CARL Library Impact Toolkit Project: An Overview

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About Us

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) represents Canada’s twenty-nine largest university libraries and two federal institutions.

Assessment Committee → Library Impact Toolkit Working Group

Colleen Cook (Chair, McGill University)
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Shailoo Bedi (University of Victoria)
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Toolkit Project Team

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Library Impact in CARL’s Strategic Directions

From *CARL Strategic Directions*

CARL’s culture of assessment within and across Canadian research libraries enables the articulation of their contributions toward higher education and the research enterprise, and facilitates the continuing evolution of assessment capacity and services.

– In collaboration with other higher education bodies, develop new indicators and approaches to demonstrate impact on research, teaching, and learning

– Facilitate, strengthen, and communicate ongoing qualitative and quantitative library assessment on a pan-Canadian basis.
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How to Get at Impact?

• From Environmental Scan…

  – Conduct (or commission) an environmental scan of value- and impact-based approaches to library assessment and university assessment in order to gauge best practices. (original Assessment Committee workplan)

…To Impact Framework

  – The CARL Assessment Committee is pursuing the development of an assessment framework that reflects a diversity of impacts and provides tools and resources to assist in a broad range of assessment methodologies. (Library Impact Assessment Framework WG ToR)
Inspirations

2017 Report by the Federation for the Humanities & Social Sciences

Approaches to Assessing Impacts in the Humanities & Social Sciences
Key Observations from the FHSS Report

• There are substantial potential benefits to assessing the impacts of scholarly work.
• A flawed impact assessment process can produce significant negative consequences within the research system.
• The impacts of scholarly work are highly diverse, and no single indicator or definitive set of indicators has been developed that can fully capture this diversity.
• Bibliometrics are a useful approach to assessing scholarly impacts, but they have important limitations. These limitations can be mitigated through the use of qualitative indicators.
• It is rarely possible to precisely attribute impacts to any specific scholarly work due to the collective nature of much of this work and the long timeframes between research and impact.
• Many research impacts are fundamentally linked to actors outside the academic community — such as in the private sector, the public service and civil society.
HSS research has impacts on:

**Academic impacts**

**SCHOLARSHIP**
that can be measured using indicators such as:
- Bibliometric indicators
- Downloads from Open Access repositories
- Citations in grant applications
- Acknowledgements
- Prizes and awards
- Reputation as measured by survey
- Post-publication peer review (book reviews, dedicated symposia)
- Juried exhibitions and performances

**CAPACITY**
through teaching and mentoring at the graduate and undergraduate levels that can be measured using indicators such as:
- Number and quality of experiential learning/research opportunities for students
- Surveys of students and alumni
- Employer surveys
- Integration of research as a learning outcome in courses

**Impacts on society**

**PRACTICE AND POLICY**
that can be measured using indicators such as:
- Invitations to participate as an expert, witness, an advisor, on an expert panel or committee
- Citations in government documents
- Consulting for governments or think tanks
- Commissioned reports

**SOCIETY AND CULTURE**
that can be measured using indicators such as:
- Number and quality of partnerships between researchers and community groups
- Requests for consultancy/advice from community groups
- Media coverage of research (newspapers, TV, online)
- Requests for media appearances
- Engagement of the public at events
- Research-related social media
- Public use of research-based web resources on social and cultural issues

**ECONOMY**
that can be measured using indicators such as:
- Advisory roles and board memberships
- Revenue opportunities and cost savings in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors resulting from research applied in practice
- Income derived from patents, patent licensing, copyright and trademarks
- Consulting contracts
What it not is…

• About assessment for process improvement or organizational effectiveness
• A research agenda
• Focused on evidence of causal effects

What it is…

• About telling our stories of impact, institutionally or collectively
• A practical toolkit
• About diverse approaches to impact
• Distinct and complementary to other approaches to assessment
Other Similar Library Initiatives

IFLA – Statistics and Evaluation

• Develop online toolkit / resource
  – All libraries
  – Identifying, selecting and using *appropriate methods* to demonstrate and communicate value
  – Identifying, selecting, composing, and communicating stories
  – Appropriate for specific library audiences and stakeholders
  – Relevant to demonstrate impact to selected audiences
What is the Task?

- Develop a framework that articulates the diverse impacts of research libraries
- Working with the framework, develop an online bilingual resource to assist libraries in communicating and documenting impact within their contexts
  - A description of areas of impact
  - A list of indicators for each impact area, and how those indicators can contribute to the story of impact
  - Resources to help implement the indicator, such a relevant CARL data set or survey tool
  - Case studies
- To be completed within 12-18 months
What are the “impact pathways” for research libraries and how do we tell those stories?
Areas of Impact

- Research & Scholarship
- Student Learning & Experience
- Community Engagement
- Institutional Reputation
Sub-Sections for Each Area of Impact

- Definition/scope
- List of indicators
- Relevant methodologies
- Key resources
- Case studies from CARL institutions
- Further research questions
Example : Community Engagement

• Definition
• Scope
  – Social inclusion
  – Support for lifelong learning
  – Arts & culture
  – Civic engagement
  – Community visibility

Impact Areas
- Indicators
- Cases studies
- Methods and Methodologies
- References and further reading
Current Status

• Went out for peer review in September

• Feedback
  – Needs more structure (contextualization)
  – Increase presence of qualitative methods and methodologies

• By March 2021
  – Using the Student Learning & Experience impact area, create more transparent impact pathways
QUESTIONS?