonstrating their ROI. See what Google suggested when I asked about measuring ROI:

How do sales and marketing staff show ROI for a trade show booth? It may take a LONG time.

# of attendees → prospects → leads → sales opportunities → sales wins → revenue

How do social media marketing professionals show ROI?

They measure cost per lead, the cost for their work vs. the cost for comparable Google Adwords expense, conversion rate for clicks to web site, etc.

To measure ROI, ask:

*What would it have cost to achieve {this goal} without {this resource/service}?*

Distinguish between HOW (operational) and WHY (strategic) data.

**HOW** data is operational – useful for managing the library but not for demonstrating value

**WHY** data is focused on outcome – useful for showing value. Supplement WHY data with examples of strategic value.
What is the ROI for calculating the library’s ROI?

- Justifying the library budget
- Gaining support from stakeholders, who can serve as advocates
- Adjusting to changing needs and priorities of the university
- Identifying service gaps
- Identifying opportunities for providing higher value

**Finding your ROI**

You can measure library ROI in many ways. Recent studies have found:

- An increase in the university library budget results in increased grant funding
- An increase in the journal budget results in a far larger increase in the number of articles downloaded
- For every €1 in increased library budget, there is €4 in increased benefits
- An increase in e-journal use correlates to more PhD degrees awarded
- An increase in the library budget has been tied to better student retention and graduation rates

See [libraryconnect.elsevier.com](http://libraryconnect.elsevier.com) for articles and links to other resources on calculating library ROI.

**Look for “low-hanging fruit” ROI numbers**

Cost of material vs circulation

For a print book, 20% of the cost of a new book (i.e., the used-book price) x the number of times the book was circulated = total value for the book.

Cost of inter-library loan vs otherwise inaccessible information

Time spent reading rather than searching for material

**Measure impact on students**

Show that library outreach, literacy programs, and increased use of library programs results in improved student retention, graduation, and employment after graduation
Measure impact on research
Calculate the percentage of grants and patents awarded to faculty that were supported by library research.
Calculate the number of published articles and presentations by faculty and administration that were supported by library research.
Calculate the number of strategic administrative initiatives that were supported by library research.

If you can improve searchers’ user interface, you can improve their strategic searching.
   Enable better Google searches by building custom search engines (cse.google.de). Favour or exclude certain web sites, add synonyms, etc.
   Move searchers beyond Google and entice them to use the library’s value-add online services.
   Make a one-time effort to customize user profile, results in ongoing savings and increased value.

Measure impact on university personnel
Find out how much your users save in search time after library training. ASK them!
Identify ways to support employee development and improve staff retention

Value-added online services vs. Google
Global coverage and ability to search in multiple languages results in increased ability to follow global discussions on topics of research interest, to identify new opportunities and newly arising issues to address

Communicate the value of the timeliness and deep archive of value-added online services.
   Access to breaking news faster and more reliably
   Access to a deeper archive for a full picture of the past
   Try a “dare to compare” – challenge a non-library user to conduct research on Google and you show what you can find on a value-added service
Issues of copyright and privacy

The “sharing economy” has resulted in a lowered awareness of copyright and intellectual property protection. Just because you can copy doesn’t mean it is legal.

Content with adequate licensing results in risk reduction for the university.

The Right to Be Forgotten decisions result in more gaps in web results, more need for value-added services.

What’s a minute worth?

What’s a professor’s time worth?

Assume ~1800 hours worked a year (8 hours/day x 5 days/week x 45 weeks/year)

Assume “burden load rate” (what an employee actually costs the employer) of 45% of salary

Hourly rate = annual salary * 1.45 ÷ 1800

€80.000 annual salary * 1.45 = €116.000 fully-loaded salary

÷ 1800 hours in a year = €64/hour or €1/minute

Now, start counting the minutes saved PER USER by library services and products.

Time NOT spent Googling

15 minutes twice a day x 45 weeks = €7.200/year

Time saved with custom UI or time saved scanning literature/news

15 minutes once a day x 45 weeks = €3.600/year

Info pros’ time counts too!

Time saved generating data analytics

Time NOT spent on user support

For more about this, download the Dow Jones white paper I wrote, The True ROI of Digital Content, at tinyurl.com/gkw527p
Finding ROI opportunities

Who are your stakeholders?

- Faculty
- Students
- Administrators
- Prospective students
- Staff
- Alumni
- Vendors
- Employers of students and graduates
- Parents of students
- Local community

ID new ROI opportunities

Start a program to help students find internships, learn job-hunting skills and polish their interview skills.

Create workshops for faculty, staff and graduate students to help identify grants and write grant applications.

Remind users of the library resources that they cannot access or afford themselves. Raise users’ DIssatisfaction with their search results. “You settled for Google???”

Review course content, assigned readings and reserves, other course resources:

- What percent of the material is available through the library?
- What else can you recommend?
- Do you need to develop a new LibGuide for this course?
- How else can you integrate library resources into course resources?
Build higher usage

Look for underutilised resources and promote them in your newsletter, the university intranet, in fliers, through training sessions, short learning videos, etc.

