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Additional Functions and Services

Responses

The services listed here were cited by at least one state library agency as being performed in addition to services specified in the survey.

ADA Compliance, Administration of OGLC Services, Census Information/Property Values/Municipal Data, Chartering/Registering of Public Libraries, Children's Literature Resource Center, Distance Learning/Videoconferencing Services, Distribution/Delivery/Mailing of State Documents, Electronic Access to State Government Information, Family Resource Center, Instructional Technology Leadership, Interlibrary Loan Subsidy, Library Facility Planning and Construction Service, Library Jobline, Management of County Bookmobiles, Microfilming and Imaging, Natural Heritage Program, Natural Resources Information System, Public Policy Research, Publishing, Radio Reading Service, Services to Ethnic Minorities, Services to Users with Special Needs, State Archival Reference Service, State Digital Library, State Homepage/Web Coordination, Statewide Video Service, Statutory Responsibility for Hospital Libraries, Telecommunications Services for State Government, Universal Service Fund Assistance, Van Delivery/Materials Delivery System, Voluntary Certification of Support Staff, Web/Internet Service Provider

Sampling of Partners or Entities with which Responsibility for Service or Function Is Shared

Library Services Performed by State Library Agencies	Partners or Entities
Reference and Loan to State Government Employees	Other State Agency Libraries
Reference and Loan to State Government Agencies	Other State Agency Libraries
Reference and Loan Directly to the Public	Public Libraries; Specific Major Urban Library; Regional Library Systems
Interlibrary Loan from State Library Collection	None Cited
Interlibrary Loan Referral Service	Other Libraries of all Types; Library Consortia
Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped	Separate Independent Library for Blind and Physically Handicapped, Contract with Major Urban Library, sub-regional centers in public libraries
State Documents Depository System	State Archives; Public/State Universities; Regional State Depository Libraries; State Historical Societies; State Legislative Reference Library
Other Functions and Operations	Partners or Entities
State Archives	Public/State Universities; State Historical Societies
State Computer Center Operations	State Departments of Administration; Other State Agencies
State Data Center	Public/State University; Office of State Planning; State Economic Development Dept.; Office of Financial Management
State Legislative Reference/Research	Separate State Legislative Reference/Research Library or Legislative Service or Bureau
State History Museum/Gallery	State Museum; State Archives
State Records Management	State Archives; Separate State Records Administration Department or Bureau
State Center for the Book	State Humanities Councils; Separate 501 (c) (3) Organization; State Library Foundation; Public/State University

The Functions of State Library Agencies

Sampling of Partners or Entities with which Responsibility for Service or Function Is Shared, Continued

Statewide Library Services Development	Partners or Entities
Accreditation of Libraries	State Education Agencies (Education, Higher Education)
Administration of Federal Aid	Advisory Committee; "Parent" Agency
Administration of State Aid	"Parent" Agency; Another State Agency (Finance, Dept. of Administration)
Certification of Librarians	State Center for Government Training; Public/State University Library Education Programs
Certification of Librarians	State Center for Government Training; Public/State University Library Education Programs
Collect and Publish Library Statistics	Regional Library Systems/Cooperatives; State Education Dept.
Consulting Services	Regional Library Systems; Cooperative Educational Service Agencies
Continuing Education Programs	Library Schools; State Library Associations; Universities; Regional Library Systems
Cooperative Purchasing of Library Materials	Library Consortia; Library Systems/Cooperatives
Database Development: Bibliographic Databases	Library Consortia; Library Systems/Cooperatives; Individual Libraries
Database Development: Retrospective Conversion	Library Consortia; Library Systems/Cooperatives; Individual Libraries
Database Development: Full-Text or Data Files	Library Consortia; Library Systems/Cooperatives; Public/State Universities; Individual Libraries
Electronic Network Planning or Monitoring	Other State Agencies; Library Consortia; State Board of Regents/University System; Regional Library Systems; Local Libraries
Electronic Network Operation	Other State Agencies; Library Consortia; State Board of Regents/University System; Regional Library Systems; Local Libraries
Internet Access: Training for Participation	Public Library Systems, Multitype Library Systems/Cooperatives; State Library Associations; Library Consortia; Public/State Universities; Cooperative Educational Service Agencies
Internet Access: Consulting for Participation	Public Library Systems; Multitype Library Systems/Cooperatives; Library Consortia; Cooperative Educational Service Agencies
Internet Access: Subsidy for Participation	State Agencies/Entities (Dept. of Administration/ Separate Entity Dealing with Telecommunications); Library Systems/Cooperatives
Internet Access: Providing Equipment	State Agencies/Entities (Dept. of Administration/Separate Entity Dealing with Telecommunications); Library Systems/Cooperatives; Public/State Universities; Local Libraries
Internet Access: Mounting Directories, Databases, or Online Catalogs	Library Consortia; Public Library Systems; Multitype Library Systems/Cooperatives; Local Libraries
Internet Access: Managing a Gopher, File Servers, Bulletin Boards, Listservs, or Web site	Other State Agencies (Dept. of Administration, etc.); Other Libraries of all Types
Library Legislation Preparation and/or Review	State Library Associations/Federations; "Parent" Department
Library Planning/Evaluation/Research	Regional Systems; Advisory Committees; Local Libraries; Public/State Universities; Library Schools
Literacy Programs	State Education Departments; Vocational/Technical College Systems, Statewide Literacy Coalitions; Governor's Office of Literacy; Local Libraries; Local Literacy Organizations
OCLC GAC	Library Consortia; Library Systems/Cooperatives; Public/State Universities
Preservation and/or Conservation Services	State Archives; State Historical Societies; Local Libraries; State Preservation Consortium
Public Relations/Promotion (Marketing) Campaigns	State Library Associations/Federations; State Library Friends Organizations, Local Libraries
Statewide Standards or Guidelines	Library Systems/Cooperatives; State Library Associations/Federations
Statewide Reference Service	Other Libraries; University Libraries, Contracts with Major Public Libraries; Regional Reference Centers
Statutory Responsibility for Public Libraries	Local Governments; Local Libraries; Regional Library Systems

