Designing a User and Usage Database to Promote, Market, and Demonstrate the Value of Selected Statewide Databases: The Florida Electronic Library as an Example

Charles R. McClure  
Francis Eppes Prof. and Director  
cmcclure@lis.fsu.edu

Lauren H. Mandel  
Research Coordinator  
lmandel@fsu.edu

Lynnsey K. Weissenberger  
Webmaster and Research Associate  
lweissenberger@fsu.edu

- The FEL is a statewide, multi-title database
  - The majority of resources are licensed from Gale-Cengage Learning
  - 50+ resources including licensed databases, as well as Florida-specific databases (e.g. Florida Photographic Collection and FloridaCat)
- Available to all Florida residents
  - Now using IP authentication
  - Previously used library card ID numbers
- [http://www.flelibrary.org](http://www.flelibrary.org)
Background

- Information Institute has worked with Florida Division of Library & Information Services (DLIS) evaluating FEL since 2002
- Past projects:
  - 2010: Gale Training Evaluation
  - 2009: Florida Memory Project
  - 2006 – 2008: Evaluation Activities for the FEL

To view past projects visit http://ii.fsu.edu/Research/Projects

Project Purpose

Support the DLIS goal of meeting the cultural, educational, and information needs of Floridians by creating a database that provides stakeholders with access to usage and retrieval data, which will help produce data-driven recommendations to guide Gale-Cengage’s future marketing and promotion efforts
Project Goals

• To assist the DLIS in
  – Collecting and analyzing usage and retrieval data from four datasets evaluating outputs,
  – Using outputs and datasets to create an outline for a database, and
  – Using the resultant data to provide recommendations to guide marketing efforts to end users

Project Overview

FOUR KEY TASKS:
1. Identify, collect, and analyze usage and demographic data
2. Design outline for interactive database
3. Pilot test and make recommendations to refine/improve the database
4. Produce recommendations for marketing driven by the collected data
Usage

• Importance
  – Captures ‘symptoms’ of intellectual activity; indicative of how resources are used (Matthews, 2009)
  – ‘Critical component’ of communicating worth to stakeholders (Kinman, 2009)
• Metrics and their value
  – Monthly usage data essential if use varies throughout year, but not 1-2 selected months (Blecic, Fiscella, & Wiberley, 2001)
  – Use in relation to disciplinary and institutional populations (i.e., per capita) a valuable measure to capture (Blecic et al., 2001)

Marketing

• Importance
  – Electronic resource usage data should inform promotional and educational activities (Brannon, 2007)
  – State library agencies cater to a wide range of information seekers and need to attract non-users of physical libraries (Xie & Wolfram, 2002)
• Know your audience
  – Understand audience and develop target markets (Alford, 2009)
  – Gather user feedback via focus groups and surveys (Alford, 2009; Fagan, 2009; Turner, Wilkie, & Rosen, 2004)
• Reaching your audience
  – Need both face-to-face and virtual awareness and training campaigns (Turner et al., 2004; Xie & Wolfram, 2002)
Steps in the Process

- Multiple conversations with the Division
  - Which datasets to include,
  - What kind of queries needed to be possible,
  - What type of database was needed, etc.
- Investigated datasets and collected data
- Developed database requirements
- DLIS built the database
- Collaborative pilot test
- Recommendations for marketing (more on this later)

The Database (Beta)

- Ultimately, only 2 datasets
  - Monthly usage data of FEL resources (only for 1 sample month as of end of this project)
    - By library
    - By county
  - 2009 American Community Survey (U.S. Census) data
    - By county
- Can query
  - Either dataset individually
  - Both datasets together
  - Compute across datasets (such as usage per capita)
County-Level Profile

- Spanish speakers: 29%
- High School or less: 29%
- Not Hispanic: 71%
- Higher Education: 29%

- Children 5-19: 18%
- Adults 20-54: 48%
- Adults 60-84: 22%
- Other: 12%

Findings: Database Usage

- Full Text
- Retrievals
- Searches
- Sessions

- General OneFile
- Academic OneFile
- Kids InfoBits
Marketing Assessment

Target Markets

- Users who primarily speak Spanish
- Adults 20-54 (parents and prime employment period)
- Users with high school or less education
- Non-users of the physical library

Issues

Cooperative’s website lacks FEL branding
- No FEL logo present in any section of site
- No promotion of FEL portal (flelibrary.org) for outside access

Cooperative’s website re-categorizes databases
- Not all available databases are presented to users
- Some contents of databases given separate listings
- No descriptions or subject tags

Further Research

- FEL usage over period of 6-12 months
- Determine lowest, median, and highest 10 counties
  - Then develop county-level profiles for each
- Fluctuations in monthly use
- Database-specific usage patterns
- FEL access points
Future Marketing Initiatives

• Create in-depth marketing profiles
  – Of counties
  – Of specific library systems (highest and lowest usage)

• Develop training concepts

• Create a web-based marketing supplement
  – Not just through flelibrary.org, but also through other websites, social media, etc.

• Examine issues affecting the FEL brand

Summary

• Project was a first step toward long-term usage assessments and marketing strategies

• Lessons learned will help future projects involving the FEL stay focused

• Learning more about various factors affecting FEL usage will provide valuable insights to DLIS

• Increasing awareness of and usage of FEL essential to maintaining funding for it
References: Usage


References: Marketing


Thank You!

Questions or Comments?

This research has been funded under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, administered by the Florida Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services.

Contact Information

Charles R. McClure  
cmcclure@lis.fsu.edu

Lauren H. Mandel  
lmandel@fsu.edu

Lynnsey K. Weissenberger  
lweissenberger@fsu.edu

A copy of the slides is available at:  
http://mcclure.ii.fsu.edu/northumbria_slides.html