



# DEFINING ROI

LAW LIBRARY  
BEST PRACTICES

DIGITAL WHITE PAPER

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The graphic features a large, multi-colored target with concentric rings in shades of blue, green, yellow, and orange. A dark blue arrow is shown hitting the bullseye. The background is composed of various overlapping geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in shades of blue and white, creating a complex, layered effect.

AALL DIGITAL WHITE PAPER

# DEFINING ROI

LAW LIBRARY  
BEST PRACTICES

**T**his is the proverbial best of times and worst of times. The great economic meltdown of 2008, triggered a tsunami of changes in the legal profession that has reverberated through every type of legal organization. The law firm market was catapulted into an altered world where technology, client pricing pressures, and globalization have generated a truly “disrupted market.” As law firms retrenched, their hiring of new associates was reduced. This in turn drove down law school enrollments as college graduates faced dwindling job prospects and high student loan debt. Budgets

for law libraries supported by federal, state, and local taxes are shrinking. Virtual law firms, offshore lawyers, and low-cost administrative centers are redefining the contours and professional trajectories of lawyers and legal support professionals. Globally, libraries as “places” are shrinking. Google and artificial intelligence technologies such as IBM Watson are casually assumed to be poised to replace both research librarians and lawyers alike.

In this endlessly mutating environment, librarians must face the challenge of identifying,

“ Law librarianship cannot expect to survive as a profession if members do not engage in honest reassessments of the types of professional skills they need to learn, and the platforms and services they should provide.”

measuring, and communicating the benchmarks and metrics of value.

The role of the legal information professional has never been more critical to the institutions they support, and it has also never been more at risk. The success of both lawyers and law firms hinges on access to the right mix of precedent and predictive insights. Information professionals act as connectors—digital cartographers

who help law students, judges, and lawyers surface and synthesize both precedents and predictive indicators. Today, information is so ubiquitous and information professionals deliver it so seamlessly that the complexity of balancing the budgets, the workflows, the technologies, the formats, and the user preferences is often invisible to our organizations. Librarians must track and evaluate a flood of emerging technologies and select and configure tools that change workflow and research methods, while also supporting the existing infrastructure. More than ever before, librarians need the right tools and methods for monitoring the pulse of their constituencies while carefully selecting and managing complex changes in platforms, learning styles, client expectations, and budget constraints.

This American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) white paper is being written to encourage all AALL members to take on the “value challenge.” This project is a journey, not a destination. Law librarianship cannot expect to survive as a profession if members do not engage in honest reassessments of the types of professional skills they need to learn, and the platforms and services they should provide. They must embrace the need to continuously reassess and recalibrate services to optimize value at the highest strategic level, all while maintaining an eye on the bottom line. Measuring value across each environment will not be easy, but it is a task we must all undertake.

Contributors include thought leaders from across the AALL spectrum, who have mined their own experience and share their measures of success.

There are numerous individuals to thank for this white paper. The genesis for this undertaking came from AALL past president Holly Riccio, who sought to continue the work the Economic Value of Law Libraries Special Committee started under Steven Anderson's term as AALL president. Riccio convened an ad hoc team of thought leaders to identify topics and recruit authors. Thanks are also owed to the contributors, who took time from their busy schedules to write for this publication, sharing their impressive breadth of experience and insights. The authors have created engaging and practical guides that draw from renowned historical sources such as the *Five Laws of Ranganathan*, as well as highlighting the contemporary wisdom of Don Draper, the iconic fictional '50s ad man from the TV show *Mad Men*. These varied approaches to this topic are illustrative of the myriad of approaches to demonstrating value. We hope that seeing what someone else has done can spark more creativity and innovation for measuring value within the profession.

#### EDITORS

Greg Lambert

Jean P. O'Grady

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“ The role of the legal information professional has never been more critical to the institutions they support, and it has also never been more at risk.”



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## DEFINING ROI: LAW LIBRARY BEST PRACTICES

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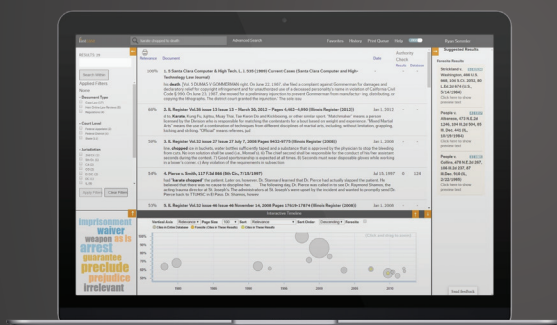






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# Leveraging Narratives: Communicating Value with Qualitative Content

Five practical strategies for communicating your library's value to key stakeholders.

BY ROGER V. SKALBECK

**T**he contemporary law library is embodied by its information resources, physical space, technology infrastructure, and the people who make it all happen. Each of these elements can change dramatically with new information tools, shifting organizational demands and emerging service models. What doesn't change is the need to exhibit how the library provides value. S. R. Ranganathan's fifth law of library science is helpful to consider here: "The library is a living organism." Organisms adapt to their environments, expanding and contracting as needed to survive. The same is true with libraries.

Law libraries need ways to exhibit value in an environment of recurring organizational evolution, shifting budgets, and evolving user needs. Following are practical strategies to communicate value for resources, people, and physical

features essential to legal studies, scholarship, and service. Examples are presented in the context of an academic law library, but should be applicable to other types of institutions as well. These include ideas to develop meaningful narratives relevant to our faculty, students, law school departments, alumni, and public users.

## Contextual Quality Metrics

Metrics play a central role in demonstrating library value, with quantitative data driving decisions more often than qualitative evidence. Quantitative library metrics include anything you can count, such as reference transactions, circulation evidence, and price per use/user for a given resource. Quantitative signals are essential for data-driven decisions. For continuing expenses such as an annual fee for a database, a library should have utilization metrics. Ideally,



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the database providers will supply this information and support it through tracking tools in an integrated library system.

Quantitative data can be essential for internal decisions, but some compilations are opaque or meaningless to people without a sufficient grasp of what libraries do. To oversimplify things, this may include everybody who is not a library employee. Gate counts or volume counts are irrelevant without comparative context or connection to the activities they support.

Qualitative information can play a bigger role in communicating value. For example, consider reference desk statistics. Quantitative data can show timing and scope of questions answered. These signals are helpful in deciding whether to provide weekend or evening coverage. However, administrators probably don't care about the balance of directional versus reference questions. Additionally, academics don't bill their time, so service duration may only have an opportunity cost, with no revenue potential.

Further, the qualitative context for reference service can exhibit value that administrators appreciate. For example, it is valuable to know if faculty members routinely call the reference desk to meet deadlines, such as preparing for a press interview, developing testimony, or spot-checking facts in a footnote for a law review deadline.

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## 1 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

To track contextual quality metrics at the reference desk, a library should record specific activities and reference them with faculty names. Some strategies to communicate the qualitative context of a service might appear as:

- “This week, we helped Professor Smith verify facts for an interview with the legal press on Friday afternoon.”
- “On a weekend, a reference librarian provided citation research for five students in the Jurisprudence seminar for a paper due the following Monday.”

In communicating this context, naming librarians is useful to connect the people to the process. The library as a living organism includes potentially all library staff. Using names should be done to illustrate who provided and received the service.

## Library Surveys

A classic tool used to solicit feedback from law students is done through a library survey. Invite all current law students to complete a survey that includes a variety of satisfaction and demographic metrics together with open-ended questions. If your library is considering services or resources that may compete for funding, offer the ideas for group input. For instance, you might perceive a need for improved carrels, new reading room furniture, or updated equipment in group study rooms. Presenting these as alternatives can help explore perceived value and context for student needs.

By asking the recurring questions each year, you can develop a baseline to compare student feedback over time. In constructing the survey, anonymity is a good option, but it's helpful to associate student responses to their year in law school. This helps identify the duration of a student's past experience.

Simple satisfaction assessments can help identify possible concerns with things like building security, scanning or printing options, or circulation services. With open-ended questions, students will often provide comments that can help create a narrative that reflects library impact.

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## 2 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

In communicating survey results, consider providing information in two phases: immediately after a survey concludes, and after the library has acted on survey input. With most survey tools, it should be easy to produce qualitative charts to show satisfaction or participation rates immediately after a survey concludes. To demonstrate a library's responsiveness to survey input, consider publishing a narrative description of new services or resources after responsive action has been taken.

If you run a survey in the spring, all students will have had a full semester of experience at the law school. A library can publish charts after the survey concludes and release a narrative update for the beginning of the following fall semester. This approach puts quantified results first and quality of response second, in two distinct phases.

Questions in a survey provide a way to promote services or draw attention to library features that may be overlooked. For instance, you might ask students about features of a group

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study reservation system. Students unaware of this option can discover it through a link or description. Also, if students can select the option “I didn’t know about this,” it will help identify opportunities to promote resources or services.

### Promotion Through Narrative (“Call to Action”)

A peer library director once commented that her library’s online catalog is a great tool for library inventory, but it can be a horrible way to discover the value and purpose of resources when needed for research. A library may subscribe to more than a hundred databases and electronic texts across many platforms. If a law library is part of a larger university, the number of nonlegal sources can far exceed those developed for the legal market. The challenge is to get overworked students and self-sufficient faculty to discover sources other than Lexis, Westlaw, and Google Scholar.

Libraries often compile research guides and tutorials to collect and annotate diverse sources on discrete topics. These serve as good supplements to a library catalog or discovery platform, offering opportunities for annotation and explanation. The challenge lies in getting people to find and use them in their time of need. Some resources, such as digitized collections of journals or books, will span several topics, creating a need to balance repetition and selectivity.

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### 3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Consider developing a systematic schedule to promote resources, creating sample research scenarios and describing them with a strong “call to action.” This concept, which comes from the world of marketing, simply means creating headlines and links that give a visitor a reason to click or read more. As an example, consider the following headlines that might appear in a newsletter or blog promoting a hypothetical judicial database:

- “New Judicial Database Now Available”
- “Explore Judge Biographies and Past Rulings and Prepare for a Possible Clerkship”

The second example describes database scope as well as multiple research scenarios. The first part of the headline shows that the source covers directory information as well as possible judicial statistics. Adding the adjective “possible” can promote this for people considering clerkships.

Additional narrative value can come from adding an example search or showing platform features. In the judicial database example, this might show results of a search displaying the number of judges who graduated from your law school.

Reference librarians are good candidates to develop this content. In addition, acquisitions staff and subject specialists will likely have insights into a platform’s unique features or suitability to a school’s academic strengths. If this promotion is done in a structured format, repeating the process requires less time. Also, a predictable format is good for a consistent user experience.

This strategy ties back to exhibiting value—helping people discover a library’s resources, many of which can be one billing cycle away from cancellation if underutilized or undiscovered.

### Form and Function

Law school deans and administrators regularly request or require information about the library’s profile, demographics, and financial features. Such requests and requirements can arise in budgeting as well as through recurring statistics reporting, such as information provided to the American Bar Association or *U.S. News & World Report*. Requests can also come up when administrators meet with a law school’s advisory board, alumni, or entire student body.

Libraries should be prepared with a core set of statistics, but they should also be prepared to research, synthesize, and package information about the law school and its peers, as well as the legal industry as a whole. For example, this could involve alumni demographics, data collection for a law school event, or documenting trends in higher education.

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### 4 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

When asked to provide information, a library should know the audience and context for every request. The form of the information collected should follow the function it will serve for the audience. For instance, a dean may have to give a presentation to a community of lawyers. In this case, the best form of delivery might be PowerPoint slides using a law school template. The function recognizes that the audience of practicing lawyers can understand legal terms and appreciate authority citations.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY SUGGESTIONS

### Connect Names to Numbers:

Enhance numeric charts with the names of people receiving and providing service.

### Communicate Survey Results in Two Phases:

1. Produce quick, quantitative charts when a survey concludes.
2. Provide narrative comments later to show actions taken in response to input.

### Provide Inspiring Calls to Action:

Promote resources with headlines that demonstrate specific scenarios achievable with the featured service.

### Create Content to Encourage Repurposing:

Create reports containing discrete elements suitable to be repurposed. A report delivered in PowerPoint can be easily excerpted for a senior executive's report to the Board.

### Anticipate Annual Occurrences:

Every organization has a cycle of activities. Find predictable, recurring events, and anticipate actions to promote services relevant to a user's time of need.

In the web design book *Don't Make Me Think*, Steve Krug updates the *Strunk and White* style composition principle "eliminate needless words" to simply "eliminate words." Krug offers this suggestion specifically when writing for the web. However, it is sound advice when composing an email, a PowerPoint slide, or a narrative report. It's too trite to say "less is more," but "less is faster" seems fair. It takes less time and effort to read and contemplate shortened content. Here, the library should follow Ranganathan's fourth law of library science: "Save the time of the reader."

As a final communication strategy, consider using photos, charts, and annotations in formal documents such as budget requests or analytical reports. In a budget, a library uses terms such as "serials" or "alternative formats," if that's how they're tracked. The terms should be explained, and a library may choose to illustrate some categories with photos. If a budget tracks anything related to services, a photo of the person providing the service helps to show where staff are active and adding value.

### Cycle of Law School Activities

Law school activities are often seasonal and recurring. Each year, the calendar is marked

with predictable events, including orientation, on-campus interviews, mock trial competitions, exams, summer employment, and graduation. With each event, there are opportunities to promote library value and services. By mapping out a list of recurring activities, a library can anticipate needs, repeat successful initiatives, and adjust to evolving organic demands.

## 5 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

At various points in the year, students, faculty, and staff can have different information needs. Consider creating a framework for recurring communications, coordinating activities with departments outside the library.

For instance, at the start of each semester, students will need to find assignments, discover books on reserve, and generally get oriented to the school. Assignment and reserve texts can be coordinated with the bookstore and academic administrators. As another example, a school's career services office will have a schedule of timing for interviews, job searching, and application cycles. A library can partner to promote job search and legal employer intelligence tools.

Libraries need to continue to explore how value is tracked, quality is emphasized, and information is delivered in a way that reminds people what librarians do and why we do it. Librarians need consistent, deliberate, and thoughtful strategies to move things forward. Here's hoping that the present contribution and accompanying voices provide meaningful strategies for all of us to showcase our value, and in turn be valued.



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## “Show Me the Value!”

Creating, measuring, and promoting ROI in academic law libraries.

BY JOAN S. HOWLAND

“Dig the well before you are thirsty.”

—Sign in a locker room in the movie *Jerry Maguire*.

### Establishing Value: Why It's Important

In an iconic and often-referenced moment in film history, Cuba Gooding Jr., as professional football player Rod Tidwell in the 1996 movie *Jerry Maguire*, repeatedly screams at his already overwrought agent, “Show me the money!” With the addition of other colorful dialogue and a panoply of expressive hand gestures, Tidwell expands his diatribe to emphasize that he appreciates all that Jerry Maguire has done for him in the past and that he has confidence that Maguire will continue to take care of him, but he needs to see tangible and meaningful results. Behind this exchange is the not-so-subtly veiled threat that Tidwell will take his business and his money elsewhere if Maguire cannot prove his worth.