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Statewide Library Services Development	Partners or Entities
Statutory Responsibility for Academic Libraries	Boards of Higher Education; State University Systems
Statutory Responsibility for School Libraries	State Departments of Education; Education Service Units
Statutory Responsibility for State Institution Libraries	Other State Agencies (Corrections, Health and Human Services, etc.); Individual State Institutions
Statutory Responsibility for Special Libraries	none cited (one agency has responsibility for hospital libraries)
Statutory Responsibility for Public Library Systems	Library System Boards; local/member libraries
Statutory Responsibility for Multitype Library Systems	Library Systems Boards; local/member libraries
Summer Reading Programs	State Library Associations; Regional Library Systems; Local Libraries
Union Serials List Development	Library Consortia; Library Systems/Cooperatives; Public/State Universities

Section II

The Roles of State Library Agencies

The Art of State Librarianship

Barratt Wilkins

Some will say it is serendipity; others will call it luck; still others will call it "being in the right place at the right time." For many of us, though, it is the practice of an art, the Art of State Librarianship.

There are many factors that influence library development and successful state librarianship in the individual states. It is a mixture of politics, personality, alliances, and position. Indicators of state library consequentiality include the place of the state library agency in state government, the appointment of the state librarian, the agency budget, the personnel complement (including its education, experience, and diversity), the scope and breadth of its services and programs, and the history and politics of the state. All state library agencies are shaped by these indicators.

Successful state librarianship is a mixture of politics, personality, alliances, and position.

Twenty years ago, it was noted in a seminal National Center for Education Statistics Survey of State Library Agencies (1977) that the only two unifying factors among the state library agencies were the state statutory responsibility for library development, and the administration of the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA). Indeed, the role of that federal legislation can never be underestimated in any history of state libraries. In at least two states, the very nature of LSCA demanded the creation of a state library agency to administer it. LSCA also demanded a state role in the establishment and development of public and state institutional libraries, library service to the blind and physically handicapped, library cooperation and resource sharing, public library construction, aid to major urban libraries, and services for Native Americans.

The placement of the state library agency within state government is a crucial factor to success. Twenty years ago, there was almost an even split between state library agencies as parts of state departments of education, and state library agencies governed by a board appointed by a governor, commission, or other organization. Only a handful was attached to the legislative branch or to another department of state government. That nearly even split continues today, although the numbers in the even split have dwindled as state library agencies have become parts of other state departments. There are now five attached to a Department of State; four in Departments of Cultural Resources; and one each in Education, Arts, and Humanities Cabinet; Department of Children, Families, and Learning; Department of Community and Economic Development; Department of Administration and Information; and in the Office of the State Board of Education. Two are attached to the Legislative branch.

How successful the agency is can be measured in how many lives are touched directly or indirectly by its services and activities.

Is there a best place? Many would argue that state library agencies in state departments of education are often lost in the bureaucracy, particularly compared with other components of higher education, public schools, and vocational and technical education. Independent state library agencies under a board or commission appointed by a governor tend to have the most independence in policy and library development, but that depends on the interest and strength of the governor. Those attached to other state departments seem to fare well, because they come into daily mix with many disparate functions of government; thus library and information services is seen in a different context than simply attached to education. The record of legislative control of the state library agency is mixed—well supported in one state and comparatively not so well in the other.

All heads of state library agencies are appointed by either the governor, a board or commission, or by another elected or appointed higher level state officer. In at least two cases the appointment of the state librarian is subject to Senate confirmation. Almost without exception all heads of state library agencies possess a graduate degree in library science from a library education program accredited by the American Library Association. The appointment of noncredentialed state library agency heads for the most part ended some thirty to forty years ago. The appointment of a state librarian is part professional and part political (in some cases partisan and in some cases a result of library politics).

How the state librarian takes advantage of the appointed nature of the position is one of personal preference, politics, history, individual state experience, and the energy and practical intelligence of the individual. Some have used the position to make powerful differences in the development of library service in their states and others have not. With a few notable exceptions, a state librarian is usually in office from four to twelve years. Some have been in office for nearly thirty years, many today were appointed in the last four years, and some make it for only one year or less. Needless to say it is not an easy position; many incumbents have described the experience as like working in a fishbowl.

