How can you tell if you are making a difference?

Measuring impact evaluation - a signpost to the new landscape.

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My brief for this presentation

- How and why should we be measuring impact
- How children’s and schools library services should/could be evaluating and measuring their impact
- An outline of the social impact research on the NYR and findings of particular relevance to public children’s and young people’s/schools library services
- Any other thoughts...
If you are sitting comfortably then I’ll begin…

The tale of the Digital Natives and the Baby Boomers – a story of trials and tribulations with a choice of endings…

…and some activities along the way
Activities

- Questions on a postcard please. Relating to this session write down a question you would like to try to answer or something you are concerned about at work.

- Be ready to use your Red and Green voting cards
How can you tell if you are making a difference?
A unique combination of benefits...

Not only do libraries make a valuable contribution to our society, they stand for important values in our society including intellectual freedom, equality of opportunity, engaged citizenship, informed democracy, and a society in which people have the chance to achieve their potential (CILIP, 2010)
Children’s rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) offers support to library policy and practice related to children and young people. School libraries and children’s libraries are committed to human values and human rights and children should be able to rely on libraries for their rights to information and education (Koren, 2011)
What do public libraries offer to their communities?

Can deliver important social and economic outcomes - help to deliver local priorities

- Sharpener Investment for Changing Times: getting more out of museums, libraries and archives. MLA 2010

...a prospectus... only the sector can deliver the on[-the ground changes to be truly responsive to local needs...
‘Public libraries have tended to be slow to react to this changing environment. This may be in part because their operating culture is not used to expressing their role in terms of policy objectives emerging in other sectors, such as children’s and youth services. It may also be that libraries have not sufficiently entered the consciousness or collective imaginations of policy makers in other domains, as a resource that can help them achieve their objectives. (Carpenter 2010: 3-4)
The challenge - these digital natives behave differently, think differently, learn differently... what does this mean for libraries?
**Digital Natives Prefer:**
- Receiving info quickly from multiple sources
- Multitasking and parallel processing
- Pictures, sounds and video before text
- Hyperlinked sources
- Interacting in “real-time”
- User generated content
- Learning that is instant, relevant and fun

**Digital Immigrants Prefer:**
- Controlled release of info from limited sources
- Single or “focused” tasks
- Often prefer to get information from text
- Greater need for private and personal space for introspection
- Like info presented linearly, logically and sequentially
First item in the brief
How and why should we measure impact?
Impact – the demand for evidence?

- Accountability and the pressure to evaluate
- The value for money ethos
- Evidence-based policy and practice EBPP

Conflicting priorities...
What is evidence?

*Information or data that we select to help answer questions. One person’s evidence is another’s information.*

Are you on top of the evidence – not only gathering but being seen to analyse, interpret and apply the evidence with the aim of improving library services...
Impact - a definition for our purposes

- Any effect of the service (or an event or initiative) on an individual or group
- Positive/negative intended/unintended

Can be manifest as discernable shifts

Quality of life – self esteem, confidence, feeling included, work or social prospects

Educational and other outcomes – skills acquired, educational attainment, levels of knowledge

(Markless & Streatfield, 2006)
Evaluation – issues...

Markless and Streatfield remind us about the dangers of getting side tracked and looking at what you do (activities and processes) when trying to evaluate impact - rather than concentrating on what difference you make... (2006:81)
Second item in the brief - how children’s and schools library services should/could be evaluating and measuring their impact.
Literacy changes lives

Low literacy levels produce social, economic and cultural exclusion that can scar communities and undermine social cohesion.

Public libraries with their welcoming presence in communities are well placed to help address the literacy challenge

(Dugdale and Clark, 2008)
The Place for Children...

*Every child needs the library: children are the future movers and shakers of the nation. Reading has a value in children’s personal, social and imaginative development.*’ (Elkin, 2000)
The school library – powerful agents of learning or a wasted resource?

*In a knowledge-centered school, inquiry through school libraries provides an arena for discovery, knowledge-building, innovation and creativity* (Todd, 2009)

School Library Commission - *There is a clear message that one of the key agencies which school libraries and school library services could and should be working more closely with is the public library. Partnership with the public library service allows the school library to demonstrate the role it plays as a vital resource for the whole community*’
Start with the Child report

*Libraries are a hugely important part of children’s and young people’s lives because they bring books and children together; they provide reading opportunities free of charge, and so they encourage experimentation and learning*’ (CILIP, 2002)
Two main reasons we can look to libraries

- Centrality of literacy and learning to libraries’ mission
- Libraries as trusted institutions

But you already know all this...
Future of value and impact studies

- Economic studies – focus on monetary measure
- Use of information by particular groups
- Another way... social impact and ‘capital stock’ connections to the unique benefits?
The demand for evidence ‘so what...?’

