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How to work together on an international project

Experiences from a benchmarking project of three European health libraries

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JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA
CONSEJERÍA DE SALUD

Knowledge, Research, Innovation ... eHealth

Biblioteca Virtual
del Sistema Sanitario Público de Andalucía

*Benchmarking should been seen as the **beginning of a journey of discovery** – not as an end it itself.*

*The aim should be to **learn** more about your service by **comparing** its **impact** with that of the others – not to secure a place in a table of merit.*

Markless & Streatfield

Benchmarking project
of three European health libraries

- Proposal and plan 2012
- Project started 2013
- Mainly worked online
- Hardly no costs
- No project leader

What is benchmarking?

- First, shoemakers used the term benchmarking

- Now, used to **measure** performance using a specific indicator

- Our project is a **best-practice** benchmarking project
  - Used in strategic management
  - Organisations evaluate activities in relation to best or better practices
  - To make improvements
  - May be a one-time event, often a continuous process

Getting ideas, solutions and examples

- Planning library space
- Teaching IL
- Marketing and promoting
- Integrating services in users' work
- Collaborating with other services

Methods of the project

- Collaborative collection of **data**
- Observation and shadowing
- User and staff **interviews**
- EAHIL colleagues **focus group**
- Collaborative **blog** writing
- Learning by doing

Tools for cooperation

Collecting data

- Library areas, facilities and equipment
- Services for the public, including loan, ILL and user training
- Collection management, bibliographic records
- Institutional repository
- Library staff, both number and staff training
- Financial data

How to compare?

Library visits

- Discussing with library **directors**
- Interviewing library **users** about library space
- Interviewing library **staff** members
- Looking at the physical **space** and collection organisation
- Learning about staff **organisation**
- And **relationships** with hospital and university

Interviewing users about library space

- What do you use this library for?
- Why do you (study/read/work/group work) right here?
- Where would you study if the library did not exist?

Similar user activities in libraries

- Reading lecture notes and other study material
- Discussing, talking, working in groups
- Writing lab reports and research papers
- Searching for information
- Using library's and their own books
- Working on their own laptops and library computers

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If the library did **not** exist

Instead of it	Users would choose to work
BMH (Norway)	home
BSS (Belgium)	campus
KUH (Finland)	campus/home

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Insights from user interviews

- Spaces for both **individual** and **collaborative** work
- Both **silent** and **semi-silent** work or study
- Access to **computers** and **Wi-Fi**
- Natural **daylight**

Interviewing staff about roles and value

- What is your **role** in this library?
- **Why** do you work here?
- What is the **meaning/purpose** of your work here?
- What **value** does the library (and your role in it) add to the university?
- What would it mean **if the library did not exist**/provide the services?
- In your opinion, is the library doing the right things/providing the right services?

Reflections on library work

- Staff members were willing to invite us to take part in processes where they **reflect** on the **meaning** of their work and the **value** of library

- We found the value of the library **together**

- If libraries did not exist, **they would have to be invented**

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Takeaways from the staff discussions

Connect

user needs with staff views

to **develop**

a more **user-oriented** service

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Focus group with EAHIL colleagues

Advice from the focus group

- What could **non-users** tell us

- Main focus on **marketing**

- EAHIL Special Interest Group (**SIG**) on marketing

- How the project should **proceed**
  - focus on fewer topics
  - decide what to measure
  - use indicators

International benchmarking

- Aims at providing **good** services
- Involves
  - Working hours and **personal interest**
  - **Support** of the supervisors and organisation
  - **Constant evaluation and continuing development**
  - Draws attention to **different ways** of managing a library
- Provides **tools and suggestions**
- Is **challenging but rewarding**

Information
Skills
Opportunities

Thank you for your attention!

References and links can be found in the full text.

Take a look at our blog!

https://benchmarkingthreehealthlibraries.wordpress.com

Benchmarking project of three European health libraries

LIBRARIES, BENCHMARKING, HEALTH LIBRARIES, MEDICAL LIBRARIES, HOSPITAL LIBRARIES, COOPERATION, SHARING, LEARNING