The State Librarian's influence can be measured in what other related state boards or commissions the individual serves on; the unfettered access to statewide elected officers; access to state legislators, staff, and committees; and involvement on a regional or national level in federal level committees, professional organizations, or associations.

Budgets and funding

Another indicator of a state library agency's consequentiality is the scope and size of the agency budget and how much discretionary control the agency head has over the funds. Of the three-quarters of a billion dollars that flow through state library agencies annually, a large percentage is tied up in salaries, fixed operational expenses, library materials budgets, and formula-driven grants-in-aid programs. Only five state library agencies report annual incomes from all sources above \$40 million and only one at above \$100 million. The major discretionary funds derive from the Library Services and Technology Act (formerly LSCA) and the use of the funds is based on meeting the goals and objectives of each state's long range plan. The plan and the monies are a powerful tool to advance library and information services in the states.

With respect to the new Library Services and Technology Act, state library agencies have been given a very exciting and energetic tool to develop library and information services tailored to their individual states, unfettered by the strictures, policies, and priorities of the Library Services and Construction Act. LSCA accomplished much good and advanced American library services to very high levels during the forty years of its existence, but LSTA of-

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fers an opportunity for new vision and renewed energy in meeting the information demands of a dynamic and diversen ational population. The use of these funds and the measured performance by the states will be an extraordinarily important indicator of state library agency success as we approach the beginnings of a new millennium.

Staffing

Another indicator of a state library agency's consequentiality is the size and breadth of the staff. Those agencies that experience the most success tend to have a dynamic and diverse senior management team who are heavily involved on the state, regional, and national level in professional organizations and activities and often serve in advisory capacities on national projects and programs. If the senior management team is thus involved it is often reflected in the activities of library and information professionals on the state agency staff. Some are officers, serve on boards, or are otherwise active in local, state, or national library organizations, historical societies, records management associations, information and computer science organizations, museum societies, cultural organizations, and civic and professional service organizations. In essence, the successful state library agency has staff involved in local, state, and national community activities.

Scope and breadth of programs

Still another indicator of the successful practice of the art of state librarianship is in the scope and breadth of the state library agencies programs and services. How successful the agency is can be measured in how many lives are touched directly or indirectly by its services and activities. Those with broad statutory authority are in the best position to influence outcomes.

The history and politics of the state may be the most influential set of indicators of success and the least affected by the state librarian and the state library agency. The history and demographics of a state often determine library and information service programs and activities. Those states with high density and diversity of population in urban and suburban areas offer distinct but no less difficult challenges than those states with low density and less diversity. Much of what we do is based on custom and precedent; thus our history. It is important to realize that much of today's history is rooted in change—fast-paced, constant, with new mutations developing at exponential speeds. For some, the change may be simply a variation on a theme. But to another generation it is boldly new, different and unprecedented. How a state library agency works in this “change” environment must be tempered by history and politics, and decisions can be explained by those factors.

The “Art of State Librarianship” is a practice, and like all practice, it is based on some foundation of science, education, and experience, and some mixture of the indicators of success and consequentiality discussed above. A person seeking a method of evaluation or performance, or a level of understanding of what a state library agency does, should think as broadly as possible about all of the factors affecting state library services. Through the constant sifting and winnowing of information, indicators, and factors both internal and external, a good start can be made toward determining the effectiveness of the state library agency.

State Library Agency Roles in an Electronic Age

Nancy Bolt

Libraries play six major roles on the information superhighway. They are:

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|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Knowledge Provider | Librarians access electronic resources on behalf of users. |
| 2. Knowledge Gateway | Librarians establish policies, allocate resources, and make decisions that result in physical access to the information highway through the library. |
| 3. Knowledge Teacher | Librarians teach people how to access, evaluate, and use resources on the information highway. |
| 4. Knowledge Organizer | Librarians select and organize the approach to resources on the information highway expediting access by users. |
| 5. Knowledge Creator and Publisher | Librarians create online catalogs and information resources from raw data and make them accessible on the information highway. |
| 6. Knowledge Partner and Advocate | Librarians act as catalysts to bring together partners in all community and institutional information highway initiatives and advocate for the role of libraries. |

Local libraries are more effective in implementing all of these roles if the state library agency provides state level support and leadership. There are seven companion roles that a state library agency should play in helping local libraries successfully ride on the information highway. They are:

1. Advocate

The state library agency is the premier advocate for the important and critical role of libraries on the information highway. The state library agency has the unique capability to advocate to three main audiences: libraries, decision-makers, and the general public.

Many local libraries do not yet recognize the options and importance of incorporating technology into their library service. Until library administrators and staff accept using and providing access to technology as a key role, libraries will not become equipped, obtain training, and provide new services. The state library agency's role is to encourage libraries to make technology capability a priority.

State decision-makers are increasingly planning and implementing statewide networks. As these are planned, various state organizations such as state agencies, K-12 schools, and higher education institutions are included in the planning and subsequent funding. It is the state library agency that takes the lead in advocating for the inclusion of libraries as providers of resources and public access points on a state network.

Finally, we must frame the general public's perception of libraries: from passive maintainers of the public and cultural record to active providers of materials and information from sources throughout the state, country, and

The Functions of State Library Agencies

We must frame the general public's perception of libraries: from passive maintainers of the public and cultural record to active providers of materials and information from sources throughout the state, country, and world.

world. Through campaigns such as "Log on @ the Library," the state library agency can use statewide press and media to influence the general public on the changing role of libraries.

