CRITICAL SOURCES IDENTIFIED:
Gathering, Organizing, and Analyzing Evidence — Just Like a CSI Unit!

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PURPOSE:

Libraries collect a vast array of data that are dispersed across multiple and disparate systems. Therefore, using the data as "evidence" of what the library does and how the library contributes to the university's mission is particularly challenging. To support management decisions, the data needs to be accessible, easily retrievable, suitable for demonstrating value and impact, appropriately analyzed, and well-presented.

METHODS:

Two assessment librarians (ALs) worked together to identify, organize, analyze, and report on organizational "evidence", using their different but complementary skill sets:

• A keen understanding of assessment/evaluation concepts, theories, and best practices

• Database administration and data mining

Organizational "evidence" is now gathered, organized, analyzed, and reported in a data repository (i.e., "data farm") and available for internal staff use. An annual report for external use was created using a variety of organizational evidence (some of which resides in the data farm) and professionally designed by the library's marketing specialist.

FINDINGS:

Data that are adequately collected and appropriately analyzed provide important insight into library operations. Using tools that are already in place (e.g., Microsoft SharePoint), organizational evidence can be identified, gathered, organized, and analyzed. Reporting the evidence to internal and external groups is a final necessary step.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS/VALUE:

Health science libraries must be able to show how they contribute to the academic institutional goals of teaching, learning, research, and patient care. Evidence that shows how the library makes a difference is important to campus budget administrators. Therefore, effectively identifying and categorizing evidence to illustrate the library's influence and impact is a necessary skill in today's library environment.

STEPS IN IDENTIFYING ORGANIZATIONAL EVIDENCE

1. **Identify the purpose(s) for which evidence is needed.**
   Identify the victim and why s/he was targeted.

2. **Gather relevant inputs and outputs.**
   Identify crime scene indicators.

3. **Apply appropriate methods in analyzing data to identify key results (outcomes).**
   Recognize inconsistencies in the crime scene.

4. **Prepare illustrations of significant findings and trends.**
   Analyze physical findings.

5. **Synthesize all relevant information into a cohesive, informative, and compelling report.**
   Prepare data visualizations to depict multiple crime scenarios.

6. **Distribute report to faculty and campus administrators (i.e., Assistant Vice President for Library Services shares with the Library Advisory Council).**
   Present your findings in court.

TYPES OF DATA COLLECTED, COMPILED, AND ANALYZED

• Usage statistics
• LibQUAL+™ survey results
• Branch library statistics
• Client contact activities
• Library instruction assessment results