

Library Connect Podcast: Judy Luther Interview

This is a transcript of a Library Connect podcast recorded in June 2008.

MS. KIRA COOPER: Hello. This is Kira Cooper, Senior Communications Manager at Elsevier, and I'm happy to bring you this Library Connect podcast. I'm talking with Judy Luther at the American Library Association annual meeting in Anaheim. Judy is the President of Informed Strategies, an information consulting company.

Judy developed an academic library return on investment model which she wrote about in a Library Connect white paper. Judy, your white paper presented the results of a pilot study done with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The project looked at one academic institution's investments in scholarly resources, through the library, and found a four-to-one return in terms of grant funding. What was your role in this study?

MS. JUDY LUTHER: I led the team, which included Paul Kaufman, Dean of the library, Carol Tenopir, and yourself.

MS. COOPER: What were your biggest obstacles in developing the model?

MS. LUTHER: The challenge in working on the study was devising a methodology that would produce quantifiable results, using readily available data, that could be replicated across other institutions and produce a compelling picture of the value of the library to the institutions.

MS. COOPER: And how difficult was it to get this data?

MS. LUTHER: The data was pretty readily available. The challenge was in defining exactly what we needed.

MS. COOPER: And did anything in particular surprise you during your investigation at UIUC?

MS. LUTHER: Being a former academic librarian, the passion of the faculty in articulating how the library resources were available to them and the way in which it influenced not only how they worked, but their productivity and efficiency.

- MS. COOPER: Do you see any practical applications for this model?
- MS. LUTHER: The report includes the survey, which can be implemented at your own institution and describes the approach and the methodology that we use, so basically, libraries are able to do it themselves, and we'd be interested in their results.
- MS. COOPER: And how do you hope the model will be used in the future?
- MS. LUTHER: Phase two of the model seeks to expand it, and not only across institutions, but also, to be more inclusive, in terms of other variables and factors that weren't in phase one, so we look forward to seeing the results of that work.
- MS. COOPER: Thank you, Judy, for talking with me today. This is Kira Cooper signing off on this Library Connect podcast.