

APPENDIX I

FRAMING QUESTIONS

A Needs Assessment of Texas Academic, Public, and School Libraries

Framing Questions and Methods

Draft for Review by TIFB Library Working Group

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Overview

The TIFB Library Working Group (TIF/LWG) provided the University of North Texas Center for Digital Knowledge (TxCDK) User Needs Assessment Study Team with a list of questions that suggested the information wanted by TIF/LWG to help develop recommendations on funding priorities.

The study team examined the questions and proposes a number of framing questions that we will attempt to answer through data collection and analysis. We request that the TIF/LWG review the questions below to see if answers to these questions will provide the necessary information to achieve the goal and objectives of this study.

Once we have agreement on the framing questions, the study team can then identify specific and appropriate questions to ask academic, school, and public libraries to gather appropriate data. Further, the study team proposes a number of methods and strategies to gather appropriate data. These methods relate to the types of questions needing answers. These are described below.

Framing Questions for the Study

The following questions reflect the study team's interpretation of information needed by the TIF/LWG to assist it in developing recommendations for funding priorities. These are intended to be broad questions for which answers will be suggested in the study's final report. These framing questions will guide the development of more specific questions to gather appropriate data from the three types of libraries.

1. How can Texas libraries maintain the stability and capability of their technology base, content, and skills over the long term?
2. What is the current level of technological capacity in Texas libraries?
3. What is the state's role in ensuring that librarians and library staff at all levels have the appropriate skills?
4. What is the state's role in ensuring that Texas libraries can complete and maintain an adequate technological capacity to deliver information services?
5. How can state-funded, centralized information resources be integrated into and complement locally provided resources?

6. Which are the appropriate organizations to develop and deliver various levels of support to ensure long-term maximum integration and use of state-provided information resources and technology?
7. What user groups are common across the different types of libraries?
8. What are the most common categories of users information requests?
9. What are the key baseline conditions for librarians and library staff that will best support access to and effective use of technology-based information resources?
10. What conditions must be present for users to make the most effective use of technology-based information resources?
11. What types of training do librarians and library staff members need to deliver technology based information resources?
12. What are the long-term training and support requirements?
13. Who should have primary responsibility for coordinating the training and retraining of librarians?
14. What are the appropriate levels and types of training that should be made available?
15. How can Texas libraries take advantage of existing “best practices” in training and support from within the state or elsewhere?

Types of Data and Methods to Collect the Data

The study team identified four areas of data collection reflecting different types of data to be collected to address the questions above. The different types of data require different data collection strategies.

1. Data relating to technology and capacity.

These are generally “how much” type questions, and the data can be collected through online or faxed surveys to the libraries. Data will include:

- The installed platform of technology at different libraries and types of libraries
- A snap shot of the present state of library technology capability.
- Funding sources for technology (size of budget)
- Indication of future needs

2. Data relating to user needs by categories of users.

These are generally “what kinds” of questions that can help identify tools and resources needed to answer user information needs. The strategy is to define needs in relation to available online resources to understand the match or mismatch between needs and provision. Data will be gathered through a process of obtaining lists of “frequently asked questions” from libraries for questions asked by different categories of users. This data

gathering process will depend on reports from librarians related to their experience with users.

3. Data relating to training and accessibility.

These are generally “how much” and “what kinds” of questions to find out the extent to which librarians are training, the training that has been given and what training is needed. What training methods and tools are they using and whether any of these can be adopted more widely? Data will be collected through focus groups, group telephone call-in sessions, and other types of interviews. Reference will be made to existing CE studies (if they exist).

4. Data related to “best practices” and “models”

These are generally “what are others doing” types of questions to see what can be replicated in Texas. This data gathering process will depend on interviews and data gathered from other states and library agencies.