With significant edits, including the omission of “The Wrong Come Up” by LV playing on a boom box in the background and the extensive red-penciling of language that does not pass the PG-13 test, this scene could be replayed today on a constant loop between almost every American law school dean and his or her law library director. Just as Jerry Maguire does not have the luxury of resting on the laurels gleaned from successful past contract negotiations or established client relationships, no library director can bask in the glory of a long and well-deserved history of his/her law library being “the jewel in the crown of a great law school,” the students’ favorite place with “awesome” reference librarians, or the one part of the law school that draws no faculty complaints. Within the current law school environment, characterized by severe economic constraints and heightened inter-school competition,



... the climate on most campuses today encourages competition, salesmanship, and enhanced performance. We are rewarded by positive attention when we display an active regard for the bottom line.”

—Linda Dobb in “Cry Me a River: Searching for Revenue Streams in Academic Libraries,” *Association of College and Research Libraries*, 9th National Conference, 1999.

libraries are experiencing increasing pressure to do more than offer exemplary services, provide access to a staggering array of resources, and participate in classroom instruction. Academic law libraries also must demonstrate compelling evidence that their operations are creating value and making a positive impact on the larger institution. According to an article in *Library and Information Science Research* titled “Capturing Business Intelligence Required for Target Marking, Demonstrating Value, and Driving Process Improvement,” authors Brian Cox and Margie Jantii argue that “Libraries that do not provide such evidence will be at an increasing risk of having their funding reduced or eliminated.” Much like Rod Tidwell, albeit with perhaps less frenetic speech and hand gestures, deans are unequivocally charging their law library directors to “Show me the value!”

As reflected in the 1999 quote in the above sidebar, fierce competition for resources in academia, both at the collegiate and broader institutional level, is not a recent development. What is different today is that higher education in general is struggling with serious financial issues, and law schools have been hit particularly hard due to the downturn in the legal market and a decrease in the law school applicant pool of nearly 40 percent since 2010. Adding to the fury of this “perfect storm,” most law schools have been given responsibility by their parent institutions for generating the lion’s share of their operational funding through tuition, donor funding, grants, and entrepreneurial ventures such as partnerships with local business entities. Another complication is that both university administrators and accrediting agencies, including the American Bar Association, are increasingly requiring documented assessment of the quality of the educational programming offered, as well as measurable outputs such as post-graduation long-term job placement. Unfortunately, the current climate of legal education has made the annual rankings issued by *U.S. News & World Report* an even greater driver

behind law schools’ efforts to recruit successfully and provide competitive scholarship funding to the strongest students from a diminished number of qualified applicants. The convergence of all these forces has incentivized law schools to become more strategic about the deployment of resources and more focused on determining which units are most significantly contributing to the institution’s ability to provide a high-quality legal education, offer a better learning and personal experience for students, improve the school’s national and international reputation, and enhance its financial health.

Put another way, deans are approaching budgetary matters with a shrewd and pragmatic cost-benefit analysis. They are looking for more bang for their buck.

Unlike the world of professional sports where agents routinely negotiate lucrative multiyear contracts, commercial endorsements, and media deals, it is almost impossible in an academic library environment to posit a “precise and comprehensive definition of value or value creation.” For the most part, libraries do not generate consequential income or bill hours. Law libraries usually are only tangentially engaged in student recruitment, donor relations, revenue-producing enterprises such as continuing education programs, or other activities that add to the bottom line of an institution. Obviously law libraries—through their services, resources, and programming—benefit law schools in a plethora of ways. The challenge is to develop effective strategies and mechanisms to measure, analyze, and communicate the value that libraries contribute to the larger institution.

### Measuring Value

The strategic response to the challenge of identifying what to measure as part of determining ongoing value creation and impact on the larger institution is simultaneously straightforward and nuanced. It is clear to anyone following trends in legal education that deans, university administrators, and accrediting bodies are no longer interested in traditional measurements such as statistical data related to circulation, reference, interlibrary loan, shelving, and patron usage. The new mantra is “count what counts.” Libraries, like every other unit in a law school, need to measure the impact of services or other aspects of its operations in a manner that produces data that can be clearly linked to

“Tracking and reporting the improved academic performance and bar passage data of these students, as opposed to students who do not avail themselves of this library service, could persuasively demonstrate the value of the funds invested in this enterprise.”

the furtherance of institutional goals such as student academic success, skills training, bar passage, faculty scholarship, diversity, fundraising, and community engagement. For example, a law library, in an effort to assist the larger institution in ensuring the success of its students, could reconfigure internal library space to include an academic and bar preparation support center. Promoting the space as a “group study room on steroids,” this area could house relevant electronic and hard-copy resources, including study aids, bar examination preparation tools, and sample tests, and be furnished with both individual carrels and shared study tables. In addition, if funding were available, the space could be staffed at “peak traffic times” by high-performing upper-division law students, recent graduates, or qualified staff to provide personal tutoring and guidance. With administrative approval, the library also could establish a formal support program (in cooperation with other institutional programs) that requires regular, monitored attendance. Tracking and reporting the improved academic performance and bar passage data of these students, as compared with students who do not avail themselves of this library service, could persuasively demonstrate the value of the funds invested in this enterprise. Along the same lines, a library could take a “more than a bake sale” approach to fundraising and offer a series of “after hours” lectures or other special events for alumni and other proven/potential donors who may have an interest in libraries, rare books, or information technologies. A monitoring of the attendees’ subsequent giving, especially those funds specifically donated for the library, could easily be used to reflect a return on investment.

Libraries benefit from collecting information that might have internal administrative value, such as tracking statistics on reference interactions by individual librarians. Although several alternatives are available, LibAnalytics is a particularly functional tool to facilitate this type of data collection. (For more information on LibAnalytics visit [bit.ly/Lib](http://bit.ly/Lib).) The primary emphasis of any form of data collection,

however, should be on obtaining information that will provide external parties, especially those with resource distribution power, with quantifiable and validated evidence of the library’s contributions to the larger enterprise, such as academic performance and fundraising, rather than the efficiency of internal operations. In the current law school environment, being “library centric” is not merely a poor management strategy, but a recipe for marginalization at best and extinction at worst.

In regard to this new approach to metrics, there is a subtle difference between measuring inputs and outputs as opposed to measuring value creation and impact on the institution. Some recent studies, such as “Value of Libraries: Relationships Between Provision, Usage, and Research Outcomes,” published in *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, have utilized unit cost per download data as evidence of return on investment for library expenditures on electronic resources. Although the information retrieved from such studies is undeniably useful for many purposes, the data is not reliable for measuring return on investment and certainly would not pass muster with a serious empirical researcher. The data collected is only proof that an article has been retrieved; there is no evidence that the patron found the article useful or, indeed,

“Although the information retrieved from such studies is undeniably useful for many purposes, the data is not reliable for measuring return on investment and certainly would not pass muster with a serious empirical researcher.”





The direction a law school follows depends on a wide range of unique institutional characteristics, including (but not limited to) mission, priorities, student and faculty profiles, staff expertise, and available resources in terms of finances and personnel.”

even bothered to peruse it. This same criticism could be directed toward statistics collected about the number of hours librarians devote to teaching in a first-year legal research and writing curriculum. Unless a direct correlation can be drawn between an improvement in first-year student research skills or a costs savings (i.e., elimination of one adjunct legal research and writing instructor position), the data collected is relatively useless and non-persuasive at an institutional level. According to

the article “Valuing Information, Information Services, and the Library,” published in *Libraries and the Academy*, “The important question is not how much an information resource and/or service is used, but rather what is the impact or benefit of the information service in the life of the library customer.”

There is not one “perfect” template for collecting data nor one acceptable cookie-cutter approach for measuring the value a library creates or the extent to which it impacts a law school. The direction a law school follows depends on a wide range of unique institutional characteristics, including (but not limited to) mission, priorities, student and faculty profiles, staff expertise, and available resources in terms of finances and personnel. What evidence a library collects also will be determined by individual judgments regarding what type of evidence is most relevant and reliable.

Fortunately, much theoretical and applied research has been conducted and published on how best to approach the challenge of measuring the value and the impact of academic libraries. There is no reason to “reinvent the wheel” when there are many different approaches that can be explored and templates that can be adapted for individual institutional needs. One of the most touted tools, Google Analytics, is invaluable for honing information about what resources are being used, when they are being accessed, and by whom.

Another resource worth exploring is Barbara Weiner’s article “Marketing: Making a Case for Your Library,” published in *3 Sources*, which distills a strategy for determining the

bottom line in a library environment into four basic steps:

1. Find cost data for operating information services.
2. Collect user estimates of the value of beneficial library services.
3. Record narrative accounts of library impact.
4. Determine cost-benefit ratios to provide a return on investment.

Weiner acknowledges, “This is not a scientifically rigid study. However, this dollar value exercise presents a reasonable estimate of the value that [a] library provides to the organization.”

George Scotti, director of channel marketing for Springer Science & Business Media, has drawn on Weiner’s work in developing a presentation titled “A New Look at Return On Investment in Corporate Libraries.” Although Scotti’s approach is directed toward libraries in a business environment, much of the information and guidance is directly applicable to the academic law library environment. Included in the presentation is a well-articulated and detailed process for conducting a return-on-investment study. Five crucial tasks are identified:

1. Review organizational strategies and identify relevant knowledge workers.
2. Determine what you want to measure.
3. Conduct internal research.
4. Create a dashboard aligned with organizational goals.
5. Discuss the dashboard with management as needed.

Scotti’s presentation is an excellent resource for any law librarian searching for at least a basic road map to begin to frame the return on investment conversation.

Some additional basic steps to keep in mind include those identified by Richie Zamar in “Measuring the Value of Your Product”:

1. Invest the time in determining what metrics will assist the library in demonstrating the value of its services, resources, and programs, and then create a plan to guide the library in tracking that value over time.

2. Although there are certainly numerous metrics that can be used to demonstrate value creation and/or the impact the library has had on the law school, focus on critical metrics rather than attempting to perform an exhaustive study and analysis.
3. Accept that some ways in which the library creates value, such as the development of goodwill within the law school community or time saved for other units, might not lend themselves to analysis through metrics; identify other methods of communicating the library's impact in these areas.
4. Keep in mind that it is hard to measure when value will be realized; for example, research support may be provided to a faculty member for an article that might not be published for years (or perhaps never).

Many measurements are valuable but imperfect; for example, the results from measuring the impact of reference services by tracking the number of times an article has been cited can be exceedingly flawed when faculty publish across disciplines and/or international jurisdictions.

### The Future of ROI

As alluded to earlier in this article, devoting significant time and effort to obtaining quantifiable and validated evidence of a library's contributions to the larger organization is no longer optional. Far beyond the type of data collection required by central university administrators and accrediting agencies, law librarians need to be anticipating and crafting arguments that justify the considerable funding devoted to law libraries during this time of economic constraints and aggressive competition for resources.

In conclusion, the mining, compilation, and analysis of information to demonstrate return on investment is an exercise that complements but does not substitute for the time and effort that law libraries need to devote in order to

demonstrate their relevancy. This includes equally important mechanisms such as exceptional, creative, and proactive services; vigorous and multifaceted marketing efforts; and the aggressive and constant insertion of the law library into every possible aspect of the broader organization. The law library needs to position itself to be one of the drivers of the law school's future—no longer acting merely as a critical supporting player. Most importantly, however, law libraries need to stay continually vigilant about developing the trust, confidence, and respect of decision-makers, especially the law school dean. All the reports, charts, metrics, analytics, and quantifiable data are worthless if the law library does not have what Rod Tidwell would describe as “quan”—skill, love, respect, and community.



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## Measuring ROI for Business Development Initiatives

Practical advice for measuring and providing ROI from a law firm library perspective.

BY MARTIN KORN

It has become increasingly important to provide hard figures that accurately describe the value that programs operated by law firm libraries contribute to the overall financial success of the organization in which they operate. This paper highlights some of the factors to consider and provides methodology on how to accomplish the difficult task of demonstrating actual returns on investments (ROI) made by modern law firms.

Gone are the days when an elderly, white-haired litigator would lord over the librarian with a pronouncement that paying \$3,500 each year to maintain a copy of the 117-volume *Totul Despre Legea*\* didn't matter. If he used just one volume once every five years the price was

justified because his hourly billing rate was so high. In current times, the librarian would point to the law firm management's directive that the cost of every print title must be calculated and measured against a long list of financial criteria. How much does the set cost in real estate rental? How much time does the mail room take to handle all the updates? How much does it cost to pay the filing service (or a library technician)? How much do the update subscriptions cost? Compare those answers to how much it would cost to provide an online version of *Totul*. How much would it cost to send someone to the public law library once every five years? How much would it cost to get an interlibrary loan? What are the partner's collection numbers?

As seen in the discussion above, today's private law firm librarians are being asked to add accounting to what seems to be an ever

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\*All titles and provider names used in this article are fictional.





A simple method of measuring value would be to determine how often each attorney accessed BiffCo over time. This, however, merely determines the price per access and doesn't truly inform on the question of ROI."

increasing number of skills for which they are held responsible. To that end, the following is a brief discussion regarding some methods in which a librarian may be able to accurately measure the positive financial impact found in typical library resource investments.

#### Increasing ROI

To begin to determine ROI, it is important to define what can be easily measured and distinguish it from what cannot. The best example of what can be accu-

rately measured is often the same for a process that is easily automated. In short, a routine and repeatable task is the best place to start.

Once measurable processes are defined, it is important to divide them according to how they might be measured, either subjectively or objectively. It is important to keep in mind that just because something may lend itself better to a subjective method of measurement does not mean it cannot provide useful data. Oftentimes, paying attention to a subjective set of criteria may lead to a better understanding of costs and values, regardless of whether or not it becomes a factor in calculating exact ROI.

Subjective measuring of user data will look somewhat familiar (see previous commentary on the *Totul Despre Legea*), but let's consider this in greater detail with an example.

Looking at a typical, expensive online resource, start with the cost. Suppose an EDGAR content service such as The BiffCo Legal Law Database (BiffCo) costs \$100,000 to provide access to 100 securities attorneys in a law firm. One could simply state the obvious, that the firm is paying approximately \$83.33 every month for attorneys to maintain login credentials to BiffCo. This includes a current awareness component as well as BiffCo's research database.

A simple method of measuring value would be to determine how often each attorney accessed BiffCo over time. This, however, merely determines the price per access and doesn't truly inform on the question of ROI. In order to determine ROI, one would need to capture client or matter identities for each BiffCo research session. Once that has been done, it becomes a simpler process to check with the

firm's accounting department in order to gather billing and collection figures related to the matters for which BiffCo was used. At this point, you now have an investment of \$100,000 and a total amount of revenue related to the use of BiffCo. To glean further information, the librarian might want to interview some of the attorneys associated with those matters to determine the level in which BiffCo research was used in relation to the services charged to the client. In some instances, the librarian may find that BiffCo research was of minimal impact to the overall work product. In others, however, it may easily be the situation that the use of BiffCo was critical to a matter and that much of the associated revenue can be directly attributed to the \$100,000 investment.

What you've now done is combine subjective information (how useful was BiffCo in the context of this matter?) with objective data (how much did it cost to provide access to BiffCo?) in order to arrive at a vague estimation of the financial return on the initial or ongoing investment of the BiffCo subscription. This sort of value calculation should already be routine to many librarians.

#### An Objective Approach

It might be useful to consider a more objective approach that can provide truly accurate figures. The next example looks specifically at a business development process common to many, if not most private law firms: providing attorneys with a notification that a new lawsuit of interest to them has been filed. In many instances, it is the Library Services department that holds responsibility for managing this crucial task.

