Data Lake: Promoting a Mega-Tool for the Assessment Lifecycle

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CASE STUDY

A recently created Library Strategic Plan at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) identified the need to integrate a culture of assessment throughout the organization in order to encourage more data informed decision-making processes. This case study will discuss the development of a home-grown tool that assists with assessment brainstorming, and acts as a central repository for assessment products – the Data Lake.
UCLA Library

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Part of the University of California & ranked among the top academic libraries in the USA

Serving 45,000 students in 125 majors

Employs 100 librarians and 350 full-time staff

Over a dozen library locations

Library and information technology services are highly converged
What is a Data Lake & Why do we need one?

A data lake is a centralized repository of structured and unstructured data.

- Just dumping all data into a data lake without any metadata management, would only lead to a “Data Swamp”
- Data by itself (even with metadata) isn’t enough. Staff need assessment help in the context of asking questions of data
So we we created a hybrid Data Lake

**UCLA Library Data Lake**

A centralized information repository with metadata management **AND** assessment training **AND** tools using Confluence as platform

- Centralizes assessment-related activities in the Library
- Allows staff to add &/or discover studies, data, reports, and tools
- Uses templates to provides guidance for assessment activities
- Offers consultations
- Enables communication with management and stakeholders
Assessment for Change Team (ACT)

Project Info: Assessment for Change Team (ACT)

Summary: What kinds of data about the library do we already gather? What information should we be assessing in order to tell our story? How should we share those stories with the library and campus stakeholders? This group is related to Goal Team 3 (Function as the Heart that Enables Research to Thrive) and Goal 1.

MEMBERS

Team Leads: Sharon Shafer and Diane Mizrachi

Cabinet Sponsor: Todd Grappone

Strategic Planning Consultant: Dana Peterman

Members:

- Simon Lee
- Sandra Farfan-Gracia
- Estefani Bowline
- Neil Hodge
ACT Goals

CREATE A CENTRALIZED INVENTORY

• Develop specifications
• Ingest existing data & add new content
• Develop prototype
Environmental Scan & Outreach

Look @
✓ Ourselves (Library)
✓ UCLA Campus & beyond
Assessment Lifecycle & Why Confluence?

- **Assessment Lifecycle**
- **Confluence is a wiki with macros & plug-ins**
- **UCLA Library *already using it***
  - knowledge management
  - project management
  - data visualization via html macro api to Google Analytics
  - tie-in with JIRA tickets
**Requirements & Specs**

**DATA LAKE**

- Discover via search & browse
- Add & modify all assessment related records
- Connect to information (BOX, JIRA, …)
- Include dynamic data visualization
- Create an inventory of data assets & applications
- Facilitate assessment consultation & guidance
- Facilitate communication with stakeholders
Implement & Test

✓ Prototype, test, enhance & repeat
System Architecture via Confluence Macros

- Template
- Page Properties Report
- Livesearch
Dynamic Data Visualization

Confluence HTML macro using API to Google Analytics
Findings

We established a collaboration platform to manage change & an assessment culture within the UCLA Library

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

✓ Assessment is difficult and requires mentoring and follow-up
  • Sherpa-like forms need to be simple
  • Workshops and in-person consultations must be continuously offered

✓ Management support, engagement, and data-informed decision making is necessary
  • Orphaned projects were highlighted via the reporting mechanism

✓ Technical debt occurs from custom programming
  • E.g. buttons on the homepage were broken due to a Confluence upgrade
  • HTML workarounds not the most user friendly
Recommendations

WHAT’S NEXT?

Follow-up consultations
Workshops

Identify & recruit spokespeople

Recruit ACT standing committee
Connect forms via auto-fill

Explore dynamic connections to data

Education
Outreach
Lake Content
Workflow
Collaborate with us?
Sign up at http://bit.ly/2EDIIcB
Questions?

Thank You

Collaborations?
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