

An Experiment in Library Valuation: Determining the Value of a Federal Library

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The goal of this research project is to determine acceptable valuations for key library services and placing these services into a model for use in managing and advocating for a federal library. Return on investment (ROI) and cost-benefit analysis (CBA) tools will be used to establish the value of library services which will require both qualitative and quantitative measurements. Dollars will be the unit of measure and value will be estimated by time saved by NOAA employees and the estimated value of the services they receive. Estimates will also be made for services received by the general public. Costs and value received will be calculated on an annual basis. The key services for which value will be determined are

- electronic journals
- online databases
- photo library
- digital collections
- interlibrary loan
- reference services
- education services
- circulating and rare book collections

The basic model to be used includes the following factors: inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. Values are to be determined mainly from the outputs, outcomes, and impacts factors and costs from input and process factors. The main motivators for this action research are the need to *do more with less*, marketing library service, and advocating for long term budgetary support for the library. The current challenging economic times have increased the need and urgency for this action research.