In the normal course of events, the library will have contracted with one or more providers to feed raw or filtered information from the courts to the law firm (usually via email). In some firms these emails are automatically forwarded directly to attorneys for personal review, in other firms the information is reviewed by specific individuals who edit the information to highlight specific lawsuits and remove unwanted items. A further enhancement is to match specific alerts to certain attorneys in order to better target stated needs. This process is considered to be invaluable to the law firms that employ it, but the success of the program is normally taken on faith that it works.



More often than not, librarians are being asked to justify not only the costs of maintaining a law firm library but to show examples of how they directly contribute to the revenue stream."

Following is a more methodical approach for arriving at a real measure of success. First, lay out the costs:

#### PERSONNEL

For a large firm, there may be multiple individuals responsible for monitoring new complaints and distributing the information amongst attorneys. As an example, assume you have one full- and one part-time person (1.5 full-time equivalent) with a combined salary and benefits package costing \$115,000 each year.

#### RESOURCES

There are between five and 10 well-known commercial providers of new case alerts currently operating. For this example, consider these five fictional resources and their annual costs:

\$ 115,000	Acme Lawsuit Company
36,000	Tyrell's Complaints Service
48,000	Cyberdyne Pleading Corp.
18,000	Umbrella Corp. News LTD
12,000	IniTech Trackers LLC
<hr/>	
\$ 229,000	

#### ADDITIONAL MISCELLANEOUS COSTS

In addition to the two most prominent expenses, there are others that can be calculated, such as the real estate required for the two members of the library staff, the hardware they use, the cost of tech support when needed, remote access software (if applicable), etc. For the purposes of this article, a round figure of \$10,000 is used.

The total cost to provide the service of alerting attorneys of new complaints  
= \$354,000 per year.

#### Next Steps

Circling back to the alerting service provided by the library, when attorneys review the new lawsuit notifications they will almost always request a copy of the complaint for review as a conversation starting point with the client (or potential client). The library now has data points to track: the requesting attorney's name, the specific lawsuit being reviewed, and the date of the request.

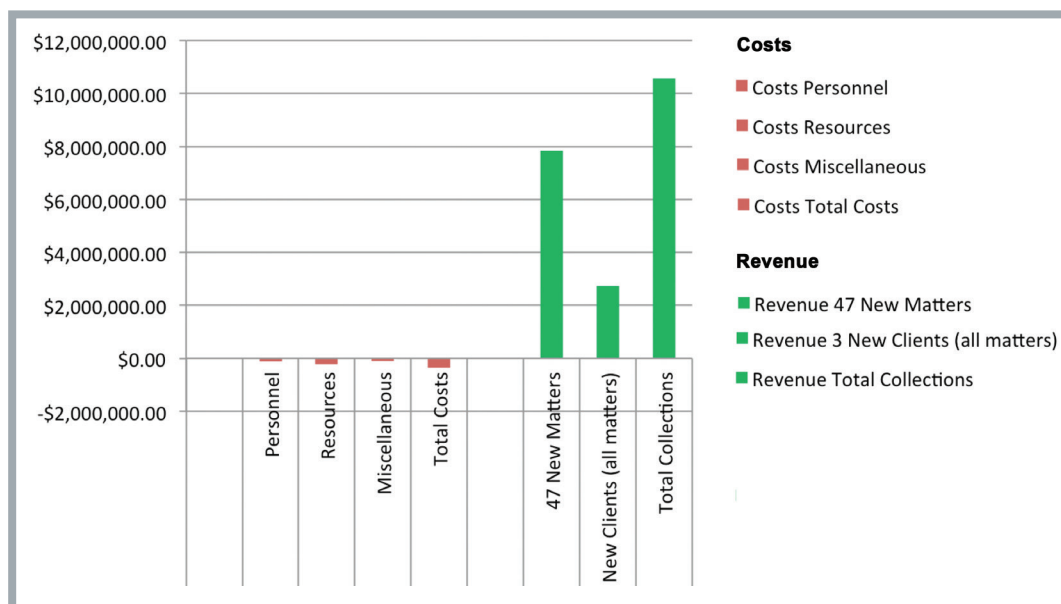
The next step is to contact the attorneys who request copies of complaints in order to determine the outcome of their business development efforts. Since it takes time to convert a new lawsuit into a new matter, it might be wise to wait three months before checking on the status of the initial document request. This step is easily turned into a routine process that closes the circle on the notification process: Every day a follow-up note (make sure to include a copy of the original request) goes back to the three-month-old contacts.

If the response received by the library is positive (in other words, "yes, we got the case"), then the particulars can be added to a database or spreadsheet for further processing. More often than not, though, the response will be "no, that one didn't pan out, but don't stop sending me notices." These are great emails to keep since they add to the more subjective measurements discussed earlier.

Now that there is a growing list of successful new lawsuit alerts, it is time to measure their real value. Working with the accounting or accounts receivables department in your organization, send the list of new matters and ask for the financials—what has been billed and what has been collected. If there is resistance to the sharing of this information, carefully explain the goal as cooperation may be more forthcoming.



It is important to point out that the library (or, for that matter, any other department) is not responsible for all of the revenue generated by notifying attorneys of a new lawsuit; the attorneys are the ones making the contacts and negotiating services."



NEW COMPLAINTS		
<b>Costs</b>		
	Personnel	-\$115,000.00
	Resources	-\$229,000.00
	Miscellaneous	-\$10,000.00
	Total Costs	-\$354,000.00
<b>Revenue</b>		
	47 New Matters	\$7,837,926.00
	3 New Clients (all matters)	\$2,732,117.00
	Total Collections	\$10,570,043.00

Here is a fictional example of how this should look:

- How many new matters were opened over a 12 month period? = 47
- How many new clients were acquired? = 3
- Total collections in the calendar year for these matters (minus matters associated with the three new clients) = \$7,837,926
- Total collections for all matters related to the three acquired clients = \$2,732,117
- Total collections associated with the library efforts = \$10,570,043
- The total cost to provide the service of alerting attorneys of new complaints = \$354,000 in the same period

In the example above, the ROI is approximately 30:1. For every dollar spent, 30 are collected.

### Concluding Notes

It is important to point out that the library (or, for that matter, any other department) is not responsible for all of the revenue generated by notifying attorneys of a new lawsuit; the attorneys are the ones making the contacts and negotiating services. It is still important to note that the library spawns initial interest in these cases. In most instances, the new work will be for existing clients, many of whom would have hired the firm for the work even without the notification. This is where it becomes apparent that there is an intangible benefit to maintaining an important dialogue with the client. However, it is much harder to make the same qualifying



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1** Look for repeatable tasks to automate and measure.
- 2** Record as much processing data as possible.
- 3** Take credit for participating in the revenue stream.

statements when the new lawsuit notifications are the starting point of conversations with new clients. In these instances, it is entirely appropriate for a library to make a stronger claim of credit by bringing in new work and revenue to the law firm.

This is but one example of measuring value with a great deal of accuracy. There is a straightforward process for developing methods that can be used to calculate ROI throughout many services

provided by libraries:

- Work with staff in order to identify repeatable tasks and programs that are potentially ripe for automation.
- Determine the types of data that can be used and where there might be measurable junctions.
- Develop a procedure to capture and analyze that data.
- Recruit other players and stakeholders as needed.
- Create a schedule of reports and identify to whom they will be submitted.

Note that while the reported information is valuable, it may be discovered that it is only useful as “background information” and not necessarily actionable from a budgeting perspective. If that is the case, push for greater attention and send the reports farther “upstream” as appropriate.

Once a repeatable task is converted into a production process, it may be found that it generates

considerable interest in additional processes. Creating new procedures, systems, and services may or may not be directly related to ROI measurement, but the genesis is the same from that initial and important step of identifying repetition. This has been the case for many law firm library staff—regularly being asked to expand services to meet new requests for ongoing monitoring of events far removed from lawsuits.

More often than not, librarians are being asked to justify not only the costs of maintaining a law firm library, but to show examples of how they directly contribute to the revenue stream. Many librarians have or will have to add services not typically considered to be “library work” to their departments in order to meet the business development needs of the organization. It is extremely important to be able to accurately measure and promote the success of these efforts—this article has endeavored to provide a simple road map that can easily be followed and implemented.



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## ROI for Government Law Libraries

Using cost-benefit analysis to calculate value.

BY STEVEN P. ANDERSON

When one thinks about law libraries and return on investment (ROI), they might think it's relatively easy for someone to plug in figures from their state law library into some kind of "ROI calculator" and get a simple ratio that tells everyone how much money they saved their institution. Such an inquiry could only be strengthened by assistance from fellow American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) colleagues. Soon after the Association's Economic Value of Law Libraries Special Committee was formed, with assistance from HBR Consulting, its 2015 *Economic Value of Law Libraries Report* described six overarching best practices. (Read the full report at [bit.ly/AALLEconomicValue15](http://bit.ly/AALLEconomicValue15).) An interesting factor about the report is that only one out of the six best practices referenced actual numbers.

Because libraries' missions are so different from each other and because libraries have historically followed those missions in different

ways, it started to make sense that an "ROI calculator" for law libraries simply could not exist. Rather, in addition to quantitative justification for library funding, the *Economic Value of Law Libraries Report* emphasized the critical need to solidify libraries' communications with their organizational leadership and to contextualize numbers with qualitative information.

This way, libraries can shape perceptions of value into three key categories: communications, qualitative information, and quantitative information and analysis. This article will analyze each of these categories from the viewpoint of court libraries.

### The Court Library System

A crucial element to consider when discussing court libraries' communications with organizational leadership is that the library must be in step with the mission of the entire organization. How does a law librarian know what the mission of the parent organization is (at least without

“ It is best to present information in a formal meeting setting, at least once a year. The presenter does not need to go over everything in detail. Rather, the librarian can point out highlights that are relevant to the institution as a whole.”

asking the chief judge this most basic of questions)? Sometimes, one can find it explicitly (see sample mission statement for Maryland courts at [bit.ly/mdplan](http://bit.ly/mdplan)). At other times, librarians may surmise correctly that the mission is to provide equal access to all who come before the court. The effect for most court libraries is that they are open to the public and they serve both the savvy Westlaw user from Big Firm LLC, and the worker who might be more at ease reading *Cómo Comprar Su Primera Casa*. Understandably, some court

libraries have a relatively narrow focus, such as the legal needs of a single county or city, while others serve the state's judiciary a bit more broadly.

Another feature that court libraries share is that staff almost always report in some way to the chief judge of the jurisdiction (even with intermediaries). Without posturing, I can tell you that chief judges are *busy* people. Typically, this means that they often prefer incremental improvements rather than large scale ones, which require significant commitments of time and energy.

### Communication

One additional commonality is that court libraries have publicly funded budgets, and the community has a right to know what they spend on librarian services. Are they receiving value?

How would you communicate the challenges of serving a diverse user group on a tight budget to your chief judge? In a heavy binder filled with other data on hours of operation and expenses? No. It's likely that a short memo, even via email, is sufficient; however, it makes sense to stay knowledgeable about the way other court managers communicate with the chief judge. It also makes sense to schedule reports in conjunction with the decision-making calendar of the court itself. For example, in Maryland, June is an ideal month because the start of the fiscal year is July 1 and the budget request for the following year is due about five weeks later. This would give you (theoretically, at least) three fiscal years in which to schedule purchases.

Whatever you do, do not call an online catalog an “OPAC” or an “ILS.” Unless the chief

judge went to a library school (a most unlikely event), he or she will not be familiar with library-related buzzwords and acronyms.

It is best to present information in a formal meeting setting, at least once a year. The presenter does not need to go over everything in detail. Rather, the librarian can point out highlights that are relevant to the institution as a whole. It's much better, for example, to say that there is a 30-percent rise in foot traffic this year, adding that anecdotally, this is because of the new self-help center across the hall, than to get into minute details (e.g., “The library saw a 1.34 percent drop in ILL usage during the last 16 months.”) Reuse your best soundbites and adapt them for different audiences and settings.

### The Data Game

Having relevant qualitative data is a necessary component of being well informed. For example, the Maryland State Law Library uses testimonials to highlight the impact of services. Approximately half of the library's reference work is done via email, which provides an easy way for someone to compliment library staff. When a staff member receives a thank-you note, save the message in a “THWUNK” file. “THWUNK” is the sound that a ream of paper makes being slammed down on a desk as if to say, “Here, what do you think of this?” Before every library committee meeting, anonymously copy the exact language of the thank-you notes from the “THWUNK” file into the meeting agenda, so that the committee members know that the library touched real people and has value. These notes are unsolicited and freely given. Even though they take up almost half of the agenda, the committee needs to be aware of this public input. The following are a few of the recent notes that the Maryland State Law Library has received:

- Thank you so much for your interesting answer. It is very helpful. Please know I appreciate your time and help on this research. It saves me time and helps me a lot for my legal strategy. I am very grateful. Thank you so much for being great public servants.
- I can't thank you enough for the list. ... What great service. I appreciate it so much.
- Thanks! This is very helpful and I appreciate how hard it is to get this information.



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- You have provided an incredible wealth of background material. I will be sorting for a while with a tight deadline looming. Thank you for all your help. It's marvelous.

The Maryland State Law Library also has a SurveyMonkey account, with a created LibQUAL-like form, which is linked from every sent email and also appears on the front page of the website. Although this is only a snapshot, it is reassuring for the library committee to know that 85 percent of respondents rated their interaction with the library as “excellent” overall, and 88 percent of them were “very likely” to use the library again or to recommend it to someone else.

### Cost-Benefit Analysis

When considering qualitative measurements, try to use methods that demonstrate a positive impact on the organization. Whenever you report library-related statistics, report them in the context of importance to the organization. For example, if you are reporting on the number of reference questions answered, add a statement that the higher the number, the greater assistance you provided to judges, self-represented litigants, and attorneys. While it is important to align your valuation strategies with others in the organization, librarians need to take the lead.

As indicated in the Committee's *Report*, there are several ways in which you can calculate ROI. Of those organizations that perform quantitative fiscal analysis, most use an “impact of service” model, which analyzes the result of contributions of services and resources of a department to the organization's success. Outside of specific projects, however, the numerical inputs are difficult for court libraries to locate and use.

The second-most used methodology, “cost-benefit analysis,” seems to be much more straightforward for court libraries to employ. In cost-benefit analysis, value is calculated based on the estimated cost of the resulting benefit divided by the cost of the service or resources.

First, we will use cost-benefit analysis to examine a project-based hypothetical and then look at a real-life example from the Maryland State Law Library. For example, say you would like to start a small scanning project that will cost \$5,000 for the vendor. You estimate that there will be 500 users per year, so you might think the cost of each search will be \$10 (at least

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### ROI CALCULATION

Estimated cost of the resulting benefit / (divided by) the cost of the service or resources = value proposition

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for the first year). This figure is true for raw numbers, but your conversion of print to digital materials actually has a much greater impact on the library's investment in this project.

A 2010 paper by University of Michigan researchers titled, “A Day Without a Search Engine: An Experimental Study of Online and Offline Search” by Yan Chen, Grace YoungJoo Jeon, and Yong-Mi Kim, is highly instructive in this regard. The study found that a web search for the correct answer to a question took seven minutes, while a library search took 22 minutes to answer the same question. The web search saved the user 15 minutes. To view the study visit [bit.ly/Umich](http://bit.ly/Umich).

