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Return vs. Value:

How to communicate your library collection's impact

Return on Investment (ROI)		Value of Investment (VOI)
	versus	
+ Direct value calculation; examines the present value of the collection to the user community and demonstrates how financial resources are invested to support information needs − Does not provide evidence for how or why library collections are used	**COLLECTION ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES**	+ Indirect value calculation; examines outputs and outcomes, like publications and citations, that link collections to the overall value of the library and the institution over time − Difficult to collect evidence of collection impact when benefits of use may not be evident for months or years
+ Allows librarians to compare information products side-by-side to evaluate total value to the user community − Does not provide insight into future information needs or up-and-coming research interests	**COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT GOALS**	+ Allows librarians to develop long-term collection strategies by identifying collection gaps, shifts in research interests, or evolving program requirements − Does not provide insight into immediate collection usage trends
+ Allocates scarce resources or selects alternative collection materials + Identifies recurring and non-recurring costs − Resource allocations do not shift at the same pace as research interests or information needs	**COLLECTION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**	+ Holistic collection view promotes effective curation and strategic management of resources over time + Reduces the overall risk of resource investment and collection decisions − Measures future return on investment and may not measure current recurring and non-recurring costs
+ Answers questions like: What materials are being used today? Are collections of value to users today? − Does not measure what users do with collection materials after discovery and access	**COLLECTION VALUE AND IMPACT**	+ Answers questions like: How and why do materials support research, teaching, and learning activities? How does information funnel through the research cycle? − Does not indicate how users discover or access collection materials
+ Promotes transparent and accountable collection budget management + Provides evidence that resources support existing information needs − Does not link collections to research output, teaching objectives, or the reputation of the institution	**COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**	+ Links collections to the value of the institution by providing evidence for research output, student retention rates, grant funding, and teaching excellence − Demonstrates how collections align with institutional goals and priorities − Does not provide evidence that supports immediate budget management activities

NEXT STEPS: **Create a big picture assessment that is sure to impress decision-makers. First, measure the value of your collection today with ROI and over time using VOI principles to showcase the full impact of your library.**

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