Capturing the Impact of Libraries final report

- Predominance of one-off evaluations of time limited programmes and pilot schemes over research on core services
- Lack of baselines against which to measure change
- Lack of qualitative in-depth research that analyses the specific nature of interactions that take place in libraries

(DCMS/BOP Consulting, 2009: 2)

Rediscovering reading: an evaluation of the role of Public Libraries in the National Year of Reading
Streatfield et al 1999
Third item in the brief - an outline of the social impact research on the NYR and findings of particular relevance to public children’s any young people’s / schools library services.
Review time - how can you tell you are making a difference?
The National Year of Reading 2008
Reading any thing, any time, any where
NYR 2008 campaign values

- Impact – both personal and social
- Celebration – positive, enjoyable experiences
- Diversity – of reading experiences and communities
- Participation – co-production of the year with communities and partners
- Creativity in development and delivery
- Legacy – to create a lasting change in lives and systems
NYR evaluation – MLA client objectives

- To investigate the efficacy of the NYR programme in Yorkshire as it relates to the place shaping and social inclusion targets of the NYR.

- The overall objectives are to investigate the impact of the NYR in two sample local authorities in relation to
  - Target beneficiaries
  - Partnership and cross departmental working

Researchers used GSO framework as this was specified in the MLA brief.

Longitudinal research (Rankin and Brock, 2008 and Rankin et al 2009)
Methodology – data collection strategies

A variety of research methods used to collect qualitative data from key stakeholders in North Lincolnshire and Calderdale

Phase 1 October-November 2008
- semi-structured interviews with key library staff
- focus group interviews with NYR steering group partners through written responses to key questions
- information gathered from documentation and publicity materials provided by each case study authority

Phase 2 May-June 2010
- semi-structured interviews with key library staff
- information gathered from documentation and publicity materials provided by each case study authority
Generic social outcomes framework

Developed by the MLA to help museums, libraries and archives to
- deliver against key agendas and maximise their contribution to communities
- evidence their contribution to outcomes.

GSOs seen as an important tool because of the increased emphasis of outcomes as well as outputs.
GSO origins

Generic Learning Outcomes (GLO) developed as part of the Inspiring Learning for All framework

GSO framework developed and piloted by Burns Owens Partnership (BOP) in 2005

GSOs outline ways in which museums, libraries and archives impact on social and community themes:

- Stronger and Safer Communities
- Strengthening Public Life
- Health and Well Being

(BOP)
GSO outcomes...

The evaluation has found considerable evidence of NYR related activities in supporting the three first tier social outcomes ‘Stronger and Safer Communities’, ‘Health and Well-Being’ and ‘Strengthening Public Life’.
## Tier 2. Social outcomes themes

### 1. Stronger & Safer Communities
- **1.1** Improving group and inter-group dialogue and understanding
- **1.2** Supporting cultural diversity and identity
- **1.3** Encouraging familial ties and relationships
- **1.4** Tackling the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- **1.5** Contributing to crime prevention and reduction

### 2. Strengthening Public Life
- **2.1** Encouraging and supporting awareness and participation in local decision-making and wider civic and political engagement
- **2.2** Building the capacity of community and voluntary groups
- **2.3** Providing safe, inclusive and trusted public spaces
- **2.4** Enabling community empowerment through the awareness of rights, benefits and external services
- **2.5** Improving the responsiveness of services to the needs of the local community, including other stakeholders

### 3. Health & Well-Being
- **3.1** Encouraging healthy lifestyles and contributing to mental and physical well-being
- **3.2** Supporting care and recovery
- **3.3** Supporting older people to live independent lives
- **3.4** Helping children and young people to enjoy life and make a positive contribution

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**Table showing social outcome themes from tiers one and two**
National Year of Reading Evaluation – Yorkshire

The key aims of the National Year of Reading were to support ongoing work to achieve national literacy targets, engage parents and families in reading with their children and develop adult literacy. MLA Yorkshire, Renaissance Yorkshire and Arts Council England, Yorkshire jointly commissioned a regional National Year of Reading 2008 co-ordinator to work with local authority steering groups on strategic intervention, legacy development and corporate engagement. The regional steering group sponsored a longitudinal evaluation of the National Year of Reading in Yorkshire by Leeds Metropolitan University. Phase one has been completed, generating an interim report which looks at the impact of the National Year of Reading, both on the organisations that delivered it and their work with target groups.

The report used the following dimensions of analysis:

- qualitative data from interviews across each authority with practitioners, partners and steering groups filtered through the perspective of MLA’s Generic Social Outcome (GSO) framework.
- qualitative data from interviews across each authority with practitioners, partners and steering groups filtered through the National Indicator set.

