COLUMN / CHRONIQUE

Current research

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Urquhart C, Thomas R, Ovens J, Lucking W. Villa J. Planning changes to health library services on the basis of impact assessment. *Health Info Libr J*. 2010;27(4): 277–285. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-1842.2010.00900.x.

Background: Various methods of impact assessment for health library services exist, including a toolkit developed for the UK. The Knowledge, Resource and Information Service (KRIS) for health promotion, health service commissioning, and public health (Bristol area, UK) commissioned an independent team at Aberystwyth University to provide an impact assessment and evaluation of their services and to provide evidence for future planning. **Objective:** The review aimed to provide an action plan for KRIS through assessing the impact of the current service, extent of satisfaction with existing services and views on desirable improvements. **Methods:** Existing impact toolkit guidance was used, with an adapted impact questionnaire, which was distributed by the KRIS staff to 244 users (response rate 62.3%) in early 2009. The independent team analysed the questionnaire data and presented the findings. **Results:** Users valued the service (93% considered that relevant information was obtained). The most frequent impacts on work were advice to patients, clients, or carers and advice to colleagues. Literature searching and current awareness services saved staff time. Many users were seeking health promotion materials. **Conclusion:** The adapted questionnaire worked well in demonstrating the service impacts achieved by KRIS as well as indicating desirable improvements in service delivery.

Chan R, Stieda V. Evaluation of three point-of-care healthcare databases: BMJ Point-of-Care, Clin-eguide and Nursing Reference Centre. *Health Info Libr J*. 2011;28(1): 50–58. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-1842.2010.00920.x.

Background: Point of care resources make it easier for clinicians to find answers to questions that arise during a clinical encounter. In order to make informed purchase decisions in times of tight budgets, librarians need to have a better understanding of which resources will meet their patrons' clinical information needs. **Objectives:** The goal of this study was to assess the content, interface and usability of three point-of-care tools: BMJ Point-of-Care, Clin-eguide and Nursing Reference Centre. **Methods:** A questionnaire designed to gather quantitative and qualitative data was created using Survey Monkey. The survey was distributed to healthcare practitioners in Alberta's two largest health regions, and the data were analysed for emergent themes. **Results:** The themes that arose – ease of use, validated content, relevancy to practice – generally echoed those stated in the literature. No one database fared significantly better, due to differing features, content and client preference. **Conclusions:** Despite the limitations of the survey, the themes that emerged provide a springboard for future research on the efficacy of information resources used at the point of care, and the need for deeper analysis of these recent additions to the medical information market.

Ketterman EB, Besaw ME. An evaluation of citation counts, search results, and frequency of updates in Dyna-Med® and UpToDate®. *J Electronic Resour Med Libr*. 2010;7(4):273–280. doi: 10.1080/15424065.2010.527238.

This study examines two point-of-care products: Dyna-Med® and UpToDate®. These resources were evaluated based on four criteria: search result counts, search result answers, reference counts, and currency of updates. The results of the study suggest that of the four areas evaluated, two indicate a statistical advantage of one database over the other. DynaMed contained updates that were more current, and UpToDate had a more significant total number of references used in a topic. The other two criteria, of initial search result counts and if there was an exact answer to the clinical question, did not produce a statistically significant difference.

Puterbaugh MD, Shannon M, Gorton H. A survey of nurses' attitudes toward distance education and the educational use of 3-D virtual environments. *J Electronic Resour Med Libr*. 2010;7(4):292–307. doi:10.1080/15424065. 2010.527243.

Using funds provided through the Medical Library Association's 2008 Donald A.B. Lindberg Research Fellowship, librarians at Eastern University conducted a survey to assess nurses' attitudes and perceptions about (1) the effectiveness of distance education in delivering academic content; (2) whether distance learning promoted socialization and fostered professionalization; and (3) the use of an online immersive environment, such as the virtual world Second Life, as a tool to deliver distance education. Results from the survey indicated a positive attitude from nurses at all academic levels toward distance education and a willingness to explore the academic use of a virtual environment.

