Proving Value and Preserving Staff Sanity: A Centralized Data Repository
The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas Library

PROBLEM

Data collection is currently chaotic. Data are needed from multiple staff members and processes throughout the library for external surveys, administrative reports, etc. Compounding the problem, data collection procedures are unclear and data are stored in multiple systems. Compiling data costs too much time and effort for everyone involved.

1 ▸ VISION: CENTRALIZED DATA REPOSITORY

We need to think beyond how we have always done things.
We need a solution that:
- Allows everyone to use it easily
- Simplifies data collection and access
- Organizes data logically in one place
- Provides enough flexibility to meet future data needs

2 ▸ METHODOLOGY

Our progress thus far:
- Examined data needs of AAHSL survey
- Documented who collected data and how
  - Interviewed staff members
  - Recorded survey questions and data collection processes in OneNote notebook
- Mapped survey questions and data collection processes to current data storage areas

THE NUMBERS

Staff members recording, compiling, or collecting data = 52

Library units = 10

Purposes per year for data > 20

Discrete data collections systems > 50

Headaches suffered by the Assessment Librarian during the AAHSL survey period = ∞

3 ▸ FUTURE STEPS

- Review progress to date
- Repeat methodology for additional external library surveys
- Estimate scope of project
  - Staff time needed
  - Amount of data to be stored
- Evaluate possible solutions such as SharePoint

4 ▸ LESSONS LEARNED

- "Just in case" data collection is safer than "just in time" but far less efficient
- Mapping to source descriptions is more useful than mapping to a number that changes
- Be flexible and open to a project evolving beyond its original conception

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