2. Participation in State-Level Decision Making

The most effective avenue for advocating for the role of libraries is through participation on state-level committees that are charged with planning, funding, and implementing statewide telecommunications networks and related activities.

The state library agency must become active in advocating the inclusion of library representatives on legislative and executive planning committees. At a minimum, state library agency staff should attend all meetings of such committees and educate members about the roles, needs, and value of libraries.

3. Collaboration

Technology planning and implementation calls for more collaboration than most other activities. After advocacy and participation in decision-making, the state library agency should seek alliances and collaborations that further the support and inclusion of libraries. Such collaborative relationships can be made with nonprofit organizations, with telecommunications companies, and with state and regional government entities such as county and municipal associations, and with library organizations such as professional associations, regional cooperatives, and individual libraries.

4. Standards and Guidelines

State library agencies are in a unique position to establish technical and service standards. Local libraries can use state standards in local decision making and as leverage with local decision-makers. At least three kinds of standards may be useful: minimal technical standards, network participation standards, and service standards.

Minimal technical standards are at least guidelines and can be used by local library staff to understand the minimal capacity necessary to participate on the information highway. By setting these standards, a state library agency gives local libraries a powerful tool to use with local funders to achieve minimal technical parity with other libraries and agencies.

Network standards and guidelines inform local libraries of what is necessary to connect to a statewide network. They help ensure that all libraries can be connected to each other and to other state and national information resources. This is useful in helping medium and large libraries make decisions that contribute to the common good; they help small libraries gain a better understanding of how they can participate in such a network. Again, this provides a way to leverage resources and power to involve more libraries in providing information to the public.

State Library Agency Roles in an Electronic Age

Service standards or guidelines make it clear to local libraries, to their local governments, and to library users the level of service that is expected from libraries in the age of telecommunications. These service standards and guidelines can be included in statewide long-range plans, strategic plans, or LSTA plans to show how telecommunications services relate to other library services. They can also be included in separate technology or network plans for the state library agency or for libraries in the state.

5. Building, Creating, and Negotiating Resource Access

The state library agency is in a unique position to take the lead in building a statewide network, creating resources to be accessible on a state network, and negotiating for state or regional contracts with database vendors. In many states it is the state library agency that has established a statewide network of state and local library resources for access by libraries and citizens. State library agencies can also create central interfaces and user friendly enhancements such as interlibrary loan systems or global/broadcast searching of databases that allow libraries and citizens to find and obtain information and locate materials easily and quickly.

State library agencies can also take the lead in creating online information resources including mounting the state's own resources, working with the state's legislature, governor, or other state agencies to mount government information. Similar efforts can be made with nonprofit organizations or with commercial entities to make useful information available to the state's residents.

Finally, state library agencies can take the lead in negotiating state or regional contracts to make information resources available to libraries and/or to the general public. These contracts can lower the cost of information for any one library by spreading the cost among many libraries. State library agencies can also opt to use state or federal funds to pay the full cost or to subsidize the cost of such access.

6. Consulting and Training

A primary role for state library agencies that support all or most of the other roles described above is consulting and training. Many libraries look to state library agencies to provide technical assistance, general consulting, and training in the areas of technology, networking, and telecommunications.

Specific topics on which some state library agencies provide training include network development, technical installation, online interlibrary loan, online reference, use of a state network or the Internet, computer repair, electronic preservation, and equipment selection.

It is often state library agencies that provide both the leadership and reassurance to local libraries that participation on the information superhighway is both possible and feasible.

7. Funding

The final major role played by state library agencies is in the area of funding at the state level. It is state library agencies that often make the case to state government for the funding and operation of a statewide network facilitates both library and public access. State library agencies and their advisory committees and policy-making boards that make decisions that result in the allocation of federal funds to statewide networks or to provide grants that encourage local libraries to acquire technology and to connect to a state or regional network.

Without the efforts of state library agencies, state networking and much of the development of local library telecommunications capability would not take place. It is state library agencies, working in cooperation with regional and local libraries in their states, that provide the leadership, technical assistance, standards/guidelines, and advocacy that articulate and enhance the role of libraries on the information superhighway.

Roles that State Library Agencies Can Play

Himmel and Wilson, Library Consultants

These roles were originally developed for the Mississippi Library Commission.

Advocate—The state library agency actively promotes the importance of libraries and library services to the public and encourages state and federal legislation that would improve or enhance library services.

Advisor—The state library agency provides expert advice upon request to libraries on a broad range of topics including children's and youth library services, library technology, library construction, etc. A staff of "library consultants" usually provides advice.

Provider—The state library agency acts as a direct provider of services to libraries such as being the source of materials through interlibrary loan or information through referred reference service. The state library agency may also provide direct reference and loan services to the general public or to state government. Direct service may also be provided to individuals with special needs such as those who have visual or physical disabilities that prevent them from using standard printed materials.

Data Collector/Evaluator—The state library agency collects descriptive statistical information (number of volumes owned, circulation, expenditures, etc.) from libraries, compiles the data, and reports it back to libraries for their use in comparing their libraries to others in the state. The state library agency may also analyze and evaluate library service based on the data collected.

