

The value of national libraries in the digital era: a conceptual value framework for national libraries

Results from the 2015 survey

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Introduction & background of the study

- In the context of public / institutional policy on investment, libraries are asked to demonstrate their relevance to their stakeholders
- Relevance = use, benefits to users, economic value, etc.
- What do we really know about the contributions of national libraries to the nation, to their public and to their various stakeholders (funding agencies, publishers, booksellers, libraries and information industries)?
- And more importantly – how are national libraries demonstrating their relevance in the context of the digital era? How do they create value?

Significance of the study

- Developing a clear understanding of the notion of value used for libraries and cultural institutions which could be applied to national libraries
- Identification and evaluation of potential value assessment approaches which could provide realistic and convincing arguments of the relevance of national libraries
- Providing a conceptual value framework that represents how national libraries create value

Research and findings

- Literature review concentrated on:
 - National libraries (history of, evolution of functions and missions)
 - Evaluation and assessment methods and approaches
 - Cultural studies and cultural economics
 - Public policies
- Empirical study
 - National libraries websites and annual reports / strategic reports (sample of 40 national libraries)

Further research - Survey

1. Survey questionnaire (June 2015)

- Comprised of 34 questions (114 indicators)
- 220 libraries through the CENL /CDNL lists (June 8 &15)
- Goal:
 - how national libraries are compiling their data, evaluating and doing assessment of their services and products and how these are impacting on their community of users
 - validating the conceptual value framework

Further research – Survey (3)

- Survey results: 32 responses
 - Europe: 21
 - Asia / Oceania: 5
 - Africa: 3
 - North America: 2
 - South America: 1
- Sufficient information and methodologically valid

Further research – Focus group meetings

2. Individual and focus group meetings (August 2015)

- 15 participants
- Follow-up to the survey questionnaire
 - more in depth information on the national library's views on value
 - clarification of the constituent elements of the conceptual value framework
 - confirmation of documented evidence of value

Next steps

- The second stage of the research project will consist of documenting and collecting assessments, evaluations, case studies and other studies
- The aim is to provide examples of value manifestations for up to 10 indicators (covering the four types of values)

Value manifestations retained

A- Institutional value

- Building the national heritage collections, including digital collections → Case studies from SNL, KB and others
- Making the heritage collection accessible → Use of IFLA's National Bibliographic Register data
- Preserving the collections → Cases studies from NLs

Value manifestations retained

B-Innovation value

- Applying and adopting new technology → Case studies from NLs
- Providing new services → Case studies from NLs

C- Instrumental value

- Offering open access metadata → Case studies from NLs
- Offering open access digital collections → Case studies from NLs

Value manifestations retained

D- Cultural value

- Social / national value → Case studies from NLs
- Historical value → Case studies from NLs
- Architectural / locational value → Case studies from NLs

Conclusion

- Many thanks for your support
- Next 6 months – further requests for case studies, best practices and other studies to support the value manifestations
- Positive responses so far from presentations and discussions with scholars and librarians
- Dissertation completion target date: December 2017