

# Outcome evaluation in libraries: approaches and methods

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Objectives of the workshop

**Abstract:** *Both in their day-to-day operation and in special activities, libraries hope to bring about positive individual and social effects, like enhancing reading skills, information literacy, ICT skills, etc. Increasingly, funders ask for evidence that they indeed achieve these results. The workshop aims to bring together researchers and students working on or interested in the empirical evaluation of outcomes of libraries' special programs targeted at (groups of) patrons, to discuss approaches and (qualitative and quantitative) methods in library outcome evaluation. Both standardized (e.g., the ISO standards) and non-formalized approaches and methods will be discussed.*

**Keywords:** Outcome assessment, empirical evaluation, library performance

Workshop proposal Bobcatss 2014 Barcelona

## Target Audience

The workshop aims at bringing together students, researchers and professors interested in sharing knowledge about library outcome assessment: the evaluation of the extent to which an intended effect of a specific library program on patrons has been realized. Outcome assessment can thus be seen as part of a larger endeavour to establish the societal value of libraries, which also includes effects deriving from the standard operation (products and services).

## Method

Introduction by session organizers, presentations by workshop participants, structured discussion of approaches and methods, resulting in a collectively supported inventory of approaches and methods in library outcome evaluation

## Workshop

*Topics to be included in the workshop and the inventory are:*

- need for research on outcomes of libraries (as part of the 'total' societal value)
- outcome vs. output measurement
- local, regional and national (=system) evaluation of library services and programs
- to use or not to use the ISO standards?
- qualitative and quantitative research methods
- top-down and bottom-up approaches and (dis)advantages of both

## *Objectives/Outcomes*

- Participants will learn from each other and thereby enhance their knowledge of the field;
- The inventory will help to better locate one's own approaches and methods in a broader framework, leading to new ideas for future projects;
- Co-operation between participants in future projects could result from the workshop

### *Duration*

Preferably 90 minutes

### *Number of participants and Prerequisites*

Max. number of participants: 20

Preparation: the session organizers will provide an introductory paper to be read before the conference. They will also circulate a concise questionnaire, to be completed and returned before the conference. On the basis of the returned questionnaires, the organizers will decide on the (logical) order of presentations and prepare the discussion topics, which will also be circulated before the session.

### *Equipment*

- Laptop, beamer and projection screen (or wall);
- flipover or whiteboard with markers;
- preferably wifi

### **Curricula vitae**

*Frank Huysmans* (1970) studied sociology and communication science at the University of Nijmegen and obtained his PhD on the temporal organization of media use in households from the same university in 2001. He has worked as a scientific and policy researcher and has advised the Dutch government about media and cultural policy. Since 2005 he is special professor of library science at the University of Amsterdam.

He organized and chaired three sessions on library outcome evaluation at a series of library conferences for practitioners in public libraries (2010-2011-2012).

*Ellen Kleijnen* (1987) is a PhD candidate in the department of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Her research aims to investigate whether an integrated library facility in a Dutch primary school (aimed at reading promotion) leads to more reading, a more positive attitude towards reading, and better reading and language skills among students from migrant populations. She studied pedagogical sciences at Utrecht University (2005-2009) and conducted research in the field of youth policy at the Netherlands Institute for Social Research.