

THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR THE JOB

The value of the Monitoring and Evaluation of Electronic Resource Usage (MEERU) workshops

Anne Powell, 2010

Members of a national consortium responsible for the purchase of e-resources need information to support their decisions. A key source of this information comes with the monitoring of e-resource usage and the evaluation of its impact on research output. For this reason, the Monitoring and Evaluation of Electronic Resource Usage (MEERU) workshops were requested by several countries for 2009-10.

In 2006, INASP introduced a training workshop entitled Monitoring and Evaluation of Electronic Resource Usage (MEERU). The workshop, a three-day event piloted in Tanzania and launched in Kenya, was well received and participant feedback very positive. However, as with any training workshop, the timing has to be right. In this case, while the workshop was met with enthusiasm, not all the participants were in a position to put what they had learned into practice.

The value and relevance of the workshop content was, however, still evident and when planning activities for 2009 activities our partners in Kenya indicated that they would like a follow-on MEERU workshop - they were not alone. Several of our partner countries also showed an interest in presenting these workshops.

Subsequently, the workshop materials were updated and piloted in Kenya in July and cascaded to Vietnam a few months later. Local adaptation of the materials by our Latin American partners resulted a Spanish version of MEERU being piloted in Nicaragua and rolled out to Cuba and Bolivia by the end of 2009.

The Kenya Pilot Workshop

The pilot workshop for the updated materials was run in July, 2009 and attended by 20 participants from different institutions. All the institutions involved were members of Kenya Libraries and Information Services Consortium (KLISC). While some had attended the initial MEERU workshops in 2006, many were new to the concept. The co-facilitators - Rachel Rege, Kenya Agriculture Research Institute (KARI), and Anne Powell, INASP - were both involved in the initial, 2006 workshops. Through a mix of tutorial and practical sessions, the workshop introduced concepts and tools, building upon these in later sessions,

using the information gathered by participants prior to the workshop.

The final session focused on how KLISC could use the information collected and was run by Agatha Kabugu, chair of KLISC. This allowed participants to take what they had learned and the practical information gathered and apply it to a country-specific context. The resulting suggestions included:

- Institutions prepare reports for information sharing
- KLISC members should conduct Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) annually at an institutional level
- participants should pass on what had been learned to other staff within their institutions
- each participant should report back to the consortium after 3 months
- participants and member institutions should work to promote resources and services

Why MEERU?

Members of a national consortium responsible for the purchase of e-resources need information to support their decisions. A key source of this information comes with the monitoring of e-resource usage and the evaluation of its impact on research output. The MEERU workshops are primarily of interest to librarians from institutions that are a part of the national consortium - providing current information and the skills to continue gathering the M&E data that can then feed into the subscription selection process.

The MEERU workshops aim to demonstrate and discuss how to access institutional level usage data for e-resources, assist participants to process and interpret quantitative and qualitative data and discuss how quantitative and qualitative data can be used by a library consortium. The workshops also make use of Evidence Base's eVALUED toolkit.

When discussing subscription renewals for 2009 and 2010, the Country Coordinators (CC) were interested

The event was useful in that I gained skills on how to capture e-resources usage data and how to use the results in improving the usage. Also I learnt from other participants what they are doing in promoting e-resources.

Workshop Participant

KCA University e-resources summary: All resources 2009	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Separate user sessions in month	263	508	425	133	117	562	595	202	351	508	311	83	4058
Searches Performed	79	128	82	82	75	170	541	192	148	178	165	34	1874
ToCs downloaded in month	35	47	11	5	13	42	22	21	15	26	20	3	260
Abstracts downloaded in month	242	420	255	110	59	446	425	95	299	338	225	58	2972
Articles downloaded (PDF) in month	156	365	269	83	53	394	550	249	305	351	462	144	3354
Articles downloaded (HTML) in month	236	597	873	94	95	796	1471	212	354	507	547	224	6006
Document deliveries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total documents obtained	392	962	1142	177	248	1190	2021	461	659	858	1009	368	9360

in the resources' relevance (is this of interest to the researchers?) and options for cost sharing, both of which can be addressed through collecting and collating institutional usage data. As INASP only collects data at a national level, the consortia needed something more specific than this for their decision making. Although some publishers have provided access to this data, the time consuming nature of this task makes it impractical for the CCs to collect and collate on behalf of the whole consortium.

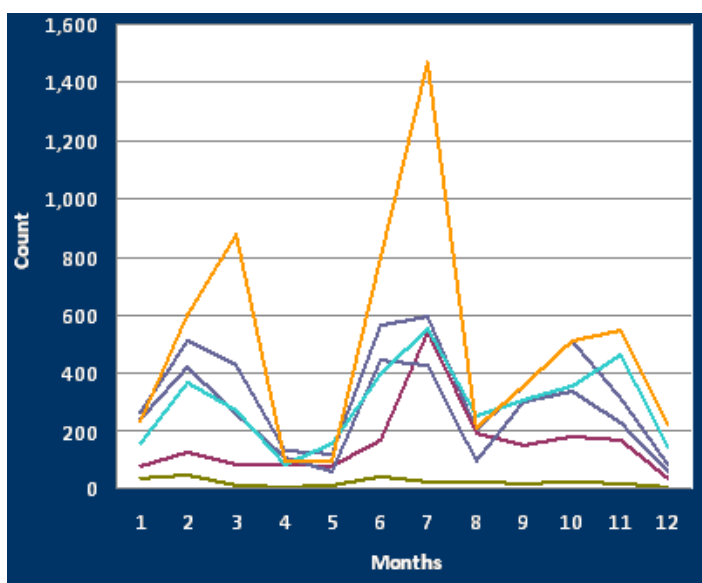
In addition, a number of institutions had shown an interest in seeing their own usage in the hopes of building a 'big picture' of their e-resource use. This data would then be used to feed into selection decisions for the consortium, plan promotional and awareness raising activities within their institutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of the search skill training programmes offered to researchers and library users.

Adaptable materials

Some elements of the MEERU workshops are standard practice; however, many elements are best when tailored to a country specific context. In particular, the practical and discussion based elements focus on the circumstances and needs of both the consortia and the contributing institutions.

For this reason, it is recommended that a representative from the consortium lead the final session. Inviting any consortium members who had not attended the workshop to take part in the discussion is also recommended.

With the addition of context-specific changes, the materials are designed to be used in the cascading training methodology. A future MEERU facilitator for Vietnam attended the pilot workshop with this in mind. Two months later, a MEERU workshop took place in Vietnam. The Latin American workshops have also applied the same cascading methodology. The MEERU materials were translated for these workshops and are now available on the INASP website in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.



The table and graph (above) were supplied by Terence Odongo, KCA University, using the sample spreadsheet from the Kenya 2009 workshop.

Anne Powell works in the Information Delivery component of the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information. For more information on PERii and Information Delivery, see our website: www.inasp.info/perii

For more information on the MEERU workshops, visit the INASP website: www.inasp.info/meeru

For more information on the Kenya and Vietnam MEERU events, please see the events pages: www.inasp.info/kenya-events
www.inasp.info/vietnam-events

For more information on the cascading training methodology, see the website: www.inasp.info/cascading-methodology