

Assessment

Introduction

Assessment, or the process of gathering data to use for purposes of evaluation and making decisions, is an important (and yet often overlooked) area for program developers and project managers. Assessment is the method of measuring performance against clearly stated, defined goals and objectives. It is the iterative process of setting goals, gathering data, analyzing results, evaluating performance, and then recalibrating accordingly.

Assessment for digital repositories needs to occur at various points: at the program level (is the program achieving its goals? Are services meeting users' needs?), the collection level (is this particular collection meeting its goals?), and the systems or interface level (are users able to find what they're looking for? Is the system able to support most projects? Does it provide the functionality needed?)

The high-level process for analyzing the performance of individuals, programs, services, and collections is the same, but each raises different questions or areas to focus on and might require different methods of data collection.