Enforcer—The state library agency monitors and enforces state statutory requirements related to library service and federal regulations related to the use of Library Services and Technology Act funds.

Leader—The state library agency promotes improved or enhanced library services by encouraging libraries to implement programs and methods that enable libraries to improve their efficiency and/or effectiveness.

Facilitator—The state library agency advances cooperation and linkages between and among different types of libraries (academic, public, school, and special). These linkages can be electronic networks, program connections, or personal relationships.

Educator—The state library agency provides continuing education opportunities that allow librarians, other library staff, library trustees, and library friends to carry out their respective role(s) more effectively.

Innovator—The state library agency uses state or federal funds to demonstrate programs or services that result in improved or enhanced library services.

State Libraries: Leading, Supporting, or Cameo Role?

Bill Wilson

The previous page presents nine roles that state library agencies can play in carrying out their programs of service. The nine roles are: Advocate, Advisor, Provider, Data Collector, Enforcer, Leader, Facilitator, Educator, and Innovator. While these roles stress the library development aspects of state library agency work, they provide a valuable tool to use with the extended library community to discuss state library agency activities.

These roles are helpful in the same way the well known public library roles contained in *Planning and Role-Setting for Public Libraries* (Charles McClure, ALA, 1987) have been useful. They provide a convenient terminology for discussing what state library agencies do. However; as is the case with the public library roles, the state library agency roles outline more work than any single agency can carry out at a high level. State library agencies, like libraries must make choices, set priorities, and focus efforts where their resources will do the most good. How do successful state library agencies do this? Since the word "role" has been introduced, an approach that continues the theater analogy may prove instructive.

As is the case in the theater, various players in the library world carry out different roles and succeed to varying extents. Some actors fill "leading roles" while others perform in "supporting roles." Finally, as is the case in many theatrical productions, statewide activities related to library service and development often require players to fill "bit-parts" as well. Excellence in carrying out a role is not dependent on whether a player is in a leading role, a supporting role, or makes a cameo appearance. It is possible to excel at each; however, a production will certainly flop if a bit-player tries to steal the show by acting like a leading woman or man. By the same token, portraying character that is supposed to be a leading-woman or man like a bit-player will assure that the production has a short run!

While state library agencies are major players in their states' library communities, they are not the only players. State library agencies must determine which other players are performing which of the roles and at what level. They, with significant input from the library community, must then determine whether it is most appropriate for the agency to play a leading or supporting role, or to fulfil a limited role. State library agencies can't afford to take the leading role in all arenas nor can they remain major players if they routinely accept only bit-parts.

Many factors come into play in determining a state library agency's appropriate level of involvement with various issues and with different types of libraries. State statutes, administrative rules, and directives from policy-making authorities or boards obviously influence role choices and role involvement heavily. Often, state library agencies have little control in regard to much of the work that they must carry out. For example, a state library agency's role in advocacy may be restricted because of a prohibition on lobbying activity.

Nevertheless, SLAs must examine the level at which they perform various roles based on the activities and resources of the other players. The most effective and efficient result can be achieved when all the players agree on their respective involvement in each role and strive to coordinate efforts aimed at improving access to library services for all of a state's residents.

Recent Developments in Evaluation and Measurement in State Library Agencies

Ethel Himmel

State library agencies, like other publicly funded organizations, are called upon to establish performance goals and indicators and to communicate the impact they have. Some chief officers of state library agencies see this expectation as an opportunity to show legislators and others in state government that the state library agency is on top of things and accountable.

Thinking in the library world in general has moved away from rigid national standards or norms and moved toward evaluating services in terms of how well individual libraries are meeting the needs of the specific community they serve. Libraries have started to look at outcomes; that is, what happens in a community because it has a library. The idea that all libraries are the same or provide basically the same services is no longer widely accepted. This approach fits very well with state library agencies because, while they share many similarities, each has developed through the years to serve the needs of their individual constituencies and states. State library agencies, like local libraries, are functioning in an environment in which other service providers, customs, politics, history, and expectations have had an impact on the services needed and the functions provided by the state library agency.

Libraries have started to look at outcomes; that is, what happens in a community because it has a library.

The precise outcomes or impacts that state library agencies, or even individual programs of the agency, have in its state are very hard to measure. The direct cause and effect relationship illustrated in a scientific experiment is much more difficult to show in the real world. Lacking the control that is part of the scientific experiment, those who seek to measure the impact of library service, or a state library agency, often find themselves struggling to communicate the real impact the library or agency has. In an environment with multiple information and technology outlets and with expectations that vary among the stakeholders, it is hard to define why a state is better or has improved because it has a state library agency. However, a number of state library agencies are exploring outcome "concepts," "performance targets," and "performance indicators" as ways of measuring and communicating their impact.

Recent developments

A number of recent developments are influencing the measurement and evaluation activities of state library agencies. Foremost among these, the change in the reporting structure for federal programs promises to have the widest and most immediate impact across all state library agencies.

Recent Developments in Evaluation and Measurement

The change from the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) under the U.S. Office of Education to the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) under the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is driving the library, education, and legislative communities to rethink program evaluation. The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), which focuses the attention of federal agencies and their state partners on performance, not just simple measures of activity, also strengthen this impetus.

