

Parallel Sessions A
A1 – Experiences in Web Site Evaluation

Thursday, September 19, Room B, 10.30

A Multidimensional Approach to Web Evaluation at the National Library of Medicine

Lyon, B; Wood, F B

Lyon, Becky: National Library of Medicine, Library Operations, 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894, USA, blyon@nlm.nih.gov

The World Wide Web offers many new opportunities for the National Library of Medicine to carry out its missions. But the Web has made it much more difficult to determine if we are succeeding in our efforts. The web-based information and user environment is more complex, and traditional evaluation methods do not work or work as well. NLM has recognized the need for a more comprehensive, innovative, and multi-dimensional strategy for web evaluation. This includes the integrated use of web log usage data, usability studies, online surveys, and online user panels, combined with traditional methods such as telephone surveys, outreach feedback sessions, and focus groups. And we are emphasizing, to the extent possible, the use and impact of web-based information from the user or customer perspective. This includes new efforts to understand why users are seeking information, how easily users are able to access and download information, and what users are doing with the information they find on the web. NLM has experimented with a range of web metrics and evaluation methods. We believe that a strategic approach to web evaluation is emerging. We hope that this approach will advance the knowledge base in this field, and prove useful to the many others who are faced with the challenge of more rigorously evaluating web-based information services.