The cost of time saved (in Maryland, per average worker) is \$26.27 per hour divided by four [60 minutes divided by the number of minutes saved (15)], which is \$6.57 per search. (For more data on salaries and hourly wages, visit [bit.ly/Salarygov](http://bit.ly/Salarygov).) Multiply the cost of a single search (\$6.57) by 500 searches per year, and it turns out that your \$5,000 investment yields an average worker time savings of \$32,850 per year. Your ROI in this simple project is a factor of 6.57:1 (the estimated cost of the resulting benefit divided by the cost spent on the service). The ROI is likely to be far higher in succeeding years, as the initial cost has already been paid.

An ROI of 6.57:1 certainly is not something to be ignored. However, it is lacking certain cost inputs that make this total savings illusory, indeterminate, or at least less likely than 6.57:1. The four main cost inputs that are missing include:

- The initial cost of acquisition of the scanned item (which is why ephemera, such as state publications procured for free, will always have a higher ROI).
- The actual cost of keeping the print material clean, dry, well-preserved, and well-cataloged in the library.
- The actual or imputed cost to the library of the librarian's time in managing the digitization project.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

**1** Libraries can shape perceptions of value into three key categories: communications, qualitative information, and quantitative information and analysis.

**2** Cost-benefit analysis seems to be much more straightforward for court libraries to employ.

- The cost of maintaining the newly digitized online resource, which ultimately necessitates server acquisition and maintenance, a software platform, and connectivity.

While online access is moving to ubiquity, it is not there yet. When planning, you must take into account the fact that each researcher will be out at least \$1,000 for the purchase of their computer, software, and internet connection. If the person is accessing the newly digitized material from a computer that is not their own, then the host computer's owner, such as a

public library, will bear some of the cost.

Unless the institution as a whole commits to a certain methodology, a library doing this on its own and not addressing all the input factors damages the credibility of the librarian's assertions. Nevertheless, cost-benefit figures can be helpful to use because they raise the issue of which cost elements you might be discarding or ignoring. In the above case, it is certainly probable that the project would still be beneficial to the public, even if one were to incorporate the added costs.

The Maryland State Law Library is unique in at least one way: It operates the state's main legal self-help website, the People's Law Library of Maryland (PLL). The library's primary focus is on Maryland state civil law of interest to low- and moderate-income Marylanders (persons in state court without representation). It consists of about 600 pages of both substantive and procedural law.

Because the library strives to update all material annually, the site relies a great deal on the Maryland legal community for both new and updated content. While reliance on Maryland Legal Services Corporation grantees, pro bono attorneys, and students has been helpful, the library is now in its second year of hiring paid "PLL Fellows," which provides an opportunity for law students and new graduates to gain practical writing skills, meet key attorneys in the legal services community, and to help spread the word about PLL to their friends and colleagues. In addition, the site has had the good fortune of using language students for foreign translations.

The main point is that the library is maintaining a high-quality research website at a very low cost. In FY-2015, PLL had 1,227,319 sessions/visits and 1,893,159 page views. From this data, we can assign the number of sessions/visits (1,227,319) as representative of questions answered. Then, using a cost-benefit analysis and the "cost of time saved" amount of \$6.57 from above, we can see that PLL saved its users a total of \$8,063,486 per year ( $1,227,319 \times \$6.57$ ). Looking at PLL's ROI at the project level, and with staffing, server maintenance, and hosting, the library's cost was approximately \$120,000 in FY-2015. The PLL project's ROI was an enormous value at 67:1 (\$8.063 million divided by \$120,000). In fact, if we were to look at the costs related to the site, we would find that the site pays not only for itself, but for the whole law library. In FY-2015, the library's overall budget was approximately \$2.5 million. The ROI of PLL to the State Law Library was about 3.2:1 (\$8.063 million divided by \$2.5 million). As you can see, cost-benefit analysis can vary greatly, depending on what cost inputs are used. However, it remains a useful tool as it provides some sort of monetary value for libraries.

Today, librarians must be knowledgeable leaders in addition to being skilled researchers. Court librarians can no longer roll their eyes when someone mentions quantitative valuation. We need to become more facile with its terms and more adept with using its methodologies. We also must become more assertive about informing court leadership about both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of our libraries.



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## Storytelling, Metrics, and the Wisdom of Don Draper

“If you don’t like what’s being said, change the conversation.” —Don Draper

BY COLLEEN CABLE

When we own the data and the process of communication, we have the opportunity to not only change, but control the conversation. The only way to do this is to collect the right data and transform it into information that tells the story we want to tell: the story that motivates organizational leadership to act. The consequences of not owning and controlling the conversation can be disastrous. In the absence of information to the contrary or an alternative narrative, perceptions are made about and projected onto the library. Overcoming these perceptions, once established, can be extremely difficult.

**“You make your own opportunities.”  
—Don Draper**

In case you aren’t familiar with Don Draper, he is a fictional character and was the star of AMC’s *Mad Men*. The show is set in the 1950s at a New

York advertising agency. Draper is the creative director of the firm and makes many memorable pitches to agency clients and prospective clients. Leading up to these pitches, he must utilize both qualitative and quantitative data to develop an advertising campaign, and then sell that campaign to the client.

Despite all of the preparation and a comprehensive presentation, sometimes the clients still didn’t understand the pitch, and that’s when Draper would really shine. He understood that the ultimate goal of the client was to sell their product, and he was able to convince them that his idea was the best way to achieve that goal—through a compelling story, not just through data.

This process has many aspects to it that are very similar to the persuasion challenges faced by today’s information professionals. First, we have a variety of services that we are constantly “selling”—both the direct use of the services to



“We need to be persuasive in our communication through storytelling. This requires fully understanding the strategies and goals of our organizations, and then creating a narrative that effectively communicates that information.”

our end-users and the value of those services to organizational leadership. These services encompass not only the products and tools that we purchase and maintain, but also research and other services performed by our staff. Engaging and selling to both groups is paramount.

Second, we have access to both qualitative and quantitative data about these services that can be leveraged into a campaign that communicates value. Even if we don't have a

specific tool designed to capture usage metrics, there are still other kinds of data we can use.

Third, we need to be persuasive in our communication through storytelling. This requires fully understanding the strategies and goals of our organizations, and then creating a narrative that effectively communicates that information.

Below are a few common missteps that are often made during this process:

- Collecting data that is meaningful to us, but not to anyone else.
- Spending time collecting data that has never, and would never, be used in a report.
- Using terms that don't mean anything to those outside our industry, like “ready reference” or “catalog.”
- Not adequately manipulating the data into simple impactful charts/graphs or statistics that help tell the story.
- Presenting data/information in a way that is confusing or meaningless to stakeholders.
- Not aligning with firm goals and strategies or connecting with stakeholders in a meaningful way.

**“Success comes from standing out, not fitting in.” —Don Draper**

Don Draper was so much better than everyone else because he understood that he had to create campaigns that would connect with people and then sell those campaigns to the clients. He understood that this required more than just survey data or sales figures—it required a

narrative or story. Take one of Draper's most memorable pitches, the Kodak slide carousel.

The Kodak executives referred to the carousel as a “wheel” and could not see past that; they thought they were selling a wheel. Draper recognized that calling it a wheel wasn't going to achieve the goal (i.e., selling the product), so there was no point in building a campaign around a wheel. Instead, he completely rebranded the product and used storytelling to create an entirely different message:

*This device isn't a spaceship, it's a time machine. It goes backwards and forwards ... it takes us to a place where we ache to go again. It's not called the wheel; it's called the carousel. It lets us travel the way a child travels—around and around, and back home again, to a place where we know we are loved.*

Of course, this is completely fictionalized narration courtesy of the brilliant *Mad Men* writers, and who knows how Kodak actually came up with the carousel concept. But Draper's pitch demonstrates how the creation of a story that connected everyone in the room to the product completely transformed the thought process. As the clients are leaving the office someone sarcastically says, “Good luck at your next meeting.” They know that there is no way that anyone can top Draper, and that they have won the business.

According to an article in *Entrepreneur* titled “From Bedtime to the Boardroom: Why Storytelling Matters in Business,” “storytelling should be seen as more than just a sales tool. It's important to use stories to “connect employees ... to management, and to give a voice to those who don't otherwise have one.”

This is exactly what we are striving for as information leaders within our organizations, yet we struggle to get others to connect to what we do and fail to demonstrate the value we provide.

Why is storytelling so important? Primarily, because our brains are wired to connect through stories. Yes, data is important. A *Harvard Business Review* article titled “The Irresistible Power of Storytelling as a Strategic Business Tool” states “data can persuade people, but it



Before starting to turn data into a pitch or presentation, conduct a reference interview with yourself to truly get to the heart of what you need to present and to avoid common missteps."

doesn't inspire them to act; to do that, you need to wrap your vision in a story that fires the imagination and stirs the soul." This is why the mere collection of data, while valuable, is not necessarily going to inspire management to increase a budget or add a new employee.

**"Make it simple, but significant." —Don Draper**

We have access to a wide variety of data, whether or not we use a tool dedicated to its collection. There are certain data that we should be maintaining or have the ability to generate quickly if needed, such as:

- Annual spend per attorney (and/or timekeepers) and spending trends
  - Domestic, international, total firm-wide
  - By office or region
  - By practice group vs. general firm-wide resources
  - Print vs. online
- Usage for the largest vendors, such as LexisNexis and Westlaw, as well as others who will provide it along with usage trending
  - Cost per session or cost per active user vs. total cost for the resource
- Qualitative feedback from users
- Quantitative survey data collected, if any

Ongoing additional data that should be collected from outside the library includes:

- Attorney headcount from Human Resources
  - By position, practice group, and office month by month
- Intranet metrics from your Information Technology (IT) department
  - If your IT department collects this information, you should request it for all links to electronic resources on a monthly basis
- External survey data
  - From vendors or professional associations

Before starting to turn data into a pitch or presentation, conduct a reference interview with yourself to truly get to the heart of what you need to present and to avoid common missteps:

- What do I want to accomplish?
- What am I really trying to "sell"?
- Why am I trying to sell it? What is so important about it?
- Who is my audience and what is important to them?

Let's look at a real-life example. Imagine you are trying to get approval to purchase a new resource:

- What do I want to accomplish?
  - To add a new electronic judicial analytics resource
- What am I trying to "sell"?
  - Value of the expense vs. the ROI
- Why am I trying to sell it?
  - Time-saving analytics; leveraging big data; elimination of print; direct access to one-click reports; competitive advantage
- Who is my audience and what is important to them?
  - In this case, it is the COO and director of practice management, both of whom have a goal of providing practice-ready tools on the intranet that give us a competitive edge

Notice, we aren't trying to sell the actual product or how to use it or what the interface is like, etc. That probably doesn't matter to our audience in this instance. Instead, we need to create a story using any relevant data we have, such as:

- What is the current process for accessing the information that would be provided by the new resource? Do we have any usage statistics or anecdotal comments from users on the current resources?
- How does the proposed cost compare to other similar products, overall or per head?
- Have we purchased similar products, if so, what has been the adoption rate over time? What do we anticipate as the actual cost per active user and how does this compare?

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1** Understand what measurements are meaningful to those outside of the library/information services department, and gather data focused around those measurements, not the other way around.
- 2** Organizational executives do not need or want to get too granular; keep your communication simple, concise, and focused.
- 3** Metrics are key to our communication, but the structure of what we communicate is just as important.
- 4** Use storytelling to create a connection between your metrics and the audience. This will not only persuade stakeholders, but also inspire action.

- Do we have any anecdotal feedback from a trial group or from references regarding the impact of the purchase?

Once we have our data, we need an opening that will help us “sell” our pitch. In this case perhaps, Paul J. Zak, a professor of economics, psychology, and management at Claremont Graduate University, said it best:

Attention is such a scarce resource. You need to grab someone within the first 15 seconds. People have to care about what’s going on; stories need to be of human scale. For instance, “Jane Smith was a customer of ours for the past 20 years. Last year, she left us.” That’s a good opening.

For our example, we are advocating a switch from using print judicial biographies and two or three password-required tools to gather judicial statistics.

Researchers do the majority of this work and send all of this information to the requesting attorney. If we know that the COO and the director of practice management are most interested in products that create efficiencies, a good opening might be a simple graphic showing that the current complicated process involves 10 steps, three separate products, and knowledge of passwords for each product, whereas this new product will reduce the process to two steps with no passwords. That tells a story. That engages the audience because it is meaningful to *them* and helps further their goals and strategies. If nothing else consider this:

The London School of Business recently found that people have different levels of information retention based on how information is delivered to them. When they hear statistics alone, they retain only 5 percent to 10 percent of what they hear. When the statistic is coupled with a picture related to it, retention jumps to 25 percent. When stories are used to convey that same information, retention jumps to a remarkable 65 percent to 70 percent. Why is this? Because stories engage both sides of the brain. Appealing to the right side involves the emotions of the listener. Strong emotional ties create better “anchors” for the points you are trying to make.

Metrics are a key part of how we communicate our value, but what is even more important is the structure of that communication. By applying storytelling to our pitches and reports, we not only increase the likelihood of connecting with our audience, but also permanently change the conversation around our profession.



**COLLEEN CABLE** is the director of information services at Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP. She has a distinctive background, having worked in a variety of different sectors within the legal information industry. Cable started her career as a county law librarian before moving into the law firm world. She then spent six years working as an information vendor at Thomson Reuters, an additional six years as a consultant, and has been back in a law firm for the last two and a half years. Cable obtained her MLIS degree from the University of Oklahoma and her JD from the University of Tulsa. She is the past chair of the Special Libraries Association Legal Division and is a frequent speaker at industry events. Contact her at [ccable@orrick.com](mailto:ccable@orrick.com).





## Law Libraries ... By the Numbers

Demonstrate the value of your law library to drive optimal legal services.

BY STEVE LASTRES

Many library directors and managers already collect sophisticated service metrics about their libraries and the services they provide. However, gathering metrics is only the first half of the task. In order for those numbers to be meaningful, they must be converted into a monetary value to demonstrate to senior management the actual benefits and costs of library services. While the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) published a report titled *The Economic Value of Law Libraries* in January 2015, that provides general guidance on how to think about the economic value of law libraries, this white paper seeks to provide practical, concrete techniques to help law librarians quantify their services into a monetary value that an executive director or CFO can easily understand. (To view the study visit [bit.ly/AALLEconomicValue15](http://bit.ly/AALLEconomicValue15).) This article provides a way to evaluate the business value of the library as a business unit, albeit one that is not focused on maximizing revenue, but rather

on providing the highest-quality services at the lowest feasible cost to the firm.

### Billable Hour Is Still King

Despite the emergence of the alternative fee arrangement (AFA) in the post-Great Recession legal economy, the traditional billable hour model is still the primary way that law firms generate revenue. In fact, even when working under AFAs, the vast majority of lawyers at firms continue to bill by the hour.

