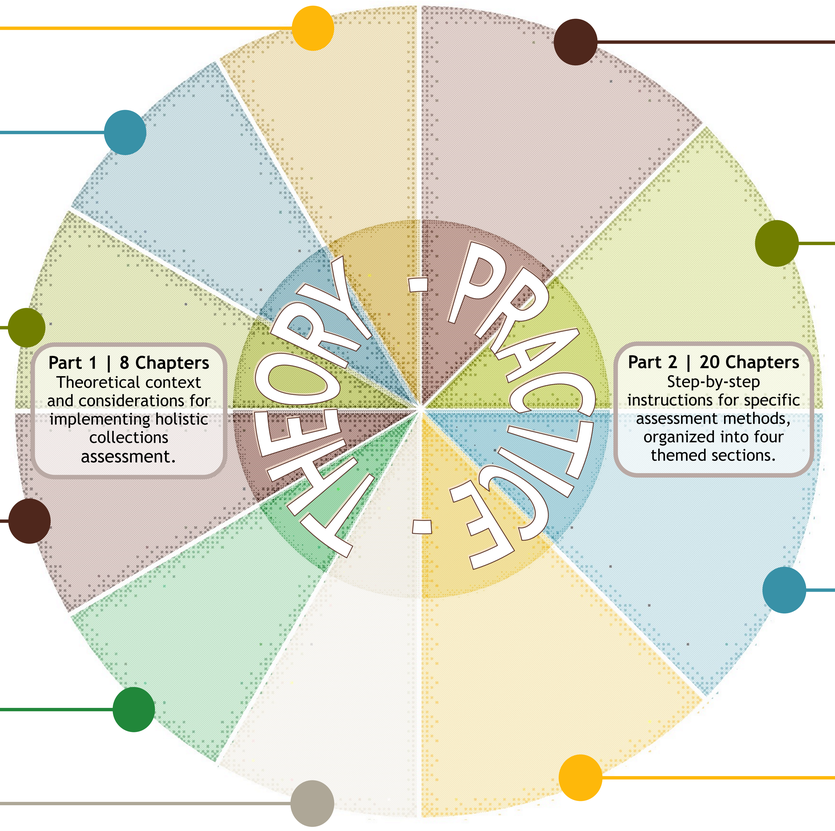
Building the Complete Collections Assessment Manual

What do you want from an assessment guide?



Part 1 | 8 Chapters
Theoretical context and considerations for implementing holistic collections assessment.

Part 2 | 20 Chapters
Step-by-step instructions for specific assessment methods, organized into four themed sections.

Setting Goals

List of common, high-level motivations for assessment, provided to readers for illustration and as a framework for building an easy "grab and go" assessment program.

Common Assessment Goals

- Demonstrate the financial impact of our collection
- Demonstrate the human impact of our collection
- Inform stakeholders about the collection
- Adjust the physical footprint of the collection
- Adjust the digital footprint of the collection
- Reduce ongoing commitments
- Reduce one-time spending
- Maintain the collections thoughtfully
- Align collections with user needs

Why do you assess your collections? Are there major motivations missing from my list of common goals?

Template guiding readers through the exploration of assessment goals, their component questions, and the kinds of actions readers hope to take afterwards.

Goal	Question(s)	Action(s)
Reduce commitments	*What percent of the budget is allocated to subscriptions? Which subscriptions are or aren't cost-effective?*	*Cancellations; renegotiations; cost-share agreements*

Engaging Stakeholders

List of stakeholder groups for readers to consider involving in the collection assessment process.

Who might you involve in assessment?

- Shared governance groups
- Financial authorities
- Data stewards
- Assessment staff
- Follow-through staff
- Communication staff
- Prominent users
- Squeaky wheels

What other stakeholder groups should I include? What challenges do you encounter trying to engage stakeholders in assessment?

Project planning template to help readers define stakeholder roles and articulate a stakeholder engagement plan.

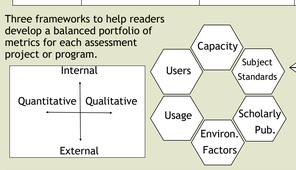
Project Stage	Sub-Stages	Target Date(s)	Stakeholders to Involve	Degree/Type of Involvement
Planning				
Approval				
Implementation				
Discussion/conclusions				
Sharing deliverables				
Evaluation				
Action items				

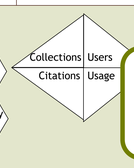
Data & Methods

Example mapping of library data to the common assessment goals identified above, to help readers map available data to their own goals.

Goal	Questions	Actions	Potential Data
Reduce commitments	*What percent of the budget is allocated to subscriptions?* *Which subscriptions are or aren't cost-effective?*	*Cancellations; renegotiations; cost-share agreements*	*Subscription lists; e-resource usage; cost data; list price; ILL reports; surveys, focus groups, interview responses; user publication and citation data; user demographics; peer collections data*

Three frameworks to help readers develop a balanced portfolio of metrics for each assessment project or program.





What are your go-to tools and methods? Are there tools and methods you struggle with, or are curious about?

How do you evaluate an assessment tool?

