Meeting:	**105 Statistics and Evaluation with Division of General Research Libraries**
Simultaneous Interpretation:	**No**

The Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) http://www.caul.edu.au/ is made up of the university librarians or library directors from each of the 38 Australian universities. In the collection of statistics and the sharing of expertise through benchmarking CAUL works closely with the Council of New Zealand University Librarians (CONZUL)

CAUL has a longstanding commitment to the measurement of academic library performance through the use of informal questionnaires and more formal collaborative projects.

The informal benchmarks involve the circulation of questionnaires to all members by a member institution, who is then required to compile the responses and circulate them to all members. However it is the formal collaborative measures that I will concentrate on today.

The formal measures available to CAUL members are:
- o CAUL statistics, http://www.caul.edu.au/stats/ which are collected annually from all CAUL and CONZUL members.

Three other measures which were developed and published originally in 1995, and are available for use by institutions as required: http://www.caul.edu.au/best-practice/PerfInd.html
- o Client satisfaction survey
- o Document delivery
- o Materials availability

The benefits of using the same measures across the sector include the increased ability to benchmark and the availability of time-series data.

All of the above measures are reviewed regularly and updated to reflect the changing environment. For example the original client satisfaction survey has been replaced by an instrument developed by a commercial company, Rodski Behavioural Research Group, and the LibQual survey developed in the US by ARL has also been evaluated.

The development of new measures is also constantly reviewed and in 2005 resulted in the development of a measure for *Digital Reference (information and research) services.*

CAUL Statistics ('cheap, useful, fairly valid')

The CAUL statistics is the only measure which all universities in Australia and New Zealand collect and report annually. The goal of the statistics is to provide accurate, relevant and authoritative data and provide standard measures for key aspects of service delivery. The chair of the CAUL Statistics Working Group, Derek Whitehead, coined the term 'cheap, useful, fairly valid' to describe the statistics collected.

Why these characteristics?
- o Library statistics are part of the cost of managing – keeping cost/effort down is essential.
- o Useful - if you don't use the data, why keep it?
- o Fairly valid is corrective both ways - you need SOME level of validity, but you can go too far – excessive validity can undermine the usefulness of statistics.

The statistics have been collected since 1953 however *what* is collected has changed over time. It is the role of the Working Group to ensure that the statistics remain relevant, and capture as much as possible the range of outputs of a university library. International trends and standards are monitored and the CAUL statistics are aligned in particular with those of ARL in the USA, CARL in Canada, and CURL/SCONUL in the UK.

The statistics are particularly useful for
- o Determining how well we are going in relation to like institutions and to ourselves, over time
- o They assist in understanding and improving service delivery.
- o They inform and provide a basis for resource allocation and budgeting
- o Demonstrate the extent and nature of complex changes over time
- o They are an important way to communicate upwards in the organization as they provide comparative data on a range of measures eg budgets, expenditure on library materials, expenditure per student, and expenditure on electronic resources.

To illustrate how changes are made to the CAUL statistics it is worth considering our recent foray into **E-metrics.**

E-metrics

Most recently the Statistics Working Group has been grappling with **E-metrics** following suggestions from CAUL members that since we are increasingly using electronic resources we need some means of measurement and comparison. While it was possible to identify the amount of money being spent on e-resources there were no national statistics reflecting use.

The Working Group identified a number of E-metrics projects internationally including:
- o ARL
- o COUNTER
- o Equinox (European Union)
- o NISO – draft revised Z39.7 standard on library statistics
- o ISO Library statistics standard which at the time was under development

After evaluating all the available options the Working Group recommended to CAUL/CONZUL that we should collect the following:

- o Number of logins (sessions) on electronic databases
- o Number of queries (searches) in electronic databases
- o Full-text requests from electronic databases
- o Percentage of total acquisitions funds spent on e-resources

What they recommended we **omit**, on the basis that the figures would be less useful and that comparisons would be less valid due to internal policy decisions were:

- o Size of the library's digital collection
    - o e-theses
    - o e-reserve
    - o digitized heritage resources
- o Use of the library's digital collection
- o OPAC searches
- o Turnaways (rejected sessions)

The agreed statistics are being collected this year for the first time and we will be watching with interest to see whether everyone is able to collect the statistics and assess the validity of comparisons.

In addition to the above changes in 2005 it was agreed to let a contract to improve the functionality of the statistics to increase the capacity for interactivity and assist institutions to manipulate data to meet their particular requirements. This development has proved to be very useful.

Performance indicators

CAUL developed and in 1995 launched three kits to facilitate data collection and benchmarking in the areas of

- o Client satisfaction
- o Document delivery
- o Materials availability

These kits aimed:
- o to provide a standard tool to monitor performance
- o achieve economy in the development of tools
- o standardize reporting and share performance data.