State library agencies, in particular, must take a fresh approach to reporting structures and evaluation in order to meet the accountability requirements specified in LSTA and GPRA. Although LSTA is a state-based program, the law requires an independent evaluation report to be submitted to IMLS prior to the end of each state's five-year program. Thus, most states will be planning evaluation activities for at least three levels:

- (1) promoting the improvement of evaluation activities for specific subgrants awarded to individual libraries or consortia;
- (2) planning and implementing evaluation of state library agency conducted LSTA activities; and
- (3) the five-year evaluation required by the Act.

In addition, states will also likely be assessing the effectiveness of their administrative and subgrant LSTA procedures.

At the national level, IMLS and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) have established a joint committee on LSTA evaluation to look at options for channeling ongoing program and evaluation information from the states to IMLS and Congress throughout the five-year program. The issues involved in this committee's charge are more complex than might be at first imagined. First, because LSTA is a state-based program, activities across the fifty states are not uniform. No two states are supporting the exact same mix of activities with LSTA funds. Yet IMLS must still provide annual information on LSTA to Congress. Second, Congress has made it clear that its interest lies in the impact of the program, not simply on descriptive information. Impact evaluation is complex — in both design and implementation, and often requires an extended period of time before results can be adequately measured or documented.

Congress has made it clear that its interest lies in the impact of the LSTA program, not simply on descriptive information.

Further, LSTA is a multitype library program. Due to the focus of LSCA on public libraries, state library agencies have long collected public library service statistics for reporting to the National Center for Educational Statistics. Most state library agencies do not have the authority — statutory or administrative — or the staff resources to collect statistics describing academic and school library services. This lack of authority and resources affects the establishment of baseline evaluation data in the states and directly constrains the development of national performance indicators.

While it may ultimately be possible to define national performance indicators for LSTA, it must be remembered that library funding nationwide is a mosaic of local, state and federal sources. Broad indicators of the health of library services nationwide may be useful in library advocacy, but they will not fulfill Congressional intent for the evaluation of LSTA without the support of additional types of evaluative data.

The increased emphasis placed on evaluation in LSTA will encourage state library agencies to develop more rigorous evaluation models — for themselves and for their subgrantees. Over time as this information is shared, and promising practices are identified and communicated within the profession, the quality of library services nationwide will be improved.

The Functions of State Library Agencies

Three other areas promise to have more subtle or more state specific impacts: change in the way people access information, state required performance measures, and state agency staff who have TELL IT! Training (see description below).

TELL IT! focused on planning and evaluation as a means to higher quality and more cost-effective services and as an integral part of business as usual.

As the use of electronic databases and Internet resources increases, and as library expenditures shift from print materials owned by libraries to access to resources available electronically, the library community is searching for ways to measure the use made of information resources. State library agencies are involved in coordinating some of the connections (and measuring their successes), in negotiating vendor contracts to provide statewide access (and setting standards and requirements for these contracts) and in developing measures that can be used locally, statewide, and nationally to reflect this increased use.

A number of state governments (Florida, Texas, Idaho, and New York, to name a few) have adopted performance based program budgets or planning processes that require all state agencies to develop performance measures reflecting outcomes or measuring the impact of agency programs. (More on this below.) In some cases this has led to aggregate counts and indexes that primarily measure change within the state from one reporting period to another. In other cases the state library agency is building on the opportunity to develop measures that will be meaningful within the broader national library community as well.

As a result of TELL IT!, the project initiated in 1992 by the Office of Library Programs in the U.S. Department of Education, and carried out through a contract with the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, representatives of almost all state library agencies have participated in national institutes on evaluating library performance. TELL IT! focused on planning and evaluation as a means to higher quality and more cost-effective services and as an integral part of business as usual. Having been trained in determining and evaluating outcomes and in the selection and use of evaluation techniques, state agency staff are able to apply a higher level of evaluation knowledge and skills to both the users of state agency services and to the agency as well.

In the cover letter to the Baseline Survey the state library agency head was asked to identify services or functions for which their agency had developed particularly effective performance measures or evaluation methods. The instructions to the person completing the survey asked him or her to help identify "effective evaluation and performance mechanisms by placing a check in the performance measure box" if their agency conducted a formal, periodic evaluation of the specific function or service. Twenty of the fifty state agencies checked they had evaluation mechanisms for at least one service or function. A telephone interview concerning the evaluation at that state library agency was then conducted with the designated contact person in each of these twenty agencies. The following paragraphs are based on those interviews. Obviously, some evaluation and measurement are carried out by all agencies; however, individual states may have chosen not to check the final column for a number of reasons, e.g., their evaluations are informal, done on an irregular basis, or the agency did not consider their method to be exceptional.

Counting activities (inputs and outputs)

It was clear from the telephone interviews that a lot of counting is done. State library agency staff track lots of data: number of people using the library collections, reference transactions completed, titles microfilmed, libraries connected to the Internet, workshops provided, children completing summer reading programs, consultant contact hours, amounts allotted and expended in various budget categories, and staffing levels, to list a few. These numbers

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are reviewed periodically, either formally or informally, and compared with previous figures or targets to determine ongoing levels of activity. The data is used in calculating unit costs, in budget preparation and in providing reports of activities to other state and federal bodies.