Build more face-to-face time through on-site awareness-raising events, establishing weekly drop-by sessions for help with research, establish a peer student “ambassador” program, etc.

Build smarter usage. Look for ways to raise the value of search results.

Show users how to conduct simple data-mining, data visualisation techniques.
Create newsletter-style information packages for faculty and staff.
Show users how to export and re-use information.

Use the tools available on the online services. We need to be ubiquitous to be valuable.
Install widgets at pain points
Embed content where it’s needed
Promote vendors’ mobile apps
Provide curated daily news to faculty & staff

**Communicating the value of the library and information services**

We have to find the dog whistle – the subtle messages that convey value.

“Libraries are great and they offer great ROI” doesn’t connote value.

“We supported 85% of the successful grant proposals this year” DOES connote value.

You have to know what is valued in order to talk about it. Do you know your university’s strategic goals for 2017? Are you visibly contributing to those goals?
Conduct reality-check interviews conversations to learn what services your various stakeholders NEED, VALUE, and will BUDGET for.

- To challenge your assumptions about what your client groups really value
- To raise information DISsatisfaction
- To discover your clients’ untapped needs
- Get past the obvious answer to the real value
- To learn how clients describe their need
- To become competition-proof!

These are conversations, not interviews! Create opportunities for conversations to happen.

- Stop by faculty and administrators’ offices
- Chat when getting coffee
- Invite yourself to staff meetings
- Capture and share input from front-line librarians

Conversation prompts

*What’s keeping you from achieving your goals?*
*How can the library help you achieve those goals?*
*What do you do when you don’t have the info you need?*
*For repeat clients: How would you describe us to a colleague?*
(This is how you learn the most effective and powerful way to describe your value.)

When you describe yourself...

- Is it a WHAT or HOW?
- or is it a WHY?

“We search premium databases” or
“We bring insights you won’t find on the web”

“We provide research services” or
“We enable better research”

“Librarians are info experts” or
“We can find what you didn’t even know to ask us for”
Use others’ ideas

Ask colleagues in other departments how they talk about ROI and value.
See how information vendors talk about value.
Use info companies’ tools!

ProQuest - proquest.com/libraries
Springer - springer.com/us/research-development
Taylor & Francis – tandf.co.uk/libsite

Ban elevator pitches!

Instead, try elevator ping-pong

Think of it as providing a 3-second hook to start a conversation.

A defibrillator salesperson: *I sell human jump leads*
Librarian: *I find what Google can’t*
Librarian: *I'm the one who squeezes the library into your smartphone*

Try elevator Q&A

You know how {describe problem, in one breath}? Well, I {describe what your clients get, in one breath}
You know what it’s like to walk into a key donor’s office and get blindsided? Well, I can brief you the morning of the appointment with the latest on your donor.
Do you wonder whether you are missing key research? Well, we have _____________

Try elevator story-telling

Tell a 3-sentence story.
1. Describe the situation
   *One of our organization’s goals is to prepare youth for today’s job market*
2. What you did
   *Through a library workshop, 45 students learned how to build and program a communications robot for autistic kids*
3. What was the result?
   *We partnered with a local company to hire the kids and build more robots*
Troubleshooting
When you want to cry “But they just don’t get it!”, you need to change...

WHO you are talking with
Are they truly potential clients?

WHAT you say
Are you talking about THEIR concerns?

HOW you say it
Are you talking where they hear you?

WHEN you say it
Are you consistently talking when they are paying attention?

WHY you say it
Are you 100% focused on your clients’ outcome?

Try new approaches

Write and blog/publish 100-word vignettes of library successes
(see tinyurl.com/je99gv9)

Create how-to videos on specialized research

Create a cheat-sheet on when & how to use the open web more effectively like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th>Best uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google, Bing, other search engines</td>
<td>Free, fast results, easy to use</td>
<td>Irrelevant information, too much information, limited search tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikipedia, Internet Public Library, other reference resources</td>
<td>Free, broad range of topics, (semi-)curated information</td>
<td>No professional or trade publications, limited coverage of complex topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Census, Science.gov, other gov’t data sources</td>
<td>Free, authoritative, in-depth statistical data</td>
<td>Must search each data set separately, limited to simple searches, often not current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Scholar, HighWire, other scholarly search tools</td>
<td>Free searching, scholarly publications, some full-text articles available</td>
<td>Not all material is free, limited to simple searches, limited number of journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProQuest Dialog, other premium search services</td>
<td>Wide range of professional sources, reliable content, consistent format, power search and analysis tools</td>
<td>Fee-based, can take time to learn full capabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our messages:

Info pros enable you to accomplish your goals
Info pros are strategic assets
Info pros can rock your world

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Mary Ellen Bates is the owner of Bates Information Services, providing strategic business analysis to business professionals, and consulting and training services to the information industry. She also provides strategic coaching services for info-entrepreneurs.

She is a frequent keynote speaker, and is the author of seven books and innumerable articles on the information industry. In 2005, she was honoured with the John Jacob Astor Award in LIS, given by the Checkpoint Charlie Foundation in conjunction with Initiative Fortbildung e.V.

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