Client satisfaction

The most common and widely used indicator is the client satisfaction survey. This has changed over time as the indicators available have become more sophisticated and increased in number. The initial indicator was developed by the School of Information Science at Charles Sturt University on behalf of CAUL members. In 2000 it was decided to contract with Rodski Behavioural Research Group to develop an indicator which suited CAUL's changing requirements. Rodski Behavioural Research is a local company, based in Melbourne, and CAUL can participate in the development of the indicator so that it better represents areas of emerging importance while maintaining the core to ensure validity of time-series data. The relationship with Rodski is managed by the Best Practice Working Group. http://www.caul.edu.au/best-practice/CustomerSurveys.html

In 2005 the Best Practice Working Group reviewed the questions used in the Rodski survey and recommended a number of changes. These changes were circulated to CAUL and CONZUL members, who use the survey, for comment and following agreement a series of new and altered questions have been included in the survey.

While not all the Australian university libraries use the Rodski survey the high number which do enables benchmarking between institutions. Also as the survey has been in use since 2001 it provides time-series data on changes both within and between institutions. It is recognized that all surveys have limitations and should be supplemented by other measures, in this particular case the Rodski survey is valuable for benchmarking and continuous improvement evaluation over time.

Other client satisfaction instruments used by Australian university libraries include LibQual+ which the Australian Technology Universities (ATN) use and which allows them to benchmark with technology universities in overseas countries.

Document delivery indicator

Australian libraries have a national document delivery system, which enables inter-library loans and document delivery between libraries. The original Document Delivery Performance Indicator was developed by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in 1995 with an

updated 2nd edition released in 1997 and further developments by the University of Wollongong in 2003.
http://www.caul.edu.au/best-practice/CustomerSurveys.html

The purpose of the document delivery indicator is to provide an approved recommended standard tool for academic libraries to monitor their own performance and a means to enable central reporting or sharing of performance information. This methodology is intended to be a tool that libraries can use as required to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of their document delivery practices and compliance with national resource sharing code protocols.

The indicator uses Excel spreadsheets for the input of data, and assists libraries in determining frequency of meeting the agreed service standards, as well as the maximum, minimum, and average times taken to initiate requests, process received items and notify clients, and, total turnaround time. The information can be displayed in the form of charts and tables to summarise the data for selected time periods and various service levels.

Materials availability indicator

This indicator measures the proportion of wanted items obtained at the time of visit to the Library. It is most useful as an internal measure for libraries. The process involves a survey which reveals the percentage of material immediately available for client use. Following the survey a number of initiatives are implemented by the library including for example from the University of Wollongong

- o Improved signage and location maps
- o Revised practices to ensure all returned materials are available for shelving within 12 hours of deposit
- o Roving Help – Student helpers providing information support and direction to clients at time of need
- o Uniforms for shelvers – making it easier for clients to locate shelving staff to ask for assistance
- o Suggestions for purchase – allowing clients to participate in collection development

The survey is then repeated to see if the measures have resulted in an increase in the percentage of items located. Improvements over-time can then be reviewed.

Digital Reference (Information and Research) Services

The CAUL Best Practice Working Group also identifies other services which could benefit from the development of performance indicators. The development of the *Digital Reference (information and research) services performance measure* reflects the changing environment. This indicator was developed by a group of university libraries in New South Wales for use by CAUL.

Digital Reference in this context is defined as:

Digital reference is the delivery of 'point of need' reference services using electronic information technologies. It may consist of synchronous or asynchronous electronic reference interactions, such as chat, co-browsing, voice over IP, SMS and email between clients seeking information and reference librarians. Clients ask questions electronically and are answered electronically by reference librarians, regardless of geographic location.

This has proved to be a complex process with a number of issues arising including:

Lack of comparable statistical data and historical data

There were no standardised definitions or data collection forms, making benchmarking difficult. Also there were no standardised client satisfaction surveys, and no measure of staff accuracy and training methods. Most CAUL libraries use the Rodski survey for client perceptions of the library service, but digital reference is not included.

Consistency and accuracy of statistics

The differences in operating library digital services including staff allocation, system set up and statistics collection meant that comparisons and benchmarking were unreliable.

Privacy issues

Under the provisions of the Australian Privacy Act a survey cannot be emailed after an email or chat transaction has been completed. Different solutions for email and chat services have been developed by individual libraries to enable use of the survey.

Consequently the Group developed an agreed standardized model of data collection including:
- o Definitions of reference categories
- o Data interpretation methodology
- o Data collection forms.

This is a new measure and 2006 is the first year of operation so at present there are no outcomes to report.

Why have these indicators been selected by University Libraries in Australia?

The functions which are measured:
- o Client satisfaction
- o Document delivery
- o Materials availability

Are considered to be core functions of service delivery which all members are interested in measuring.

What are our client's needs and how well do they meet these needs?

How well do our collections meet their needs?

How easy is it for them to find what they need?

Statistics

The statistics serve a different purpose and are mainly used as a management tool. In their current form they do not claim to provide any analytical information they are just a measure. The issue of analysis needs to be addressed.

Digital reference

How well are we responding to the use of technologies in communicating with our student base? The GenX and GenY are constantly switched on to these technologies, how can we use these technologies to our advantage?

Conclusion

What I have endeavoured to provide in this presentation is an overview of the measures used by university libraries in Australia. Further information is available on the CAUL website http://www.caul.edu.au/ or by contacting the Executive Officer diane.costello @caul.edu.au