This billable hour approach makes equal sense for measuring librarian value and productivity. The first step in measuring librarian monetary value in the same way is to ensure your research librarians record all of their time, both for billable and non-billable matters. It's also a good idea to push down library administrative work to library staff who is not considered to be a timekeeper, so that the metrics that librarians do record reflect substantive research work on behalf of clients or the firm. This measure shows

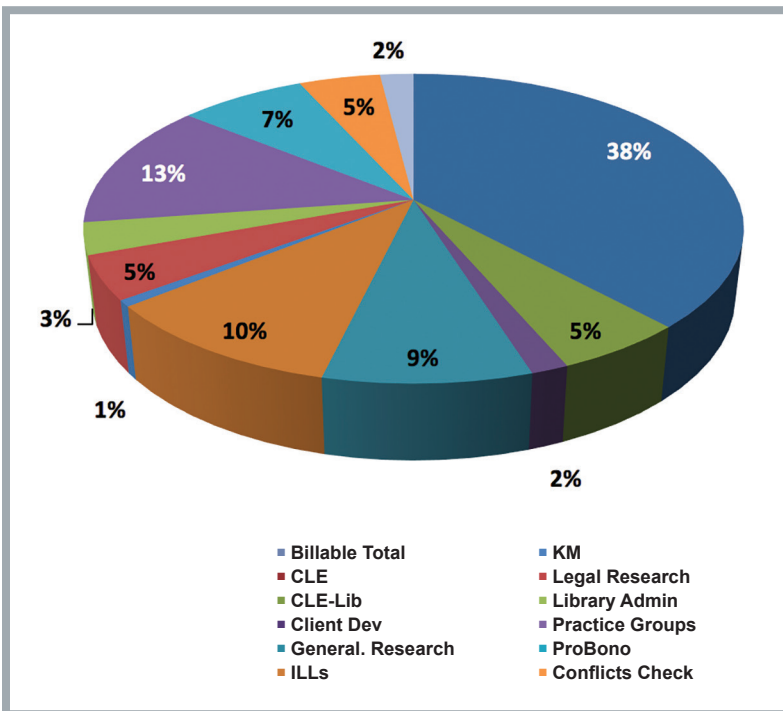
Figure 1: Knowledge Management Services Staff Revenue

REVENUE REVIEW	2008 REVENUE	2009 REVENUE	2010 REVENUE	2011 REVENUE	2012 REVENUE	2013 REVENUE	2014 REVENUE	2015 REVENUE	2014-2015 Variance
TOTAL HOURS WORKED RELATED TO BILLINGS <sup>3</sup>	8,063	7,539	7,503	7,633	8,447	7,816	8,082	6,929	-17%
% INCREASE IN HOURS	6.78%	-6.50%	-0.48%	1.73%	10.66%	-7.47%	3.40%	-14.27%	124%
STANDARD VALUE BILLED									-21%
% REAL	78.90%	65.63%	60.60%	61.91%	59.65%	61.46%	55.32%	58.69%	6%
ACTUAL FEES BILLED									-14%
% INCREASE IN FEES	6.26%	-19.99%	-9.74%	12.83%	13.93%	-0.54%	2.34%	-12.17%	119%
NET COST									28%
% BILLED TO EXPENSES	59.50%	53.83%	53.06%	51.56%	56.07%	55.26%	57.18%	45.95%	-24%

how research librarians can generate real revenue for the firm. Figure 1 displays the hours that Debevoise & Plimpton LLP research staff billed on an annualized basis. Even for firms that do not bill librarian time to institutional

clients or who choose to write the time off, it is still valuable to understand how librarians are generating revenue from the hours they bill. As AFAs become more popular with clients, librarians can offer the firm excellent opportunities for reducing the cost of delivering legal work. Librarians are research experts, yet they bill at lower rates than lawyers, which puts them in the best position to conduct cost-effective research services for their firms' clients. As the sidebar on page 31 titled "Billing Best Practices" illustrates, the revenue generated from research librarians can still represent substantial revenue despite write-offs. This revenue can offset the head-count costs of overall library services.

Figure 2: 2015 Knowledge Management Services Billing Report by Type of Service Provided



### Align Research Work with the Firm's Strategic Initiatives

Don't just track billable work; researchers should track non-billable work and organize it into meaningful categories. For example, examine the strategic initiatives of the firm to see how the library contributes its share to the greater goals of the firm. In Figure 2, a number of library-oriented categories (such as ILLs) are tracked by time and billing software. More importantly, categories such as Knowledge Management (KM), Practice Group Support, Client Development, Pro Bono, and Conflicts Checks are also included. These traditional, non-billable categories may appear by their category definition not to

“We’re all aware that library budgets have been declining since the economic downturn in 2008. However, eight years later, we aren’t focused just on cost-cutting to the bone any more.”

generate revenue. That’s true, but non-billable does not mean “non-valuable.” In fact, firms are investing in more client and business development research to generate new business. Librarians should calculate the value of client and business development research they conduct by monitoring the daily New Matter Memo (NMM) alerts of the new business. By correlating research performed

by the library with new matters, it is easy to calculate the revenue generated by that new work from the firm’s financial software system. Clearly, librarians cannot take credit for the total value of the work performed by attorneys on the new client matter, but should point out to senior management the critical role library research played in winning that new work.

Similarly, for librarians providing curated practice group, industry, or client team newsletters, it is critically important to develop good communication with the readers of those newsletters so you can track when the competitive intelligence you or your staff provided results in a new client engagement. Armed with the new client/matter number, librarians can estimate a monetary value for the work/services performed by the library staff.

#### **Strategic Contract Management = Measurable Savings**

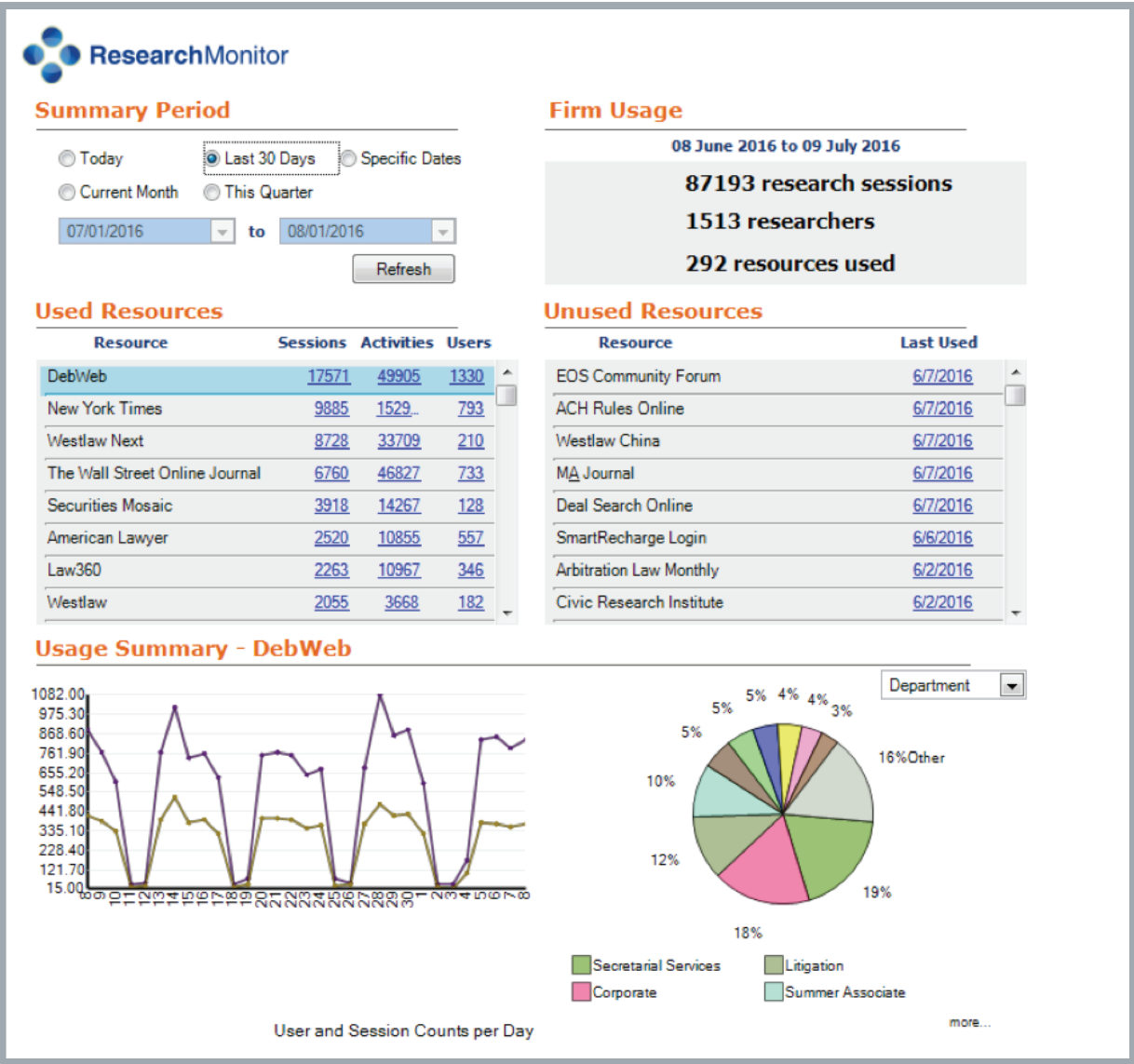
According to an article in the *American Lawyer* titled “Downsizing Continues at Law Firm Libraries” (published July 7, 2016), the median law library budget at the Am Law 200 firm was \$3.90 million in 2015, down from \$5.18 million in 2014. View the article at [bit.ly/AmLaw](http://bit.ly/AmLaw). We’re all aware that library budgets have been declining since the economic downturn in 2008. However, eight years later, we aren’t focused just on cost-cutting to the bone any more. The focus has shifted to working smarter and providing lawyers with relevant resources and tools that enable them to work more efficiently. Thanks to the introduction of management tools like Research Monitor and Onelog, library directors have access to granular and precise user metrics by resources that provide

#### **BILLING BEST PRACTICES**

- Librarians should record all of their time (both billable and non-billable).
- Time entries should be entered as soon as the request is completed so there is no loss of time.
- Report on the total monthly value of the billable work first, then deduct the value of the work written off.
- Monitor write-offs and educate billing partners about the value of your research team. Explain how librarians provide more cost-effective and efficient research services for clients, especially when your firm is engaged under an AFA.
- Categorize the non-billable work in meaningful strategic categories.
- Eliminate administrative duties from embedded research librarians. Their value lies in conducting complex legal and business research that most lawyers do not have the time or expertise to perform.
- Look for reports or software tools used by other departments in your firm to help calculate the value of non-billable work the library is responsible for (e.g., New Matter Memos or financial software tools used at your firm).
- In addition to the monetary value generated by librarian timekeepers, provide an executive summary that shows how the library concretely supported any firm strategic initiative.



Figure 3: Debevoise & Plimpton LLP Knowledge Management Services Resource Dashboard



a dashboard view of all usage by user, role, department, practice, office, etc. (see dashboard in Figure 3).

Armed with the objective usage reports that these tools provide, librarians have been successful in shifting their spends from inefficient enterprise-wide licenses to more cost-effective, limited license agreements that only cover the true benefiting user groups. Figure 4 identifies an opportunity to reduce the subscription license to benefit only the three benefiting users of that particular service (text is purposefully

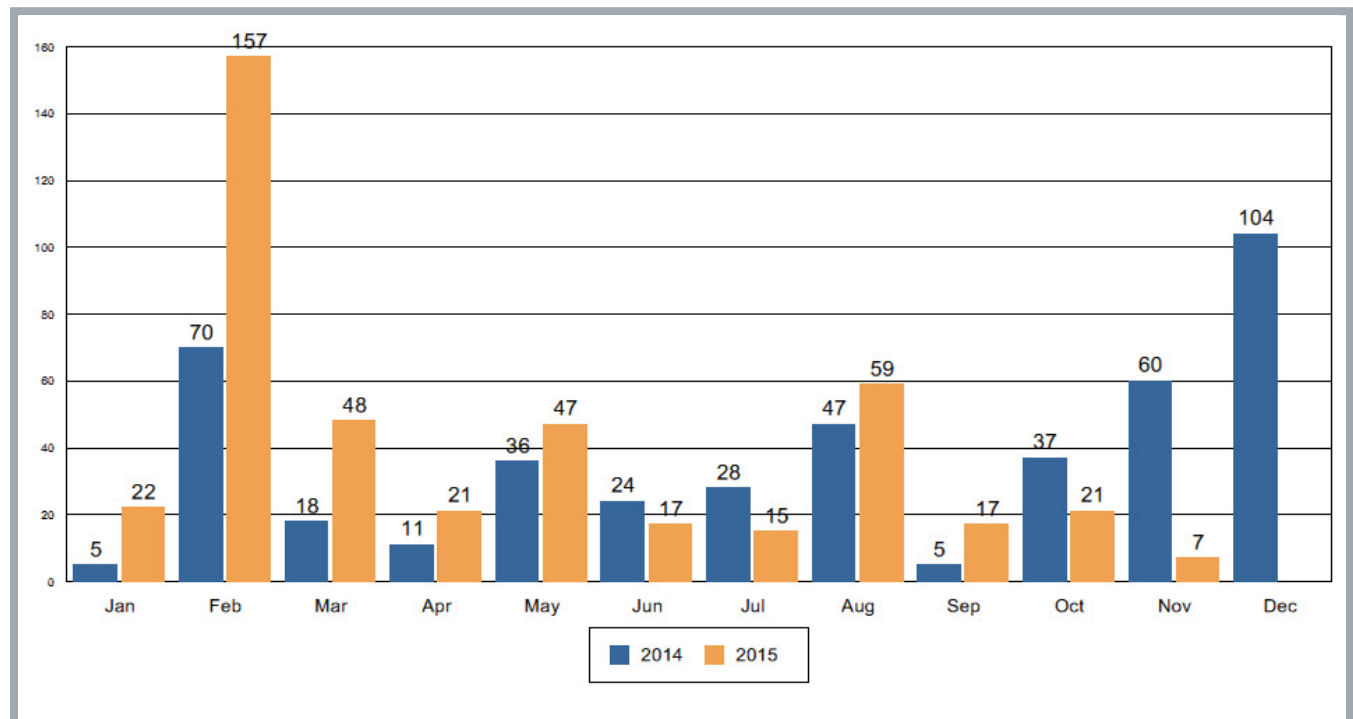
blurry to protect name of users).

Further, negotiate with major legal vendors like LexisNexis, Thomson Reuters, and Wolters Kluwer under a Master Services Agreement (MSA) to include all of the products/services your firm subscribes to. Using an MSA provides an opportunity to reduce pricing on all services compared to negotiating each product on a piecemeal basis. This way, law libraries can provide lawyers with access to more resources than ever before, but at a lower price. As you save the firm money, make sure senior management

Figure 4: Top 20 Researchers

Top 20 Researchers	
Researcher	Sessions
[REDACTED]	574
[REDACTED]	72
[REDACTED]	11
[REDACTED]	2
[REDACTED]	1
[REDACTED]	1
[REDACTED]	1

Figure 5: Two-Year Analysis Chart



knows what you have accomplished. A simple chart can communicate the savings you have achieved for each vendor and service. Don't be shy; use trending analysis to show the dollar impact of the reductions you have negotiated over a two-, five-, or 10-year timeline. Figure 5 displays yearly comparisons for usage trends.

Figure 6 shows usage for particular users that

have benefited from any process improvement and calculates any efficiency gained that the new resource provides as an opportunity cost. Such costs, however, are generally not recorded in a firm's financial software, but are recognized in decision-making by computing the cash outlays and their resulting profit or loss. Learn more at [bit.ly/Opportunity](http://bit.ly/Opportunity).

