INDIANA COMMUNITY ANALYSIS PROJECT

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The word planning has become fashionable these days in the public library field. Library planning requires setting up measurable goals and object-ives and assigning priorities to them. The ability to make realistic projections of future library demands and use by local people requires that such projections and policy decisions be based on community analysis. Community analysis also can generate data for library planners to use in evaluating existing facilities, resources, and services.

Most of the conventional community analysis efforts suffer from the lack of compatibility among the findings. In other words, findings of one community generally are not applicable to other communities, and therefore are not directly useful to help determine local goals and objectives. Community analysis can generate a lot of unfocused data that may be partically or indirectly useful to the planner, especially when the problems are not well enough defined. The Indiana Community Analysis Project (ICAP) is an effort to develop a common framework so that the findings of one community can be used to guide other communites.

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The ICAP is a LSCA grant project.[1] It began with a two day workshop, the Indiana Community Analysis Institute, held September 25-26, 1980, at the State Library auditorium in Indianapolis.[2] The workshop was followed by a year-long demonstration project which continues until the fall of 1981. The final phase of the project will be the compilation of the project data and data model into a handbook for reference use by public libraries throughout the state and the nation. The projected completion date of the handbook is June 1982. At this writing, fourteen public libraries in Indiana ranging from very small to very large are participating in the demonstration phase.[3]

In constrast to conventional ways of community analysis, the ICAP defines its own problems, develops its own analytical methods or framework (or model), and generates its own data. It creates a permanent numerical data base at each of the demonstration libraries. It does not intend or plan to evaluate or compare libraries on a certain set of norms or criteria. Instead, it seeks reasons to explain why a certain library functions the way it does. It will pool and correlate the data from various libraries to find these explanations. It will also test and demonstrate practical ways to conduct community analysis.

The ICAP defines its problems in the following questions: (1) what are the definable and measurable library outputs and what interrelationships are there between them? (2) what are the intra- and extra-library factors that influence these outputs, and how do they influence them? (3) how is the information need profile of a community developed? (4) how is the information need profile of a distinctive library clientele developed? These problems are discussed in this paper.

CHARTING AND EXPLAINING LIBRARY OUTPUTS

Fortunately, most libraries dutifully collect various library use statistics to report to various authorities. They commonly include the number of visitors or facility users and uses, number of borrowers and borrowing of library materials, number of reference/information inquirers and inquiries, use of library staff produced data (e.g., local community data file), use of special collections and archives, and contract research/information services.

All library uses by the public are defined as library outputs: ICAP is developing a practical way to monitor the local library outputs while creating simultaneously a numerical data base.

All of the demonstration libraries have started charting weekly and/or monthly library use statistics on a number of graph papers so that: (a) one can see interrelationships between various outputs as well as seasonal movements from month to month and from year to year, and (b) one can explain the movements in terms of what the library staff did in and outside of the library and in terms of what happened outside the library during the week or month.

In order not to forget what happened during each week, library staffs are asked to keep a weekly log or diary of significant happenings in and outside the library. For example, even though there might be bad weather, a new library building, socioeconomic conditions of a community, and other factors such as local topography, all can have an influence on library use. In addition, library policies and service activities are largely responsible for most library output. It is hoped that this new practice will force the librarian to rationally consider the movements or trends in his/her library so that s/he can evaluate the program and/ or collections and can better plan future activities. Thus, one need not wait a year or more to ascertain the general trends in the local community.

DEFINING AND DETERMINING LIBRARY CLIENTELES: LOCAL COMMUNITY PROFILES

The term library clientele has been used to designate library users in general. However, the word clientele may be used to define a distinctive group of people whether they use libraries or not. Thus, a community profile may be constructed based on the aggregate of a number of distinctive population groups or clientele(s). Each community is different from others in the sense that it has a unique mixture of various distinctive population groups that are more or less commonly recognizable in modern societies. Even in a small town of a few hundred residents, one can readily recognize a variety of occupations common to U.S. communities. For example, a town may have a grocery store which doubles as a drug store and a coffee shop, a dime store, a barber shop and a hair dresser, a bar (where locals can get together after work for a drink); a church or churches, an elementary school, a library, a lawyer, an accountant(s), insurance agents, a post office, a gas station, firemen and policemen. In a rural community, the bulk of the work force may be farmers, many of whom also work at factories in nearby cities. One can readily recognize these as common varieties of basic occupations. Thus, a community's economic character may be determined by its size and by its main industry.

All of the demonstration libraries have started to compile local demo-graphic, occupational, socioeconomic profiles. The first step is to find out (or estimate) how many people belong in each distinctive occupational group (school children, non-working housewives, and the retired are distinctive groups). For example, estimates are made as to the number of teachers, lawyers, clerical workers, salespersons, preschool children, high schoolers. The U.S. census will provide most of the necessary data. Thus, the library staffs have started to organize data on: (a) how many, (b) where they live and work, (c) likely handi-caps,— such as one-car families, old age, physical, psychological, cultural, or language barriers, (d) the composition of household, and (e) where and how often they congregate (e.g., church, social or fraternal organizations). Knowing

about the information problems of each distinctive occupational group (e.g., teachers), one can construct an aggregate information need profile of a community. Rationale for singling out occupation as the distinguishing factor will be discussed later.

