

Methods for User-Based Evaluation

Professor Helen R. Tibbo

School of Information and Library Science

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

tibbo@ils.unc.edu

- Many thanks to my colleague, Professor Barbara Wildemuth for much of the content of these slides.

Why we conduct user-based evaluation

- **Learn about the current users of the collection**
 - Purposes, methods, tools, content, satisfaction, impact
- **Learn about potential future audiences**
 - Purposes, methods, tools, content, satisfaction, impact

Focus of the study

- Evaluation versus basic research
 - Research is more generalizable
 - Evaluation has local basis
- Scope of study from narrow to broad



Evaluation criteria

- Effectiveness
- Utility/ usefulness/
impact
- Satisfaction



Using the criterion for evaluation

■ Criterion-referenced evaluation

- A standard is set prior to the study

■ Norm-referenced evaluation

- Comparison with some other alternative

Data collection

- Watching the users
- Asking the users questions



Methods for watching the users

- Direct observation during use
- Think-aloud protocols
- Transaction logs



Library of Congress Manuscript Division



Archdiocese of Milwaukee Archives

Methods for asking questions

■ Questionnaires

- Surveys

- Measures

■ Interviews

■ Focus groups



Sample satisfaction measure

McKinney, Yoon, & Zahedi, 2002

After using this Web site, I am...	Very dissatisfied	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Very satisfied
After using this Web site, I am...	Very displeased	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Very pleased
Using this Web site made me...	Frustrated	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Contented
After using this Web site, I am	Terrible	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Delighted
After using this Web site, I...	Will never use it again	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Will definitely use it again

Study sample

- Define the population of interest
- Consider sample size
- Develop a sampling plan
 - Probabilistic sampling
 - Nonprobabilistic sampling



Research design

- Controlling extraneous variables
- Achieving internal validity
- Achieving external validity



Data analysis: quantitative

- Descriptive statistics
- Inferential statistics



From results to conclusions

- Check for statistical significance
- Check for meaningfulness of results
- Draw conclusions



Data analysis: qualitative

- Qualitative content analysis
- Specifying a unit of analysis
- Recognizing themes
- Looking for negative evidence



From results to conclusions

- Identify themes for further analysis
- Weigh positive against negative
- Draw conclusions



Review

- The research/ evaluation question
- Evaluation criteria
- Data collection
- Study sample
- Research design
- Data analysis
- Drawing conclusions

Ax-SNet

- Archival eXcellence in Information Seeking Studies Network
- Collaboration of University of North Carolina, University of Toronto, University of Michigan, and many institutional partners across North America and the world.
- Myself, Wendy Duff (Toronto), & Beth Yakel (Michigan)

Ax-SNet

- An evolving international collaboration of researchers and institutions interested in:
 - facilitating accessible access to and use of primary sources;
 - exploring user information seeking and use behaviors;
 - provision of user instruction and guidance; and
 - User-based evaluation.

Ax-SNet

- The institutional partners, along with the researchers, will identify areas for which evaluation tools and modules will be created.
- Researchers will develop these tools.
- Practitioners will test them at their institutions.
- Researchers will revise until reliable tools are built.