Figure 6: Vendor Savings Chart

Account	Vendor	Resource	Original Cost	Actual Cost	Percentage in savings	Dollar Amount in savings	Notes
Subs & Pubs	ALM				26%		
Subs & Pubs	AM Best				18%		
Subs & Pubs	Elsevier				10%		
Subs & Pubs	Euromoney				4%		
Subs & Pubs	Inframation				17%		
Subs & Pubs	ISLG				13%		
Subs & Pubs	Law Business Research				34%		
Subs & Pubs	Portfolio Media				29%		
Subs & Pubs	Prequin				31%		
Subs & Pubs	Sourcemia				9%		
Subs & Pubs	Sourcemia				8%		
Subs & Pubs	Thomson Reuters				9%		
Subs & Pubs	Thomson Reuters				2%		
Subs & Pubs	Wolters Kluwer				9%		
Subs & Pubs	Wolters Kluwer				11%		
Subs & Pubs	Xtract Research				33%		
Subs & Pubs	ALM				8%		
Subs & Pubs	Knowledge Mosaic				11%		
<b>Total Subs&amp;Pubs</b>							
<b>Grand Total</b>						XXXXXXX	

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Learn how to quantify library services and use language that will help leadership evaluate the library's value as a business unit.
- 2 Take a leadership role in negotiating external resources.
- 3 Librarians must be involved in introducing new technologies to lawyers.

## Demonstrating Value

Librarians must learn concrete techniques to help quantify their services into a monetary value that an executive director or CFO can easily understand. It provides a way to evaluate the value of the library as a business unit, albeit one that is not focused on maximizing revenue but rather on providing the highest-quality services at the lowest feasible cost to the firm.

Librarians who want to succeed in the future must play a critical role not only in negotiating external resources relevant to providing excellent client services, but must also be integrally involved in introducing new

technologies and tools that make their lawyers more efficient and the firm more competitive. By doing so, the overall measure of the value of the law library will move beyond dollars to an indispensable service required to drive optimal value into the delivery of legal services.



**STEVE LASTRES** is director of knowledge management services for Debevoise & Plimpton LLP in New York City, where he manages the firm's information and knowledge management initiatives with the assistance of a dedicated team of research, knowledge management

("KM"), and technical services analysts. Lastres received his JD from New York Law School in 2003, where he also received the Daniel Finkelstein Writing Award. He is a member of the New Jersey and New York Bar Associations. He received an MLIS with a Distinguished Achievement Award in information and library science from Pratt Institute in 1996, and an undergraduate degree in business administration from Pace University. Contact him at [salastres@debevoise.com](mailto:salastres@debevoise.com).





## Using Metrics to Showcase Value

Best practices from the cook county law library.

BY JEAN M. WENGER, MONTELL DAVENPORT, CAROLYN HAYES, AND DAVID SANBORNE

Public law libraries are an American phenomenon not replicated in other countries, including those of the common law tradition. Cook County Law Library in Chicago, which opened its doors in 1966, is a public county law library founded in state law and authorized by county ordinance.

State laws differ in how a law library is established. County law libraries are special district government entities, independent public agencies, judicial departments, or nonprofit organizations governed by a library board of trustees, or departments within government. Cook County Law Library falls into the last category. Organizationally, the Law Library is an office under the President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners. We are a special-fund department not supported by tax dollars. Like most county law libraries, our primary source of revenue is a portion (currently \$21.00) of the civil filing fee. In recent years, revenue has been reduced due to fewer court filings, emphasis on

alternate dispute resolution, and an increase in the number of filing fee waivers.

### Communicating Value

An important component of conveying value is connecting the library's mission to broader policy goals. Establishing a connection between library services and public policy helps to solidify the idea that the law library is an asset to the community. It also establishes that the law library is using its funding responsibly. Our mission and key mandates include supporting access to justice by developing and expanding services for self-represented litigants, acquiring practice-oriented materials, identifying the changing needs of the legal profession and public through ongoing client contact and education, and ensuring optimal distribution of resources through regular review of collection development priorities and cost analysis. Within this framework, this article will track how a library, as a governmental department, can



One strategy is for the library to identify metrics that demonstrate how it advances important public policy goals like access to justice.”

measure and express its value to the legal community, the general public, and its parent institution.

#### Start with a Plan

What is the value of a library when “all a person needs is a computer connected to the internet to conduct legal research?” Like many libraries in recent years, we have received this direct chal-

lenge to our relevance and value. As a small department in a large institution, a library can decide to make incremental changes or make a major move. We opted for the latter, employing a strategic and significant response. In early 2013, the Library developed a five-year business plan titled “Focused on Service—Driven by Technology.” The thought process was organic, looking beyond immediate needs to positioning the library for continuing changes in the information and legal arenas. The plan emphasized the need for reliable legal information, mission-driven space utilization, and the educational role of a public law library. The business plan was a three-phase project for the main library, starting with collection assessment, then space planning, and finally renovation for the development of education centers and conference rooms. As the first major renovation in the Library’s history, this strategic move helped to drive the discussion of relevance and value with the county, our parent institution.

Libraries must utilize all available venues to express their worth to relevant audiences. One way is to take advantage of local or institutional milestones. While our business plan was going through the county approval process, the Library chose not to stand idle. We wanted to frame the discussion of our value to the broader community—the legal profession and the public. The year 2013 marked 50 years since the passage of the authorizing statute and ordinance. To celebrate the milestone and communicate our accomplishments and goals for the future, the Cook County Law Library hosted a 50th Anniversary Rededication ceremony in September 2013.

After approval of the renovation plans, construction took place in mid-2015, creating an education center, a reconfigured public services

space, conference rooms, and space for self-help initiatives. All changes met evolving needs of attorneys and self-represented litigants.

#### Measuring Value

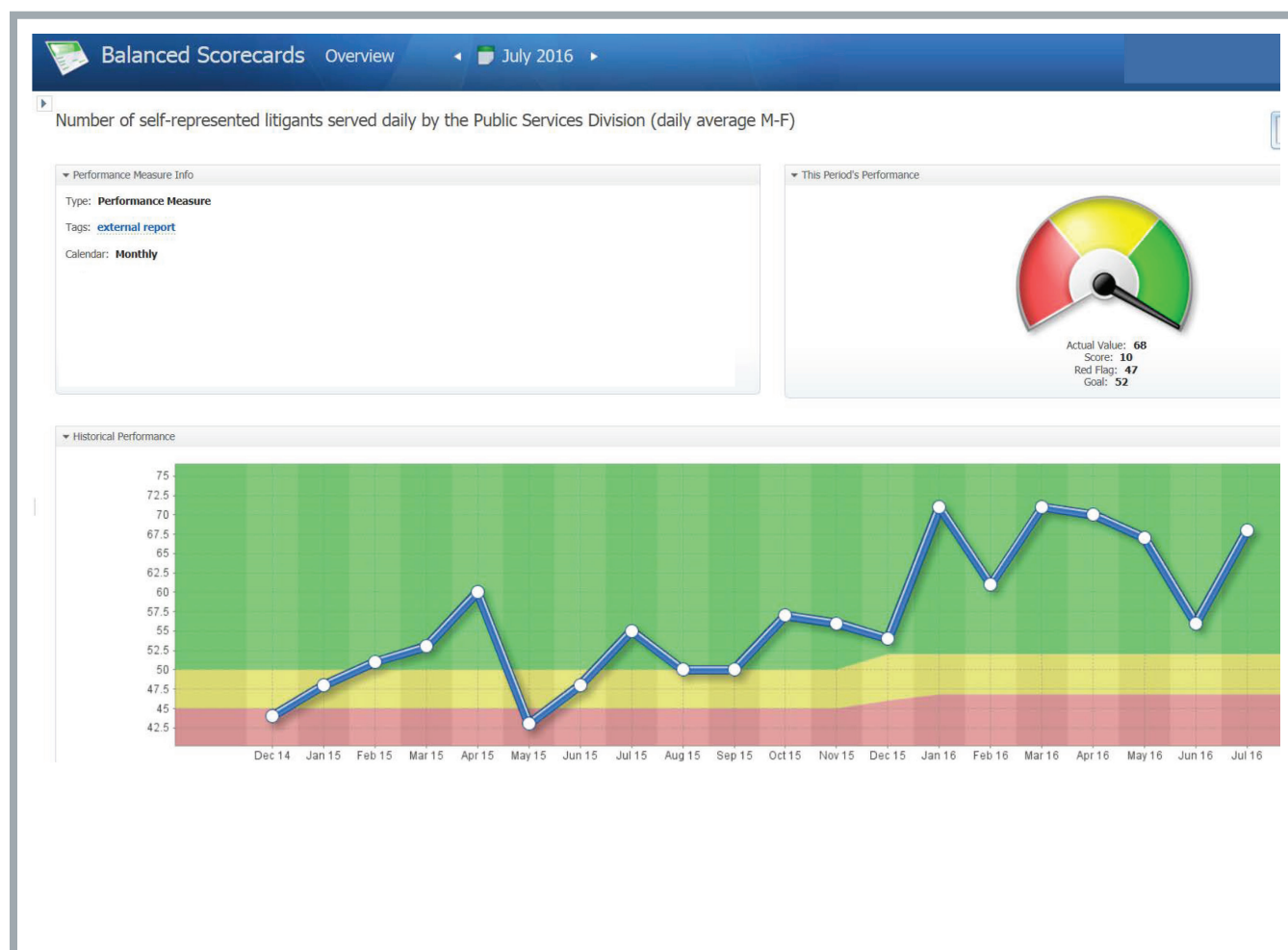
As highlighted by AALL’s *Economic Value of Law Libraries* report (hereinafter, *Economic Value Report*), quantitative information and analysis is part of the value equation. A library, as a unit of government, may need to participate in a standardized system for collection and reporting of quantitative data. In that environment, it is imperative that the library selects and advocates for data points that are best suited to its work and mission. In 2011, Cook County government instituted a new performance management initiative, STAR (Set Targets—Achieve Results). In the STAR environment, all county offices and departments report progress toward pre-established goals of which improving performance is key. Bureaus and departments, including the law library, collect metrics monthly and report these quarterly on the county website.

Selection of metrics requires strategic consideration of the message that each metric conveys. While it might be impressive to use a collection size metric to fill out a report with big numbers, these types of metrics can serve to reinforce negative stereotypes about libraries. We want to convey that our services and resources add to the legal system by creating efficiencies down the road as well as a better quality of life for residents.

One strategy is for the library to identify metrics that demonstrate how it advances important public policy goals like access to justice. For example, if a public law library closed its doors, the societal impact would be significant and irreversible. Where would the public, including self-represented litigants, go for legal information? A tactic is to respond that the library is a societal necessity and metrics support that position. Such a metric is the number of self-represented litigants served daily by the public services division. At the Cook County Law Library, this number has increased by about 50 percent since December 2014, when the data was first collected, to July 2016. As the library expands its outreach efforts and maximizes its communication channels, the expectation is that increasing numbers of self-represented litigants will use the library.

The library also collects data on the type of assistance requested by all patrons of public

**Figure 1: Cook County Law Library's Balanced Scorecard**



services staff at the main library. Categories of assistance include reference, technical, policy, and directional. Reference assistance is by far the most requested category. Quality reference assistance provides for the highest return on investment in personnel and resources. The more interactions an attorney or member of the public has with staff, the greater the likelihood that those users will learn about and use the print or electronic resources within the library. Similarly, increased usage of print and electronic resources will work to lower the cost per use. Other examples of metrics include number of patron visits at the main library and its five branches, number of patrons served by time of day, number of educational offerings, and copy/print revenues.

Libraries can select from a number of different tools to gather statistics or report metrics. Whether selecting an off-the-shelf tool or creating a homegrown tool, consider the unique needs and characteristics of the library. For example, the county moved from a spreadsheet environment to QuickScore, a commercial balanced scorecard tool. The online product collocates and analyzes metrics submitted by all county departments, assigning each a numeric score based on their success or failure to achieve their goals. Figure 1 illustrates a selection from Cook County Law Library's balanced scorecard. For other institutions contemplating a similar transition, the implementation of an online performance evaluation system does not relieve a library of careful planning and oversight. From



“Connecting what the library does to what is going on in the larger community helps provide a point of reference for those unfamiliar with the library world, while demonstrating the library’s relevance.”

the library’s perspective, it is critical that the parameters and collection methods are understood. It remains the library’s responsibility to define metrics and select goals along with the appropriate means to measure those goals.

#### **Financial Concerns**

A common concern for public institutions is the efficient use of funding. To help demonstrate this aspect, the library engaged in a basic calculation

of costs per patron visit in which budget costs (personnel and non-personnel) were divided by the annual patron count system-wide (main library and five branches in outlying courthouses). For libraries considering this approach, several variables will influence this type of calculation. Across government law libraries, variations exist in the ratio of personnel to non-personnel costs along with differing methodologies for defining a patron visit or interaction. Some states’ authorizing statutes direct the county to provide space at no cost to the library, which accounts, in part, for differences in non-personnel costs. Costs per patron visit can be further broken out based on the level of assistance or resources the patron used on their visit.

Measuring qualitative data like the knowledge gained by patrons using subscription legal resources or the understanding gained with the assistance of a librarian is challenging. However, the library collects and uses subjective data to reinforce a positive return on investment, such as the 93-percent satisfaction rating on our semiannual patron survey. As one attorney respondent stated, “The staff, service, and legal resources are amazing. I appreciate the opportunity to level the playing field by using the library’s resources as well.”

#### **Communication Is Key**

The library works to raise its visibility through formal and informal communication channels. A venue for formal communication is the required STAR performance report that the library presents twice a year to other county government stakeholders. In addition to highlighting data and metrics, we view these presentations as a marketing tool to articulate how the

library contributes to the larger organization and its policy goals. We also look at how the library can collaborate with other departments to achieve improved performance objectives.

Unlike a stand-alone law library, the Cook County Law Library, as part of a larger institution, has routine opportunities to communicate informally with other departments in the normal course of interdepartmental meetings. At these meetings or through chance encounters on the civic campus, we encourage visits to the library and attendance at educational programs. This outreach encourages other county departments to use the library’s reference services, training classes, and subscription databases. One result was that several departments have asked to hold their internal and external training and educational events in the library’s newly renovated space.

It is important to recognize that the language used to convey the library’s work and goals cannot be different from the larger organization’s, otherwise the library is misunderstood, or worse, considered irrelevant. Connecting what the library does to what is going on in the larger community helps provide a point of reference for those unfamiliar with the library world, while demonstrating the library’s relevance. The language needs to be about what the library offers rather than what the library has on its shelves. The use of verb-centric language instead of noun-centric language is strategic. Weekly reports of activities and accomplishments to government administration are framed with action verbs and tied into the library’s overall mission.

#### **Showing Value**

As stated in the *Economic Value Report*, social media is an important communication method for government law libraries to reach end users. Earlier in the year, Cook County launched a new website that transitioned from an object-centered to a service-centered approach. This approach ties in with our shift of focus from “what we have” to “what we do.” In this new web environment, all county activities are described in terms of services asking the user “How can Cook County help you today?” Submitting queries asking for help with going to court, research, divorce, or entering the terms “law” or “legal” directs the user to the law library. Creating a closer nexus between the services desired and the services offered increases the chances that

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

**1** Establishing a connection between library services and public policy helps to solidify the idea that the law library is an asset to the community.