State library agencies have also developed new ways of measuring activities carried out and reported by libraries within their states and within the state library agency. One of the newer counting activities related to electronic use is the number of separate dedicated public telephone lines with a call management system capable of handling a high number of incoming calls and informing the caller of his or her place in the queue. Another is the number of graphical Internet terminals per capita. The Oregon State Library uses a number of measures to track public library service to children. One is an index figure created by adding the circulation of materials to children and children's program attendance, which they use as a performance measure with the legislature to show the impact on children. Another, developed as a performance measure for LSTA reporting, is the percent of children in poverty that have used the public library in the last month.

Evaluation activities (satisfaction, outcomes)

Several states reported using focus groups and customer surveys to gather input and evaluations from the recipients or users of different services. Some, such as the Mississippi Library Commission in their evaluation of the Patent and Trademark Center, include questions such as "How did you hear about the service? Was the information useful?" Similar evaluations done by states providing Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped service or State Documents service ask whether the service works as it should (evaluating the processes used) and what else the user would like to have included (soliciting recommendations for improvements). The Washington State Library conducts a mail survey of its users to determine their satisfaction with current services and to gain their ratings of services planned for the coming five years.

Most of the user surveys are a combination of open-ended questions such as those above and questions using a five- or seven-point Likert scale for the users to record the intensity of their answers. Similar evaluations are used in relation to workshops provided by many state library agencies. The Texas State Library uses an evaluation handout at every workshop that asks participants to evaluate the trainers as well as the other components of the workshop. The ratings of the trainers are used in conjunction with their performance appraisals. The Louisiana Summer Reading Program evaluation form, which is the reporting form used by parish and system libraries to report their summer reading program data and participation, also asks questions about the usefulness of the manual produced by the state library.

Another type of evaluation that is widely used is the straightforward assessment of whether a statute or administrative regulation was carried out, such as reports filed or records appropriately disposed of. A related, but more complex evaluation, called Peer Evaluation, is used in Colorado and Oregon where the state library agency coordinates the evaluation of federally funded grant projects by library professionals in the state who conduct on site evaluations.

Performance indicators

A number of state governments require state agencies to develop and track indicators of their performance, either as a part of budget preparation or strategic planning. The Division of Library Development in the New York State Library, for example, uses performance indicators such as the number of public libraries that meet specific minimum standards by a target date and additional standards by another target date. The Idaho State Library uses the percentage of Idahoans without tax-supported public library service as a measure and targets a specific lower percentage as an objective that indicates its performance in working toward the goal of providing all people in the state with local access to public library services.

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The Florida State Library, building on legislative interest in outputs and outcomes in performance based program budgeting, is exploring impact measures. The 1998-1999 fiscal year budget uses four measures, which are described as outcome measures, as a first step in this direction. These include

1. annual increase in the use of local public library service;
2. the annual increase in accessibility by library patrons to materials not owned by their local public library;
3. annual increase in usage of research collections (of the state library); and
4. annual cost-avoidance achieved by government agencies through records storage/disposition/micrographics.

The data sources and methodology for calculating each of the measures, as well as indications of the validity, reliability, appropriateness, and comprehensiveness of each of the measures are included. The State Library has added staff to develop ways to measure the impact of its programs in the future.

Benchmarking

The telephone interviews included the questions, with which other state library agencies do you compare yourself? What do you benchmark? Those who said they looked to other state library agencies for comparative purposes frequently did so on a program basis rather than agency-wide. (They compare their archival program to the archival program of another state, for example, or their summer reading program with that of another state.) Generally the comparisons use input and output measures rather than focusing on processes as in traditional benchmarking. They may use different states for different programs within the state library agency; that is, the development service people compare their program with the development program in other states with similar populations or similar levels of responsibility, while the head of the state documents program looks to other state library agencies with documents programs. The factors most often mentioned as important in identifying those other states were having a similar mix of programs or having a similar number of staff or level of financial support. Many compare their programs with those of their neighboring states, partly because these are the ones their legislators ask about, but also because these states may share economic and historic similarities that make the comparisons logical. Probably the true bottom line in finding other state library agencies for comparative purposes, which was mentioned by several of those interviewed, is being able to get data and information. People in the state library agencies turn to other states where they have contacts who can provide the information or where they know the state agency collects the data they need.

In a different application of benchmarking, the Texas State Library has created a "benchmark" that is a public library development outcome measure in their strategic plan. It is the percent of the population with library service (circulations per capita) exceeding the average of the ten largest states. Data from the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics is used to compute this figure, which is then used as a mark against which the state library agency sets its own target for increasing the number of materials circulated from public libraries in the state.

Afterword

State Libraries are a crucial part of both the library and governmental landscapes. What a state library is in a particular state should not be generalized to the whole. The responsibility for a strong and responsive state library rests with the library community in the individual state. Sooner or later, leadership comes – if not from the state library, then from other state level organizations or from individual libraries. Those who wish to improve a state library, from within or without, should find valuable information in this document.

The speed and complexity of change intensifies the need to harmonize many forces, people, and events.