Is it easy to learn?

Will the tool save you time?

Can data be fully extracted from the system?

Is it technologically sustainable with current staffing?

Does it yield the best balance of cost, time savings, and project scope?

Do you have the staffing to make the most of what the tool offers?

List of criteria for readers to consider when evaluating and selecting tools for collections assessment.

Project Management

List of major obstacles to collection assessment, to be accompanied by strategies to help readers mitigate those obstacles during the planning stages of assessment.

Assessment Challenges

- Not enough staff or time
- Staff turnover
- Collections too large or complex
- Assessment is a luxury
- Not enough expertise
- Data not clean enough or tool/method problematic

What challenges have thwarted assessment in the past?

Template for a formal collection assessment project plan, to help readers define and articulate key project components.

Project	
Scope	
Roles and responsibilities	
Methodologies	
Deliverables	
Timeline	
Other documents	

Communication

Broad communication strategies shared with readers.

Communication Tips and Strategies

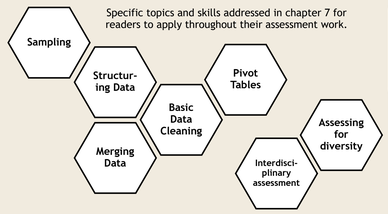
- Be goal-oriented
- Tell a story
- Keep things concise
- Consider your audience
- Think critically
- Ask for outside input

What communication strategies have worked for you? Where do you struggle?

Example stakeholder communication plan to help readers outline when, what, and how to communicate.

Project	*Holistic e-resource evaluation*	
Scope	*Develop a framework for the regular evaluation of the library's e-resources. Once developed, must be implementable by 2-3 library staff within 2-3 months.*	
Stakeholders	*Library administration; Collection Development Committee*	
Ongoing Communication	*Library admin*	*Spring – Share process for approval* *Fall – Progress update; share evaluation criteria (FYI)*
	Coll. Dev. Committee	*Spring – Share process (input)* *Fall – Progress update; share draft metrics, methods (input)*
Final Report(s)	*Library admin*	*Summary of process including high-level list of criteria* *List of cancellations*
	Coll. Dev. Committee	*Summary of process including high-level list of criteria* *Complete listing of resource scores* *List of cancellations*

Special Topics



Specific topics and skills addressed in chapter 7 for readers to apply throughout their assessment work.

What other techniques and topics would help you assess your collections?

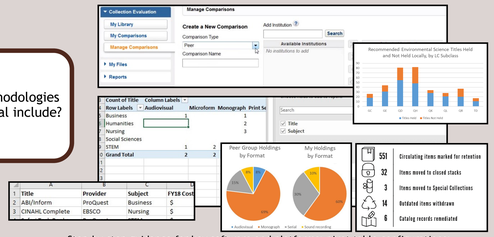
Collections

List of methodologies covered in the "Collections" section of Part II:

Collections-Oriented Assessment Methods

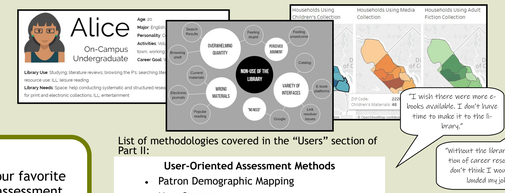
- Inventory
- Reputable Bibliographies
- Modified Brief Test
- Uniqueness
- Peer Benchmarking
- E-Resource Environmental Scan

What other methodologies should the manual include?



Step-by-step guidance for key software and platforms; pivot table configurations; examples of how to structure data; suggested styles of data visualization.

Users



What are your favorite collection assessment readings?

List of methodologies covered in the "Users" section of Part II:

User-Oriented Assessment Methods

- Patron Demographic Mapping
- User Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Persona Exercises

Suggested user-focused data visualizations.

The Standard Template

Every chapter in Part II of the Manual—the 'how-to' section of the book—follows a consistent format so that it is easier to evaluate, compare, and implement assessment methodologies.

The Overview Scorecard

4	Citation
4	External/Qualitative
6	Usage
$-$$$	Cost
@-@@	Technology
###	Staffing
Moderate	Overall

Each methodology has been mapped to the three frameworks shared in the "Data & Methods" chapter, so it's easy for readers to select a variety of methodologies appropriate for holistic assessment.

Each methodology is rated on its cost (excluding labor), the level of technological expertise needed, and the amount of staff time required.

Each methodology is rated as easy, moderate, or advanced, based on its cost, technology, and staffing scores.

Introductory Matter

- What broad question does this method address?
- Applicable Formats
- Relevant Assessment Goals
- Strengths
- Shortcomings

In case readers are unfamiliar with a particular metric, there is a summarizing question at the beginning of each chapter. For example, under "Focus Groups" it asks, "What do our users think?"

If a methodology is format-specific, the relevant formats are listed at the beginning of the chapter.

To help readers select methodologies that are appropriate for their purpose, any goals from the "Goals" chapter that can be answered effectively using a given methodology are listed.

The major strengths and weaknesses of each methodology are included to help readers evaluate which methods to use and how to address or mitigate any issues.

What other information would help you evaluate and select assessment methodologies?