**2** The use of verb-centric language instead of noun-centric language is strategic.

the user will discover the law library and its services. This usage will become an important metric for the library.

Value lies in what the user receives or perceives he/she has received. Looking ahead, potential metrics that county law libraries could capture include techniques to examine the impact of the law library on court congestion, outcomes for self-represented litigants, CLE cost savings, or any other outcome relevant to the library's mission and services.



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**MONTPELL DAVENPORT** is the executive law librarian of the Cook County Law Library. During his 30-year plus career, his various positions have enabled him to have a wide view of the library, its patrons, and their needs. He has been instrumental in the integration of online

resources in the library, continuing legal education classes for attorneys, and coordination with cooperating entities to provide assistance to self-represented litigants. Empowering professional law librarians to innovate and focus on services that meet the needs of the broader legal community, is an ongoing priority for Davenport. His experience with law libraries provides expertise in maximizing use of library resources, collection analysis, access services, acquisitions, and personnel. Contact him at [montell.davenport@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:montell.davenport@cookcountyil.gov).



# Strategies for Improving Value Delivery and Achieving Growth

Practical guidance for increasing the value of products and services.

BY KATHERINE M. LOWRY

**P**art I of this article will explore building a value proposition and how to deliver the proper value fit, and Part II will explore how to use strategic cost optimization to balance the need to constantly cut costs with the need to invest in long-term growth initiatives to deliver better business value.

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## PART I. BUILDING A VALUE PROPOSITION AND FINDING THE PROPER FIT FOR EVERY ORGANIZATION

**Fact:** Every law firm, government body, academic institution, and corporate entity is a knowledge consumer.

**Fact:** The law is not stagnant, and the rapid pace of change combined with the influx of information forces the knowledge consumer to find

ways to parse through information more efficiently or be consumed by competition.

Legal information professionals have a deep-rooted tradition in being able to help knowledge consumers find information faster, traverse the landscape of both print and digital collections, dig for the truth, and deliver the information they are seeking. Why would there ever be a question as to their value? Perhaps value is in the eye of the beholder, or somewhere along the way, value got lost in the translation. This section explores ways to build a value proposition to ensure products and services are delivering value and are the best fit for every organization. Creation of the value proposition will draw upon inspiration from methodologies used in other departments that focus on product development and project methodology. This is an iterative process allowing greater control over



**Figure 1: Value Fit Alignment Analysis**

<b>Value Priorities:</b>	<b>Service 1</b>	<b>Service 2</b>
Improve Visibility & Understanding	9	9
Improve Stability	7	8
Reduce Complexity	4	8
Cost Reductions	2	7
Eliminate Waste	9	9
Improve Efficiency/Productivity	6	9
Demonstrate Thought Leadership	9	9
Improve Quality	5	8
Enhance Customer Experience	6	10
Extend Value Proposition	10	10
Enable New Products/Services	7	9
Increase Agility	5	7
Improve Flexibility	9	9
Remove Dependencies and Inertia	8	8
Reduce Risk	7	9
Generate Revenue	6	10

creating products and services customers want and will use.

### Define the Customer

Identify certain characteristics and categorize them into groups. Be specific, and if need be, create microgenres. A study on NPR by Alexis Madrigal, “Netflix Built Its Microgenres By Staring Into The American Soul,” showcased how Netflix set out to mathematically predict which movies consumers would like. They hired movie watchers to painstakingly tag movies—not into the basic categories of Drama, Action/Adventure, or Comedy, but far more specific genres, such as “Scary Cult Movies from the 1980s.” It is estimated that Netflix has built nearly 80,000 microgenres. This data was then used to create a recommendation algorithm to aid their customers in finding movies based on the consumer’s preferences. Analogous to the movies, the technique using microgenres can be applied to legal practice areas and industries. As with Netflix, legal

information professionals can provide better personalization through establishing microgenres for the law. The deeper the categorizations are, the better the personalization of products and services will be. For example, use “White Collar Crimes Focused on Ponzi Schemes” rather than “Criminal Law.” View the NPR article at [bit.ly/NPR](http://bit.ly/NPR).

After creating the microgenres, identify a key stakeholder for each grouping. Form an alliance or partnership with them. Ask detailed questions about their practice. Listen and observe.

Seek answers to the following questions:

- What daily tasks are they trying to achieve?
- Are there tasks that are higher priority?
- Why are they doing these tasks? What do they get in return?
- Who do they work with the most?
- What do they struggle with in completing these tasks?

“If a perfect fit is achieved, the members will not only find relief in their daily tasks, but they will experience gain by increasing value in their final product or by creating a whole new line of service. In short, this is providing a product or service that is directly tied to a business outcome.”

### Build Value Proposition Through Products and Services

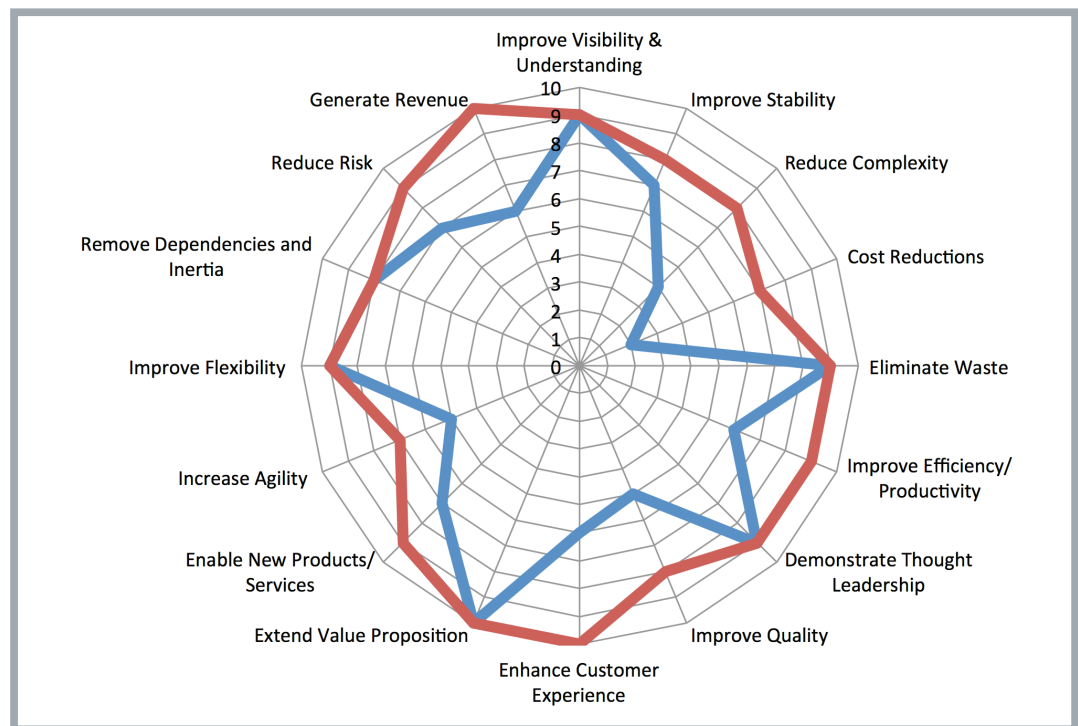
Gain insights from key stakeholders and build a product or service that will attract specific microgenres. Does the offering meet the needs or wants of this microgenre? If yes, this product or service is the right value fit. Achieving the right value fit is visually represented as seen in Figure 1. Using a numerical ranking, it demonstrates that *Service 2* delivers the best value fit to the organization. This service scores the same or higher in every value priority category and is the closest to the near perfect score of 10.

Proper fit is important. If the product or service ranks lower in meeting the value priorities of the organization, very little relief will be experienced by the members of the microgenres, which means they are still experiencing the same or more difficulty in achieving their

tasks. If a perfect fit is achieved, the members will not only find relief in their daily tasks, but they will experience gain by increasing value in their final product or by creating a whole new line of service. In short, this is providing a product or service that is directly tied to a business outcome.

Sometimes, the business outcome is quantified and demonstrated by increasing revenue or the saving of cost or time. Alternatively, it is viewed as an intangible value. The latter is more difficult to explain and can often get lost in translation. In this case, it is essential to map the products and services to the needs of the microgenres. For example, an alert for key clients where information is manually reviewed for applicability *before* being distributed is the right value fit because the service is targeted at reducing the noise of information and eliminating the common frustration of inapplicable results. Clear articulation of this service to the corresponding benefit is essential in order to demonstrate value. The benefit of the above service is better customer intimacy, providing current awareness while exposing new business opportunities.

Figure 1: Value Fit Alignment Analysis (Continued)



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### Write Out a Clear Statement

Tell the story of how each product and service leads to a favorable business outcome. Write it in a language the business will understand.

Following is a comparison of ideas leading to better or poor value fit:

### Better Value Fit

- A service catalog for research services that clearly articulates services offered for each microgenre and corresponding benefits to the business.
- Key client services customized to meet the individual needs of the business imperative or strategic initiative.
- Reducing the amount of time it takes for a member to find specific information. Building a mountain of information by microgenre that cuts across vendors.
- Deliver actionable information to aid the business in making decisions. The key here is to identify the crucial business decisions.
- Right-sizing the collection to ensure proper value fit to each microgenre, while eliminating the rest. This should be easy to quantify, but harder to build consensus.

### Poor Value Fit

- Data dumps with no synthesis of meaning.
- Unsolicited emails with more information, providing less clarity as to what is important.
- Purchasing new resources without a strategic road map identifying how it solves a problem for the members of the microgenre.
- Having a valuable service, but not selling it to key stakeholders and other members of the group.

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## PART II. STRATEGIC COST OPTIMIZATION

**Fact:** Most, if not all, organizations are experiencing the need to reduce cost.

**Fact:** The demand for information is higher than ever before.

Legal information professionals are all too familiar with cost cutting, and rightfully so, as many legal information professionals are bound by a limited budget. Unfortunately, this creates a tension with the members of the microgenres. Members still need to do their job, and a pure cost-cutting mentality is at risk of providing less legal resources to do it. Strategic cost optimization (SCO) creates ways to strike a balance between reducing spending (people and resources) and investing in long-term growth initiatives to deliver better business value. SCO is more commonly applied in Information Technology, but can be a useful aid to legal information professionals looking for ways to further align their products and services to the value of the business. Below are four steps for applying SCO the right way:

**Step 1 (Reduce):** Legal information professionals allocate a great deal of time focused on cost-saving initiatives. Under SCO, the objective is not only to reduce but to control spending. Understanding buying patterns and per unit cost is a great way to uncover new opportunities to reduce spend. For example, broad line-item costs like print and electronic spend are too general. Instead, start by understanding distribution of cost across all practice groups. Then, consider how to derive costs down to the microgenres. Are these products and services fulfilling the need of the microgenres and therefore providing value? If the answer is no, cancel or eliminate.



SCO is more commonly applied in Information Technology, but can be a useful aid to legal information professionals looking for ways to further align their products and services to the value of the business."



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

**1** Build a value proposition to ensure products and services are delivering value and are the best fit for every organization.

**2** To build a value proposition, it is essential to define the customer and take steps to understand their needs.

**3** A successful service delivers value by fulfilling a need and is tied to a favorable business outcome.

**4** Strike a balance between reducing spend (people and resources) and investing in long-term growth initiatives to deliver better business value.

**5** Balance cost-reduction initiatives with improvements that focus on business innovation.

**6** Products and services that advance the business imperatives of an organization will receive the highest amount of value.

Formulate a method to control spending.

**Step 2 (Efficiency):** Agreeing to buy the cheapest or most expensive form of legal content will be determined in the prior step. What to do with the content once it is procured is now the focus of Step 2. There must be a discipline in how the products and services are used to increase optimization. This might include broader distribution of digital content, fully maximizing the use of resources available in each contract to avoid duplication, or reduction in time to find relevant content. No matter how cheap, expensive, or powerful the tool, it is a waste if it is not used properly. This inefficiency is detrimental to the value equation for any organization. Therefore, it's important to create a discipline in how products and services are to be used.

Apply Step 2 equally to the labor workforce. If a very expensive, full-time employee is doing very mundane tasks and not applying their expertise to the full extent, this is also very inefficient and reduces value to the organization. Review tasks performed by each employee and reallocate responsibilities as needed.

**Step 3 (Consumption/Demand):** Determine the cost of consumption to rationalize the need of every product and service. The mountain of cost continues to rise while the budget shrinks. The reference to this mountain in terms of cost (dollars/cents) will only continue to cause intense scrutiny and simply watching the cost continue to grow only begs for organizations to ask for a reduction in spend. In this situation, it may not be clear how the reduction is impacting the business and may cause the elimination of vital resources.

The objective is to rethink how to look at cost and determine the value of the content by means of consumption. In other words, what is the demand for the products and services? How is the information consumed by each practice group or microgenre? Does this consumption of products and services align with business imperatives of the organization? Does cutting this resource mean an organization is unable to practice in this microgenre? Understand demand and cost associated with consumption of every product and service, and use it as a way to communicate the value to the business.

**Step 4 (Growth):** Identify short- and long-term goals to implement improvements. Prior steps are needed in order to set the stage for growth. Now, improvements are balanced with cost-reduction initiatives, paving the way for:

- Business innovation
- Increase in quality of service
- Minimizing business risk
- Developing competitive advantages

The most important aspect of this step is to focus on business alignment. Products and services that will advance the business imperatives of an organization will receive the highest amount of value. Select initiatives that allow the department to grow or transform while increasing value by delivering a positive business outcome.



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## Demonstrating Your Library's Value

A California county law library's perspective.