CONNECTING LIBRARY OUTPUTS TO SPECIFIC CLIENTELE

As librarians we should know A/P ratio (active/potential user ratio) which will indicate user/nonuser ratio of each clientele. For example, an earlier survey indicates that blue-collar users represented only 4.9 percent of the users sampled while they constituted 17 percent among the local adult population. In other words, only 26 percent (4.9/17) of the blue-collar clientele were using the library at that time.

We also need to know which clientele is using which service output and to what extent. This information is directly useful in allocating resources and planning future activities. For example, the earlier survey indicates that the blue-collar users were responsible for 6.2 percent of adult book circulation, 5.4 percent of AV materials circulation, 6.9 percent of program attendance, etc. This also represents a cross-section at that time of the output chart indicating which clientele has contributed how much to a specific output (be that reference/information inquiries or inter-library loans).

This kind of anlaysis has required a walk-in user survey. If the occupational data is incorporated in the borrower card and if the circulation routine is computerized, the computer may be programmed to produce this kind of analysis at any time. That will certainly eliminate the need for laborious and expensive manual surveys such as walk-in user surveys.

LIBRARY SERVICE HOURS, LOCATION OR SITE: INFLUENCING LIBRARY OUTPUTS

When budget cuts were made, the typical solution would be to reduce library hours at branches and even at the main library. A branch library study by M. Getz suggests that this could worsen the already depressed branch usage even further, and that a better solution would be to consolidate some of the branches that are located only a mile apart from each other and extend the hours since little negative impact should result because of the increase, albeit slight, in the distance users must travel.[4] Another study of bookmobile service by Hu et al suggests that it would be more cost effective if the number of stops were reduced and the number of hours at each stop increased.[5]

Distance by itself is not a good indicator of library use. It is already clear at a large demonstration library that a majority of working adults, most notably professional, managerial, and sales groups, use the library (usually downtown

main library) where they work for a variety of purposes. Local library staffs know this through their daily experience, but little is done locally, let alone nationally, to document and systematize (or quantify) this knowledge. The ICAP is a beginning of such an effort.

LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

If asked what they want most from the public library, the user's answer would be quite predictable: books and more books! Obviously books and other information/media materials are the primary reason people use the library. Therefore, the more we know about the use of local collections, the more astute we become in the acquisition and selection of materials for the local collection. For example, it is generally observed that among other variables, the publication date of the material is a significant one affecting its use. In other words, the newer the material, the more likely it will be used. This general knowledge, however, has never been measured and quanitified. Without quanti-fication, this theory cannot be totally accepted.

The ICAP libraries are studying the circulation patterns of local collections for the purpose of determining: (1) the age of materials that are being checked out and the subject variations, if any, (2) the age of the local collections, (3) the subject matters or topics that are in demand, and their variations by seasons and by clientele. By pooling such data from various demonstration libraries, we hope to establish or determine (1) the useful life of a collection, (2) variable collection retirement plan or formula, and (3) the long term reading interests of various clientele.

REFERENCE WORK

The ICAP regards reference work as a library output. In fact, it is one of the most expensive library outputs because it requires complete occupation of the staff time and a fully reserved reference collection beyond the general infor-mation resources within the library. Obviously this must be taken into con-sideration in weighing various output options in planning future allocations for activities and resources.

Many public libraries, especially very large resource—rich ones, have found their information/reference service outputs growing faster than the circulation of materials. With the rising costs of transportation and time, people (mostly library users) increasingly call for help from the librarian, thereby making full use of the library with minimum effort on their part.

It is quite conceivable that the potential demand for a specific kind of information can be determined and that the demand varies with different clientele. It follows that a way should be found to determine such demands as well as clientele. Based on such knowledge, we should be able to determine which kinds of information or materials should be provided or not provided in

the library. This will help avoid needless frustration over the inability to provide ready answers to all queries. Users, also, would not be frustrated if they knew what to expect from the library.

DEVELOPING CLIENTELE PROFILES

Librarians are by tradition catalogers and enumerators of information materials, and their professional knowledge and skill concerns handling these materials rather than people's use of materials. Even with the large scale computerization of library catalogs, bibliographies, and indexes, the basic approach is still enumeration of materials rather than use of information itself. In other words, information is handled as a matter of deciding or assigning appropriate subject headings or topics rather than as a problem by itself. The ICAP is an effort to look at information as our professional problem and as the subject of intense and continuous study. The ICAP began a new task to develop "Clientele Profiles" so that we can develop our professional knowledge as well as information practice.

Efforts are being made by a number of people to define or determine "information needs."[6] The ICAP is an effort to determine if "information problems" (not needs because the term needs describes the information as a subject matter rather than to explain the problem underlying the expressed request) could be explained for the library's practical purposes by one's occupation and by one's stage in life, an idea which has been espoused by a number of people, most notably by Professors M. Monroe and R. Vainstein.[7] By developing a clientele information profile by occupation, age, and sex, we would be able to describe, explain, and even estimate, one's information problems. Obviously, this knowledge is essential in anticipating what people want and in preparing materials for them.

