

## INFO 285 Week 5 Discussion 1: Measuring the right thing

*Does equipment work when it has been repaired?*

This question has particular interest to me working in the IT division in our university library. Coming from my IT background my first thought of equipment turns to computer hardware used by staff, librarians, and patrons. It also includes printers, scanners, video recorders, dvd or blue-ray players that are used or can be checked out by patrons. Thinking more about this question leads me to think that *equipment* could also include software used by staff, librarians, and patrons. Software is another important tool or item used for specific purposes in the library. Its virtually impossible to promise there will be no failures or outages but library staff can work towards minimizing the impact when a failure occurs.

The first step to answer this question is to know what equipment is in the library as well as who is responsible for the equipment. This could be done by sending surveys to all library employees asking them to identify equipment they maintain. Another approach that is more exhaustive but would be more accurate would be for a library committee to visit every library division and identify all equipment used in the library. Some equipment may be tracked using a ticketing system that allows staff to receive notice of when something is broken and needs repair. This tracking system would be another way to identify equipment and responsible parties over that equipment.

After its known what the equipment is and who maintains the equipment it would be helpful to track when and how equipment fails, assigning the repair to the responsible staff member, and then being able to see when the item is repaired and working again. In our library we use a ticketing system that tracks equipment issues in the library (including computer hardware and software, electronic devices, as well as building maintenance issues). Using the

data from a tracking system would help establish some basic measures that would lead to an answer to this question.

The next set of data that would be helpful to answer this question would be to assess if responsible areas in the library check the quality of equipment repair after a repair is made. Is there a manual or automatic quality control process in place that ensures an item is functional again after a repair? A library ticketing system could include measures in place that require the technician entering why a ticket is resolved. This could be helpful data for answering this question. Asking these types of questions and gathering this information could also be gathered by sending surveys to responsible parties as well as a follow-up interview to ask more specific questions that would help answer the main indicator question.

Some potential issues with this data gathering is making sure that the data is comprehensive enough in covering both the equipment used in the library as well as who is in charge of the equipment. Also, the nature of this question could lean toward a subjective response. How does one define *repaired*? A staff member may claim something is repaired but the patron or librarian disagrees. The data gathering process would need to account for this subjective aspect of the question in order to accurately assess and evaluate this indicator.