BY MARK E. ESTES

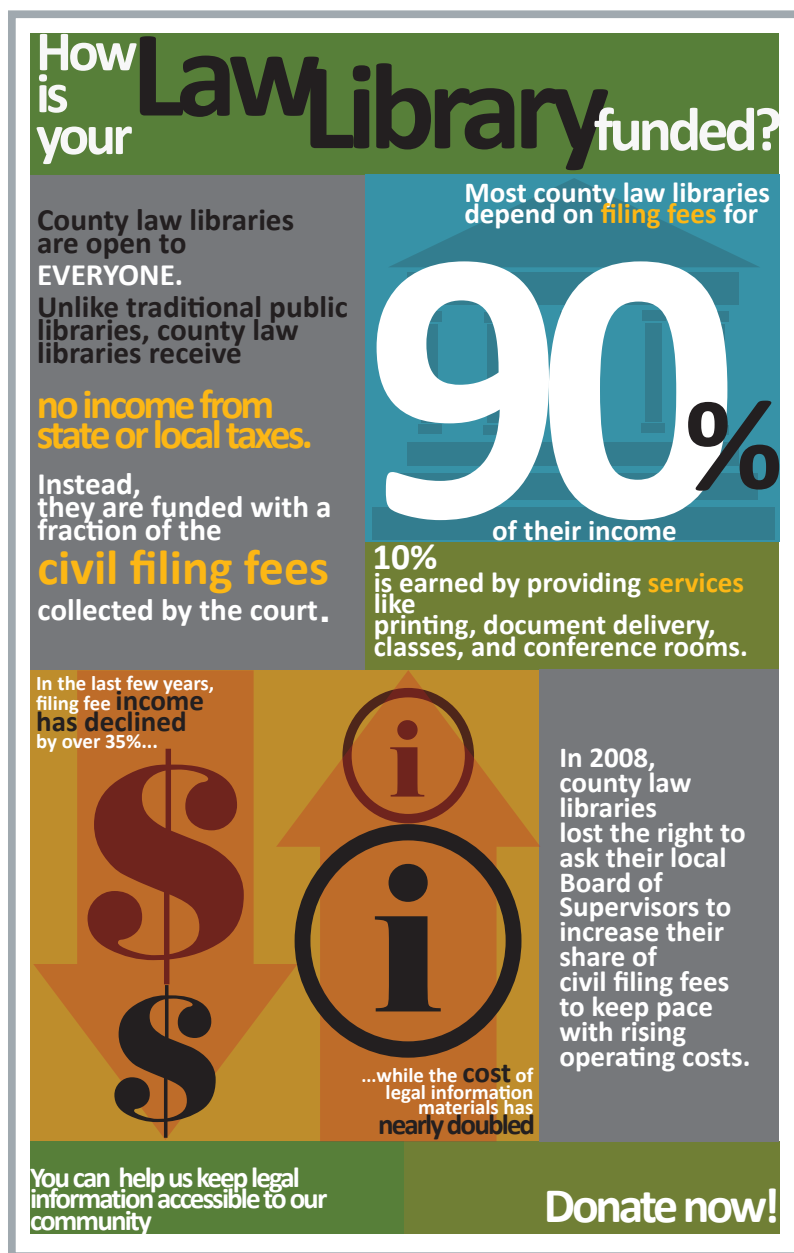
County law libraries reflect their community with the services they provide. Typically, their community has more non-lawyers than lawyers and more non-lawyer users than lawyer users. Likewise, the county law library has more non-lawyers than lawyers—sometimes 80 percent non-lawyers to 20 percent lawyers. Thus, the law library acquires and maintains information useful to both lawyers and non-lawyers. The library also staffs to provide reference services, just-in-time technology, and research instruction to both groups.

However, county law libraries, such as in California, face four major problems when it comes to communicating their value:

1. People don't know county law libraries exist.
2. People think law libraries are only for attorneys.
3. People think county law libraries are funded by tax dollars.
4. There is no single or small group of individuals to whom county law libraries can turn to for additional funding.

Publicity efforts, including doing nontraditional law library activities such as hosting rotating art shows, can raise awareness of the law library and its services. The “How is your library funded?” infographic on page 46 answers the funding challenge while also soliciting donations. The “Mission-funding relationship” infographic showcases the services and the funding sources. Unfortunately, neither explicitly connects the mission, funding, or services to how the library changes lives.

The fourth problem California county law libraries face is that there is no single stakeholder with the power to change funding—90 percent of which comes from a portion of civil filing fees. That amount hasn't increased since 2007, and can only be changed by the legislature.



For California county law libraries, the Board of Trustees, which is comprised of five judges from the county and two others (usually attorneys) appointed by the county Board of Supervisors, act as the governing body. Thus, the Board acts as one stakeholder group. While the Board does approve the annual budget, it cannot change the income amount, 90 percent of which comes from a portion of civil filing fees. Therefore, the trustees influence another group of stakeholders, the legislature and the

governor, who have the authority to change the funding law or allocate money from the state's budget. The county law library statute authorizes a county's Board of Supervisors to allocate some funds for that county's law library. Historically, however, they have not done so; therefore, they are potential stakeholders. Library users can also be influencers if the law library persuades them to contact their legislators and the governor.

To communicate its value and services to each group, the Alameda County Law Library uses a mix of methods: informal, social media, eNewsletters, and formal reports. To stakeholders, the library staff reports on efforts that accomplish the library's mission of providing access to current legal information. Those efforts include collecting user comments from surveys, suggestion "boxes," and tracking reference desk questions. The reference desk questions especially inform on decisions about a program or service as the database tracks numbers, time of day, whether the user was an attorney, non-lawyer, or unknown, as well as the subject of the question.

When the analysis of reference desk questions shows a common thread or topic, the staff develops a research guide, plans an education program, or looks for a new information resource to acquire. Next, the library staff promotes that program or resource to users. The staff then collects data related to that program or resource: quantitative data (such as attendance at the education program, database usage, or circulation statistics), and qualitative data (such as program evaluations, online catalog comments, or testimonials).

Based on information from the reports, the library staff can describe the financial impact of dollars saved and the impact on users' lives. For stakeholders, the description becomes part of an "information item" at a monthly trustees meeting and part of the formal annual report to the Board of Supervisors. For influencers and users, the description becomes a story in a blog post or a YouTube video about how lives were changed by something available at the law library.

County law libraries can combine the quantitative—counting library activities or outputs—with qualitative information describing how each service affected its users. Collecting testimonials of users provides a direct and immediate opportunity to showcase how it



## What is the mission of county law libraries?

Simply speaking, it is to promote and preserve access to justice.

This means that we make quality legal resources available for attorneys, judges and members of the general public so that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the legal and justice system.

We do this through:

One on One assistance from librarians with specialized knowledge in legal materials.

Social Programs like Lawyers in the Library, restraining order clinics, and Legal Document Assistants in the Library

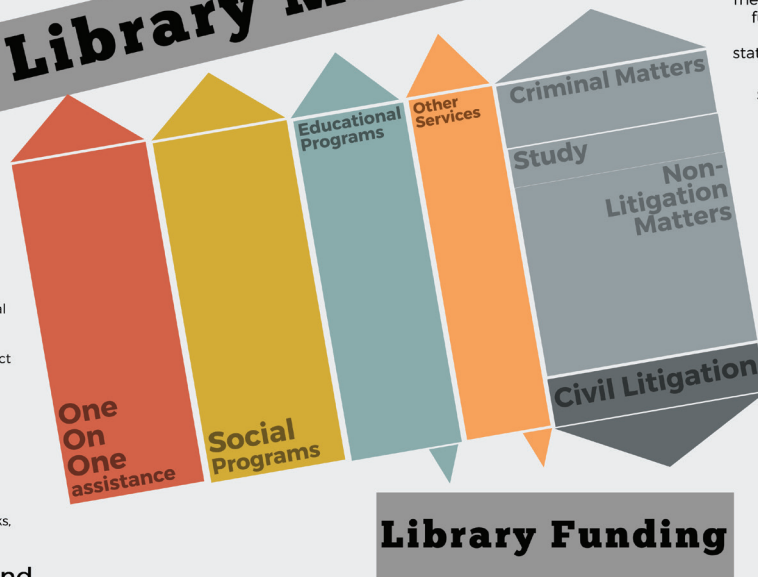
Educational programs that instruct non-attorney patrons on using library materials and embarking on their legal research, and give attorneys essential continuing education credits.

Other services such as conference rooms, print and fax facilities, document delivery, internet access, and more.

And, of course, legal resources: books, serials, and databases.

**All of these services and resources support the library's mission.**

## Library Mission



## But what supports these services?

A small fraction of library income is earned through fee services, such as conference room rental, classes, and printing.

The bulk (90%) of county law library funding comes from fees paid by citizens filing civil lawsuits. By statute, law libraries receive a small, fixed portion of these fees.

Supporting civil litigation is, of course, part of our mission, but it is only a very small part of what people come into the library to do.

Our patrons are also:

starting **businesses**,  
addressing **family issues**,  
working to **stay in their homes**,  
**studying** to become  
attorneys or paralegals,  
educating themselves  
on their **civil rights**,  
conducting **mediations** to resolve  
issues out of the courts,

and a myriad of other activities  
that are touched by the  
legal and justice system.

In short:  
**County law library are  
dependent on funding that is  
related only in part to the  
services they provide, and over  
which they have no control.**

Until the basis for funding  
county law libraries changes,  
their ability to fulfill their  
essential mission to support  
social engagement and justice  
for all will be in jeopardy.

changed lives. Often, however, the testimonial ends with that particular visit to the library. Namely, “The library staff was very helpful in helping me find the case or form I needed.” While the user left the library satisfied, the testimonial doesn’t indicate whether the user actually accomplished their ultimate quest—whether it was winning a lawsuit, transferring a deed, or starting a business. To gather that information, law librarians need to follow up with the individuals who included their contact information on the testimonial form.

When testimonials are not available, librarians can tease out a story based on the reference questions asked. For example, requests for books about landlord tenant law indicate that the library helped a tenant keep his or her residence and helped a landlord deal with a deadbeat tenant.

While telling the stories of how library services change lives, library staff must also address the top three metrics of stakeholders identified in the *Economic Value of Law Libraries* report. In the report, stakeholders rated three metrics

as the most useful:

- Cost of resources
- Frequency of resource used
- What resource was used

The cost of resources includes not just the cost



The key to communicating value involves using multiple communication styles and formats. We must convince not only stakeholders, but also influencers and users, of the law library's true value.”

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

**1** There is no single or small group of individuals to whom county law libraries can turn to for additional funding.

**2** Use a mix of methods: information, social media, eNewsletters, and formal reports. To stakeholders, the library staff reports on efforts that accomplish the library's mission of providing access to current legal information.

**3** Collecting testimonials of users provides a direct and immediate opportunity for showcasing how the library changes lives.

**4** We must convince not only stakeholders, but also influencers and users, of the law library's true value.

**5** County law librarians serve everyone, which is both challenging and gratifying.

of books and databases; it also includes the staff needed to process, interpret, and instruct in the use of those resources, as well as the costs of the physical facility. That analysis could lead to a cost-per-transaction priced hypothetically at the rate law firm librarians bill for their time. By reporting these activities in a kind of pro-forma invoice on the library blog and in monthly reports to the trustees, one can show a comparative value—"free" public service as opposed to fee-based service from a law firm.

Tracking the frequency of information resource use can be relatively straightforward—commercial database providers generate usage reports that can drill down to the database level. Online catalog systems can also track in-house use and circulation. Tracking in-house use may require user retraining—asking them not to re-shelve their books, but instead place them in some designated areas for re-shelving. As items are returned and processed, they would be logged into the catalog or a list of library titles would be created.

if an item cost \$230 to update but in the prior year there were only 10 in-house uses, then updating it is not justified. Of course, some users re-shelve their books, despite being asked not to do so; therefore, we also look to the reference desk statistics to get a more complete picture of the use. It's still not perfect, of course, but it is more accurate than putting paperclips on the top of books or tape across the book edge and counting the number of clips on the floor or number of broken pieces of tape.

Library staff can analyze database usage statistics after they have completed an educational program about that database to help assess the effectiveness of publicity or training activities. Namely, in the period immediately following any publicity about an information resource or a training program, the information indicates a change in usage pattern. Ideally, evaluations collected at the end of the program include quotes such as, "Thanks! What I've learned will save me a lot of time."

The key to communicating value involves using multiple communication styles and formats. We must convince not only stakeholders, but also influencers and users, of the law library's true value. Moreover, the demographics of those three groups probably differ more than those from any other type of law library because county law librarians serve everyone—which is both challenging and gratifying.

### Reference Desk

The number of reference desk questions about a particular title, coupled with usage statistics, help determine whether or not the item meets a cost-justification rule of thumb of at least one use for every \$10 of cost each year. For example,



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# How Not to Build a Faster Horse

Using surveys to improve customer satisfaction and improve ROI.

BY KEVIN IREDELL

It's been said that before Henry Ford invented the Model T, his potential customers told him they wanted faster horses. Whether that's a true story or not, it highlights the predicament many of us find ourselves facing every day. How do we turn what our users tell us they want into something they didn't even know they needed?

The answer is a well-constructed user survey. There are three components of a survey (usage, satisfaction, and analysis of findings) that are key to understanding why we spend money and resources on particular products and how we can analyze data from user surveys to uncover unmet needs and increase the value we bring as information experts.

## Begin with a Hypothesis

It is important to start with a hypothesis. Why are we doing this survey? What question do we need answered? A hypothesis will allow you to focus the questions and give you concrete and actionable answers by trying to prove or disprove the

hypothesis. An example is the vendor who shows usage increasing year after year, but the lawyers at the firm keep complaining about the service. A hypothesis could be framed around why they feel usage is increasing. "Usage is increasing because we've taken on a new practice group," "Usage is increasing because we have new lawyers who are unfamiliar with this product," "Usage is increasing because the newly redesigned site is too hard to use." Each of these examples would yield very different survey questions.

## Asking the Right Question

Once you have the hypothesis and begin drafting the questions, besides the obvious guidance to make the questions fair, unbiased and objective, and to ensure the response options are balanced and mutually exclusive, play the responses back in your head as though the survey is complete. A question may seem like it will reveal exactly what you need, but once you hear it in terms of response, you may feel differently. For example,



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Start with a hypothesis.
- 2 Ask questions that support or refute the hypothesis.
- 3 Stay objective when analyzing the results.
- 4 Look for secondary research or data to support your findings.

“How often do you access library resources?” (once a day, once a week, once a month). It seems like on the surface this would be an important statistic to know; however, once you start thinking about how this will play out after the survey is completed, you might find that it’s not that insightful after all. For example, 20 percent of lawyers access once a day, 50 percent once a week, 30 percent once a month. The percentages don’t matter here; you can switch them around, and you’d still come up with more questions than answers. Why do they access that frequently/infrequently? Do they require assistance or is their interaction all self-serve? Would they benefit from more access or less? Going back to your original hypothesis, ask yourself: Does the answer help prove or disprove it?

The usage part of the survey should aim to uncover behavior. Usage could be further broken down to consider: What resources are being used? How often are they being accessed? How long does it take to access them and find the answer the user is searching? While most online resources will provide some data and statistics, they will generally only reveal a high-level summary of how the product is currently being accessed. It’s a fine place to start, but when negotiating renewal fees, those data are not enough. X number of lawyers logged in, X number of hours were spent on this service, etc. A statistic from a usage survey that augments these data, such as Y percent of lawyers who accessed the service felt it took too long or longer than it should have because of confusing design, would be much more insightful pieces of information.

The second piece of behavior or usage should uncover what the lawyers are doing with the data. Questions that uncover if the time they are spending on researching or reviewing researched materials is billable will yield valuable information that can help build internal metrics for return on investment (ROI). Average time spent plus average time billed multiplied by a blended hourly rate would be one place to start. Another might be library staff time as compared to equivalent time spent by a lawyer—the data in potential billable hours—and the cost of a researcher doing the work can be quantified as well.

## USER SURVEY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Develop a hypothesis.
- ☐ Identify the audience for the final results.
- ☐ Gather secondary/internal data that will help augment and support survey data.
- ☐ Develop the questionnaire making sure questions are neutral and unbiased, and aim to prove or disprove the hypothesis.
- ☐ Identify and gather the invitation list for participation.
- ☐ Determine timing.
- ☐ Decide on whether to offer an incentive.

## SURVEY COMPONENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Survey hypothesis
- ☐ Survey timeline
- ☐ Survey instrument
- ☐ Survey communications (announcement, invitations, reminders)
- ☐ Survey results (PowerPoint, Word, etc.)
- ☐ Post-results communications (final results to attendees, incentive distribution)
- ☐ Post-results action plan

Finally, when analyzing and reporting on the results, it’s important to keep in mind who your audience is. It is essential that your summary of key findings clearly restates the hypothesis and shows how the results either proved or disproved your original theory. Focusing the reader on why the survey was done will eliminate second-guessing and misinterpretation of the intention of the survey. Including the internal metrics in the key findings as well as how the survey results support those findings is essential to building a true picture of ROI.



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