Occupation is singled out as the most meaningful variable because it combines in it three other variables each significant by itself: education (necessary qualifications) and income (necessary livelihood, motivation, or incentive) and lifestyle (standard of living or the degree of physical, intellectual, and social activities and involvements). A study by Coughlin et al found occupational status to be a more significant indicator of the amount (not kind) of library use than either income or education.[8]

Morris Janowitz, a noted sociologist, observed that today people, including the growing majority of women, tend to identify themselves in terms of occupation (or career) rather than in terms of the traditional broad social classes.[9] It has been well known for some time that the increasing majority of occupations today are in the service sector which deals with information and technical knowledge or skill. Clearly, it behooves professionals in the public library to serve as active agents helping working people to maintain and improve their effectiveness and productivity in their trade or works, and to help to directly

increase the total wealth for everyone to share. Thus, occupation deserves a serious study as a very important factor.

All of the ICAP surveys are designed to develop various aspects of information seeking habits of various clienteles. One of the surveys is specifically designed for that purpose. Called the "clientele survey," this data collection is to be done by a combination of interview and questionnaire. The telephone may be used to secure the consent of those who will receive the questionnaire form, complete, and return it. Since the questions asked are quite involved, data gathering by telephone has been ruled out. In a large community, one specific group may be targetted at a time so that an adequate picture (or profile) may be drawn about that group. In a small community, only one general random sample may be taken. However, by pooling and correlating samples from a number of libraries, adequate data may be obtained to develop or strengthen the profile.

The clientele survey asks ten major questions. The first two (or three) are occupation related, and the remaining ones are related to the problems of daily living and leisure activities. This division may be designated as Type 1 and Type 2 problems. While the Type 1 problems are occupation specific, the Type 2 problems plague everyone as a layperson. The ten (or eleven) problem areas are as follows:

Occupation/business related:

Specific information/data needed frequently for one's work or business. Background knowledge and/or skill needed for one's work or business. Materials used as part of one's work or business (e.g., children's books and/or audiovisual materials for elementary teachers).

Daily living and leisure activities:

Recreational reading, leisure activities, personal finances, taxes, govt. benefits, investments, etc.; personal health and health care, housing and homemaking, transportation, private vehicles, public transportation schedules; legal and public safety questions; child raising and education of the young.

Respondents (both library users and nonusers) are asked to describe problems more specific than the topical headings, and to rate each problem on a 5-point scale (0 to 4, 4 being the highest rating or the most urgent). They are also asked to indicate how often they have the problem, what sources they usually use (library is one of several sources), what difficulty, if any, they have with the sources, and what suggestions, if any, they have for the local library.

REVIEW OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives should be reviewed regularly. The output distribution and performance as well as A/P ratios among various local clientele over the past months or years could be used as a basis for determining or adjusting the library goals or directions as well as for planning future activities. With such factual data

bases, achieving a consensus among staff will be greatly facilitated.
It is generally recommended that planning should start with goal setting.[10]
In reality, however, the goal setting comes as the end product of the evaluations of various options open to the library. The evaluation requires a lot of data, and the data gathering requires community analysis. Thus, one's goal setting is as good as one's data and the insight gained from it.

Notes

[1] The projected total three-year grant is $46,511.

[2] The Institute was conducted by Dr. Roger C. Greer and Ms. Hartha L. Hale, both from the Community Analysis Research Institute, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[3] The demonstration libraries include: Indianapolis-Marion Co., South Bend, Muncie, Bloomington-Monroe Co., Mishawaka, Michigan City, Portage (Valparaiso), Crawfordsville, Huntington, Speedway, Petersburg, Brazil, Liberty-Union Co., and Covington.

[4] Malcolm Getz. *Public Libraries, an Economic View.* Baltimore & London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.

[5] Teh-wei Hu and others. *A Benefit-Cost Analysis of Alternative Library Delivery Systems.* Westport, CT & London: Greenwood Press, 1975.

[6] Readers are referred to works by Douglas Zweizig, Brenda Dervin, Carol Kronus, Thomas Childers, Vernon Palmour, Edward Warner, et al.

[7] Unpublished papers by the Feasibility Study Panel entitled: Approaches to the Study of Public Library Services and Users: A Report to the Learning Resources Branch, National Center for Educational Statistics. May 1979. The panel members include: Rick J. Ashton, Thomas Childers, W.L. Eberhart, Joseph Green, Jan Keene, Robert Little, Mary Jo Lynch, Jean Barry Molz, Margaret Monroe, Peggy Sullivan, Florence Wilson, Douglas Zweizig (Chair).

[8] Robert E. Coughlin and others. *Urban Analysis for Branch Library System Planning.* Westport, CT & London: Greenwood Press, 1972.

[9] Morris Janowitz. *The Last Half Century: Societal Change and Politics in America.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978.

[10] Readers should read the PLA's *A Planning Process for Public Libraries.* Chicago: American Library Association, 1980.