The How-To

- Preparing the Data
- Analyzing and Using the Data

The bulk of each chapter is dedicated to step-by-step instructions on how to gather and prepare data using the particular methodology, as well as strategies for analyzing and using the data. This includes suggestions for possible action items.

Each chapter includes suggestions for how to visualize the data. While these examples aren't exhaustive, they can help readers jump-start their thinking and design a compelling visualization in a pinch.

The Manual is largely software-agnostic, providing instructions for how to complete each method with and without proprietary software (as feasible). Potentially useful software is listed at the end of the chapter.

In addition to mapping each method to three assessment frameworks, I suggest specific complementary methodologies at the end of each chapter, in case the added context is helpful.

The Manual is meant to be a one-stop-shop for assessment, so as much as possible I will provide complete information within each chapter. However, if a particularly helpful or concise resource exists for a methodology, I'll list it for readers who want to learn more.

Standard Appendices

- Recommended Visualizations
- Useful Software
- Complementary Methodologies
- Further Reading

Usage

What data visualizations have you found to be effective?

List of methodologies covered in the "Usage" section of Part II:

Usage-Oriented Assessment Methods

- Circulation Analysis
- Physical Item Return-on-Investment
- ILL Analysis
- E-Resources Use Analysis
- Turnaway Analysis

Suggested usage-focused data visualizations; examples of how to structure data; COUNTER crosswalks.

Title	Publisher	Platform	ISSN	Package	Core	2016 Use	2017 Use	2018 Use	Use Type

COUNTER 4 Report	COUNTER 5 Equivalent
MR1: Number of Successful Full Multimedia Content Unit Requests by Month and Collection	DR_D1: Database Search and Item Usage
MR2: Number of Successful Full Multimedia Content Unit Requests by Month, Collection, and Item Type	IR_M1: Multimedia Item Requests

Citations

What would make collection assessment easier?

List of methodologies covered in the "Citations" section of Part II:

Citation-Oriented Assessment Methods

- Citation Analysis
- Constituent Publishing Outlets
- Bibliometric Analysis
- Altmetric Analysis

Metric	Proprietary?	How to Calculate
Impact Factor	No	Calculated on a yearly basis by dividing the number of citations received by documents from the previous two years during the current year, by the total number of citable documents from the previous two years. For example, 2018 Impact Factor would be calculated as follows: *citations received by 2016 – 17 documents during 2018* *total citable documents 2016 – 17* Essentially, Impact Factor captures the average of how often an article from a given journal can expect to be cited annually. The higher the number, the more impactful on average the journal.
5-Year Impact Factor	No	Comparable to Impact Factor, but with a longer span included in each yearly calculation:
CiteScore	Elsevier Analytics	Comparable to Impact Factor, but with a longer span

Guide to common bibliometrics; step-by-step guidance for key software and platforms; suggested data visualizations.

Feedback on the manual?

In Person
Share your answers to the prompting questions or your thoughts on anything else you see (or don't see) here.

In Writing
Jot down your answers to the prompting questions, comment directly on excerpts from the book, or share other thoughts on the pages provided below.

Later
Contact me by January 15:
Madeline Kelly
Director of Collections
Wester Washington University
Madeline.Kelly@wwu.edu

Putting the Pieces Together

A blank template to help readers assemble their own selection of methodologies for a holistic assessment project or program.

Framework:				
Indicator/ Dimension	Metric/Methodology 1		Metric/Methodology 2	
	Name	Sustainable?	Name	Sustainable?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

The final chapter in Part I provides readers with a template for combining methodologies into their own customized holistic assessment portfolio, as well as example combinations for each assessment framework and major goal outlined in the "Goals" chapter. Readers are encouraged to build their own combinations, but these 'grab and go' examples serve as a quick start option.

Goal	*Demonstrate financial impact of library collections*			
Data/Methodologies				
Framework 1	Collections	Reputable bibliographies: How strong are our collections in different areas? How does this map to our users?	Framework 2	Internal/ Quantitative: Modified Brief Test: How deep or strong are our collections in different areas? How does this map to our users?
	Users	Interviews: What do users see as the successes and failures of the collection? Where would they prioritize action?		Internal/ Qualitative: Reputable bibliographies: How strong are our collections in different areas? How does this map to our users?
	Usage	Circulation analysis: What physical resources get the most or least use?		External/ Quantitative: E-resource use analysis: What e-resources get the most or least use?
	Citations	Citation analysis: What are the most-cited resources, formats, languages, or publication years for your users?		External/ Qualitative: User surveys: What do users see as the successes and failures of the collection? What would they prioritize?
Framework 3	Capacity	Modified Brief Test: How deep or strong are our collections in different areas? How does this map to our users?		Environmental Factor: Patron demographic mapping: Who are our users, and how do our collections and expenditures map to user groups?
	Subject Standards	Reputable bibliographies: How strong are our collections in different areas? How does this map to our users and their needs?		Users: User surveys: What do users see as the successes and failures of the collection? What would they prioritize?
	Scholarly Publishing	-		Usage: ILL analysis: What resources are users asking for that we don't already have?