Case study record created on: 19/04/2010

MLA funded: Yes

Institution: MLA Yorkshire and Carolynn Rankin and Dr Avril Brock (Leeds Metropolitan University)

Key partners:
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- Calderdale Council
- North Lincolnshire Council

Team members:
- Carolynn Rankin, Dr Avril Brock

Start date: August 2008
End date: December 2008
GSO 1.3 Encouraging familial ties and relationships

The ultimate aim of every Child a Talker for the Early Years team and for us is to get more people naturally using libraries, to borrow books and to share them with their children (phase 2)
2.3 Providing safe, inclusive and trusted public spaces

We are taking out of this year a commitment to changing the pattern of city and local libraries, where most things happen (phase 1).

In terms of redevelopment, a place becomes a hub if it becomes a place where the community gets used to expecting exciting and valuable reading events, workshops, festivals on a regular basis. I hope that will emerge from the NYR (phase 1)
GSO 3.4 Helping children and young people to enjoy life and make a positive contribution

We do a lot of partnership work – we are heavily involved now in Every Child a Talker - our profile was raised in NYR and that means that the people we work with come to us now without us having to push it (phase 2)
Results & Implications -
6 key themes from phase 1

- Improving services and sharpening the focus of what is on offer.
- Working in partnership and strengthening partnerships
- Dealing with challenges
- The importance of activities and events
- Stronger communities – with a particular emphasis on improving group and inter-group dialogue and understanding and supporting cultural diversity and identity
- Legacy of the NYR
Findings from phase 2

The six themes derived through the analysis of Phase 1 data were still evidenced in Phase 2.

Emphasis now on –

- Differences rural/urban experiences – resources
- Initiating and consolidating partnerships
- Importance of reading for social engagement
- Continuation of NYR – embedding
NYR Conclusions

• Libraries need to become strategically aware and need to be seen to take the lead so that they are recognised for their impact – particularly in light of today’s economic climate

• GSOs can provide a framework for enabling public libraries to show social return on investment

• GSO framework does show how public libraries can contribute to diverse agendas and demonstrate their value to the community – but issues of translation and interpretation

• Professional generosity
Future development and potential use of the GSO framework

Indicator Bank developed to

- create a tool and to build on and extend the themes
- provide practical guidance to practitioners - still very focussed on museum sector

MLA were encouraging practitioners to use the GSO framework... but the MLA has now been subsumed into the Arts Council
Fourth item in the brief - any other thoughts I would like to include...
But - what about making the ‘capital’ stock connections to the ‘unique benefits’?

- Social capital
- Physical capital
- Cultural capital
- Intellectual capital
- Identity capital

What about

- Capabilities - capacity and freedom that allow individuals to achieve well-being and make choices.
Where do you look for your evidence?

The spiderman article as an example—see the handout which is an evidence based summary of a journal article.

How many of you know about the EBLIP evidence based summaries? (free resource). Here is the link

http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/EBLIP
Evidence Based Library and Information Practice

EBLIP is an open access, peer reviewed journal that is published quarterly, hosted by the University of Alberta Learning Services, and supported by an international team of editorial advisors. The purpose of the journal is to provide a forum for librarians and other information professionals to discover research that may contribute to decision making in professional practice. EBLIP publishes original research and commentary on the topic of evidence based library and information practice, as well as reviews of previously published research (evidence summaries) on a wide number of topics.

To access all reader features of the journal, such as the ability to comment on articles and receive e-mail notification of new issues, please register and sign in.
Partnerships – busy, busy busy...

- Lots of activity but libraries are usually not designated as the lead delivery agency
- Problem of the obvious is not so obvious
- Do you have any solutions?
Using everyday skills

Research is the professionalization of everyday skills (Blaxter, 2008)

*Library practitioners are often highly innovative in their practice and undertake research related activity as a normal part of their working lives. This new knowledge and understanding is often not recognised as research nor is it shared with the wider professional community* (Rankin soapbox 2010).
Future gaze – scenarios?

Libraries of the Future – UK academic libraries

The Bookends Scenarios, NSW
The importance of people

- Training and development
- New specialised skills ...
The ‘unique combination of benefits’ - connecting across the chasm

Measuring social value is more like an isolated art form than widespread science

Our ability to produce social value is considered by some to be one of our greatest commodities

Rooney-Browne (2010)
The new landscape... Arts Council

long term goals

‘Culture, Knowledge and Understanding: Great Museums and Libraries for Everyone’

1. Excellence is thriving & celebrated in museums & libraries
2. More people experience & are inspired by museums & libraries
3. Museums and libraries are sustainable, resilient and innovative
4. The leadership & workforce are diverse & highly skilled
5. Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of museums and libraries

(Arts Council England, 2011)
Answers on a postcard please...

Find your *British Library* postcard again – hopefully you might be nearer getting an answer to your question or a solution to the problem? Maybe you now have more questions!

Jot down possible solutions or actions to follow up when you get back to the workplace.
The choice of endings for this tale ...

Over to you really....!
How do you *THINK* my first day of kindergarten went?!?

They didn't even have Wi-Fi...
Thank you for listening.
Any questions/comments please?

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