Handler L. Live and online: using co-streaming to reach users. *Med Ref Serv Q*. 2011;30(2):120–129. doi:10.1080/ 02763869.2011.562773.

The increase in distance education students and the changing preferences for online instruction led the Health Sciences Library to seek creative approaches to traditional classroom instruction. Library instructors compared two different class formats: online-only classes and in-person classes with online sections. The second format, called co-streaming, provided instruction in traditional classroom and virtual environments at the same time. A postclass survey was used to gather users' evaluations of the instruction and the format via which it was offered. This paper examines the user response to, and satisfaction with, the co-streaming classes.

Calabretta N, Cavanaugh S, Malone M, Swartz B Jean. A hospital-based patient and family education center: if you build it, will they come? *Med Ref Serv Q.* 2011;30(1): 19–30. doi:10.1080/02763869.2011.540207.

Librarians located in a 560-bed, inner city academic medical center with 25,000+ admissions per year planned and opened a Patient and Family Education Center (PFEC) in the lobby of a new patient care pavilion. A review of use in the first 19 months revealed that expected needs were being met while a variety of unexpected needs were identified. Ongoing use continues to be monitored by a detailed log of patron visits maintained by library staff. This article describes the evolution of the Patient and Family Education Center, outreach to the hospital community, and plans for the future.

Smith CA. Consumer language, patient language, and thesauri: a review of the literature. *J Med Libr Assoc.* 2011 Apr;99(2):135–144. doi: 10.3163/1536-5050.99.2.005.

Objective: Online social networking sites are web services in which users create public or semipublic profiles and connect to build online communities, finding likeminded people through self-labeled personal attributes including ethnicity, leisure interests, political beliefs, and, increasingly, health status. Thirty-nine percent of patients in the United States identified themselves as users of social networks in a recent survey. "Tags," user-generated descriptors functioning as labels for user-generated content, are increasingly important to social networking, and the language used by patients is thus becoming important for knowledge representation in these systems. However, patient language poses considerable challenges for health communication and networking. How have information systems traditionally incorporated these languages in their controlled vocabularies and thesauri? How do system builders know what consumers and patients say? **Methods:** This comprehensive review of the literature of health care (PubMed MEDLINE, CINAHL), library science, and information science (Library and Information Science and Technology Abstracts, Library and Information Science Abstracts, and Library Literature) examines the research domains in which consumer and patient language has been explored. **Results:** Consumer contributions to controlled vocabulary appear to be seriously under-researched inside and outside of health care. **Conclusion:** The author reflects on the implications of these findings for online social networks devoted to patients and the patient experience.

Neves, Dooley SJ. Using LibGuides to offer library service to undergraduate medical students based on the case-oriented problem solving curriculum model. *J Med Libr Assoc.* 2011 Jan;99(1): 94–97. doi: 10.3163/1536-5050.99.1.017.

Research suggests that creating subject guides at the course level increases library use [1]. Switching from a "library-centered" focus to "student-centered" focus, libraries should make subject guides available at the point of need [2] and design them so the content is available where students are working [3]. According to Morris and Del Bosque, "The emergence of Web 2.0 tools and social networking sites has contributed to a renewed interest in subject guides" [4]. LibGuides is web-authoring and -hosting software for publishing library subject guides, web portals, or course guides. This web-hosted software is available from Springshare, a company based in Gansevoort, New York, that develops Web 2.0 applications specifically for libraries. It incorporates Web 2.0 applications such as social bookmarking, really simple syndication (RSS) feeds, and podcasts, and it allows librarians to collaborate with the LibGuides' community. Librarians are able to collect feedback for their guides through polls and ratings, as well as gather detailed usage statistics. LibGuides allows a librarian to access annual usage statistics for each of their published guides. The annual report tracks monthly page and link hits. An analysis of these statistics determines which links and pages users view least and most frequently. This paper reports on a project to assess the usefulness of a web-based research portal, designed using LibGuides software and incorporating the architecture of the medical school curriculum. The portal facilitates use of electronic resources offered by the W. K. Kellogg Health Sciences Library at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada [5].

References

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