In the period 1995 through 1997, over 40 percent of state librarians were new to their jobs. Most did not come from careers in state libraries. There is more diversity in background and many are established leaders at the national level. Creativity and change should flourish. Seminal progress also comes as a new structure for library programs is created within the federal government – the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The 1996 Library Services and Technology Act means state libraries, if they desire, can work more dynamically with all types of libraries. There are exciting opportunities as the new technologies come into nexus with traditional library services and collections. Helping libraries balance these will be key to state library success.

Looking to the year 2000 and beyond, state libraries may be shaped by three critical abilities.

The first is the ability to balance multiple constituencies: to be collegial with libraries, information providers, and community agencies in new ways. State libraries have always known about balancing acts. Now the speed and complexity of change intensifies the need to harmonize many forces, people, and events. Doing this within the context of public policy as a state agency calls for a skill set sometimes overlooked in discussions of leadership.

Second is the ability to be entrepreneurial. Entrepreneurial breakthroughs in the past have included the literacy programs in California; the Washington, then Western, Library Network (WLN), the Natural Resource Information System in Montana; the collection development Conspectus work in Alaska; the Nysernet Initiative in New York, to name only a few. That one of the state librarians is also the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for her state presents opportunities, as do state based government information locator projects (GILs). State libraries need the ability to work outside and beyond the usual programs. Even the rich diversity outlined in functions by audience in this publication may not represent the cutting edge. It is by stepping out beyond what the library director or state

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official thinks of "library" that state library agencies expand resources and influence. Entrepreneurship brings the reputation that causes state libraries to be sought out as partners by other leaders.

The third ability for state libraries is to anticipate and shape the future. Vision is needed. If the state library itself does not have a vision of the future, it should find ways to use the vision of others. Failure to anticipate the future carries a high risk for becoming obsolete. Not trying to shape the future is to let library development drift at circumstance. The role of prophet may be a critical one, given the evolving information or knowledge society. Without a focus on the future, state libraries might be mistaken for historical preservation agencies. No state library will ever be 100 percent accurate in forecasting. All must, however, set role and mission in what is to be accomplished rather than what is already done.

Sara Parker
1996-98 COSLA President

Contributors

Special thanks to all those who contributed content to this publication.

Frances Ashburn – Director, North Carolina Center for the Book
Al Bennett – Information Program Specialist, California State Library
Robert Bocher – Library Technology Consultant, Wisconsin Division for Libraries and Community Learning
Nancy Bolt – Assistant Commissioner of Education, Colorado State Library and Adult Education Officer
Sandra M. Cooper – State Librarian, State Library of North Carolina
Karen Crane – Director, Alaska Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums
Anders Dahlgren – Planning and Library Building Consultant, Wisconsin Division for Libraries and Community Learning
GraceAnne A. DeCandido – Blue Roses Editorial and Web Consulting, New York City
Carole D. Fiore – Youth Services Consultant, Florida Division of Library and Information Services
Jennifer O. Flaxbart – Manager, Talking Book Program, Texas State Library and Archives
Edwin S. Gleaves – Tennessee State Librarian and Archivist
Eugene Hainer – Senior School Library Media Center Consultant, Colorado State Library and Adult Education Office
Gardner Hanks – Continuing Education Consultant, Idaho State Library
Ethel Himmel – Principal Library Consultant, Himmel and Wilson, Library Consultants
Karen Hyman – Executive Director, South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative
Michael Jaugstetter – North Dakota State Librarian
Duane Johnson – Kansas State Librarian
Keith Lance – Director, Library Research Service, Colorado State Library and Adult Education Office
Robert Maier – Head, Library Development, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners
Robert S. Martin – Director, Texas State Library and Archives
George Needham – Michigan State Librarian
Larry T. Nix – Director, Bureau for Library Development, Wisconsin Division for Libraries and Community Learning
Amy Owen – Director, Utah State Library Division
Sara Parker – Missouri Deputy Secretary of State and State Librarian
Mary Redmond – Public Information Officer, New York State Library
Cheryl Schutt – Law Librarian, Connecticut State Library
Joseph F. Shubert – New York State Librarian Emeritus
Sharman B. Smith – State Librarian of Iowa
Barbara Weaver – Chief Information Officer of Rhode Island
Barratt Wilkins – Florida State Librarian
Bill Wilson – Library Consultant, Himmel and Wilson, Library Consultants
Nolan T. Yelich – Librarian of Virginia
Nancy Zussy – Washington State Librarian

The Functions of State Library Agencies

ASCLA/COSLA Roles and Functions of State Library Agencies Committee

Charles Bolles – State Librarian, Idaho State Library

Jenifer O. Flaxbart – Manager, Talking Book Program, Texas State Library and Archives

Marc Galbraith – Director of Reference, Kansas State Library

Karen Hyman – Executive Director, South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative

Michael Lucas – State Librarian, State Library of Ohio

Pat Owens, Interim State Librarian, Connecticut State Library

Barbara Weaver – Chief Information Officer of Rhode Island

Kendall Wiggin – State Librarian, New Hampshire State Library

Barratt Wilkins – Florida State Librarian

with special thanks to Amy Hughes and Angela Crouch, COSLA staff

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