



the evaluation exchange

A PERIODICAL ON EMERGING STRATEGIES IN EVALUATING CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT ■ HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ■ VOLUME X NUMBER 3 ■ FALL 2004

from the director's desk



Heather Weiss

Innovative uses of technology enable fast, global access to high quality information for help in gathering data, designing evaluations, and sharing resources to implement better services and supports for children and families.

Recognizing this new context for getting and using data, and committed to providing our readers with just-in-time information to improve practice, we devoted this issue of *The Evaluation Exchange* to technology's contribution to evaluation practice, as well as to how recent advances in knowledge management and communications are making evaluation information readily available for effective decision making and organizational learning. While framing this issue, we were struck by the powerful way technology is being used globally to design evaluations that promote inclusion and social justice; you will see several examples of this throughout the issue.

Partnering with us in this effort is our guest editor, Dr. Arnold Love, an internationally recognized independent consultant whose 20-plus years' experience in evaluation includes promoting the use of technology in the field. He opens our issue with a Theory & Practice that frames four key areas in which evaluators are using technology: data collection and analysis, collaboration, knowledge mobilization, and evaluation capacity building. Contributors for this issue provide concrete examples of evaluation's use in these four areas.

The issue continues with advice from experts on how to use technologies such as Internet surveys, online focus groups, and

handheld wireless devices. Additionally, authors point to how technology can improve collaboration, which enhances evaluation planning and practice.

From a "one-stop shop" for the latest data and research on indicators of child and youth well-being to the use of multimedia for the evaluation of public services in India, this issue offers several domestic and international examples of how evaluators are using information and communications technology for knowledge mobilization.

Building evaluation capacity is a key use of technology for evaluation. Articles in this issue describe the challenges and solutions of using technology to create communities of practice, especially in countries with large populations and limited resources.

This issue includes a Special Feature section, inspired by conversations with Time Warner Inc. Office of Corporate Responsibility. This set of articles describes how youth programs are using technology to engage youth both in civic action and in participatory evaluation, and the challenges and benefits of using technology in youth programming and other settings.

With this issue we offer our readers strategies to harness the power of technology to promote child and family well-being through the dissemination of high quality research and evaluation information. We hope you will alert us to other examples of the ways in which technology is enhancing your evaluation capacity and, as always, we welcome your thoughts and contributions for future issues.

Heather B. Weiss, Ed.D.
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Published by
Harvard Family Research Project
Harvard Graduate School of Education

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Harvard Family Research Project
gratefully acknowledges the support
of Time Warner Inc. Office of
Corporate Responsibility, the Annie
E. Casey Foundation, the Marguerite
Casey Foundation, the Ewing Marion
Kauffman Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg
Foundation, and the John S. and
James L. Knight Foundation.

The contents of this publication are
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> theory & practice

Taking the Next Step: Harnessing the Power of Technology for Evaluation

Arnold Love, an internationally recognized independent consultant with more than 20 years' experience in evaluation, is the guest editor of this issue of The Evaluation Exchange. In this edition of Theory & Practice, he provides a conceptual map of the issue's theme—the uses of technology in evaluation.

Technology offers evaluators the opportunity to design and implement more effective evaluations while reducing costs. Although many evaluators are already reaping the benefits of technology, most have not moved much beyond email, teleconferencing, and accessing websites. They have not made technology an integral part of the evaluation process. There is a pressing need for evaluators to become aware of advances in technology and to appreciate those advances relevant for the evaluation field. With technology changing so rapidly, a closely related challenge is developing a “mental map” of the technology landscape so that we can appraise and select the right tools to meet our evaluation needs.

What do I mean by *technology*? In the evaluation arena, the term refers to information and communications technology (ICT), also known by its street name, *communications*, a trendy word that emphasizes the union between computers and telecommunications. ICT has two immediate benefits for evaluators:

1. Enhancing the use of familiar methods (surveys, interviews) to achieve better, less expensive evaluations
2. Accessing the wellspring of innovation (wireless handheld devices, cellphone camcorders, etc.) to fashion new tools and create new evaluative processes (such as real-time analysis and collaborative weblogs, or blogs)

What Are Evaluators Doing With Technology?

A survey of the landscape shows four major areas in which evaluators are using information and communications technologies successfully: data collection and analysis, collaboration, knowledge mobilization, and capacity building. ICT is rapidly expanding the tools for generating evaluative knowledge, broadening participation and collaboration, fashioning highly effective channels for mobilizing evaluation information into focused action and social change, and linking evaluators together into dynamic, worldwide communities of practice. To provide a context and to help draw a clear mental map of the evaluation applications described in this issue, the following paragraphs review how evaluators are using technology in each of these areas.

Data collection and analysis. ICT permits evaluators to collect quantitative and qualitative data¹ more accurately, rapidly, and inexpensively than ever before. Evaluators are using websites to download consent forms, post data collection protocols for program staff, supply online help, act as gateways to secure servers for data storage, and streamline data collection by presenting videos that explain the informed consent process to potential participants. To improve evaluation design, evaluators are conducting literature searches using online electronic resources, such as e-journals, e-books, and specialized databases. They are using email and the Web to survey target groups rapidly, enter data automatically, and generate nearly instantaneous feedback. Evaluators are conducting individual and group interviews by email, online discussions, real-time chat, and videoconferencing. The ease of incorporating digital graphics, streaming video, and sound files makes organizing, analyzing, and presenting multimedia data not only feasible but practical. Finally, by building data warehouses and compact data marts for speedy access to historical and

¹ Quantitative data are objective, numerical data that can be quantified. In contrast, qualitative data provide descriptive details, often collected from a purposive sample of interviews, focus groups, or observations.

current data, and by using automated analysis tools for program monitoring, evaluators are able to spend more time supporting users and making evaluations useful.

Collaboration. Tools for electronic collaboration provide the means to do effective group work. Collaboration tools enhance the entire evaluation process in several important ways. Contemporary evaluation practice values participation by diverse stakeholders, but stakeholder involvement can be time-consuming and expensive, especially if travel is required. Electronic collaboration tools allow stakeholders to participate without concern for time or travel. Discussion forums permit evaluators and stakeholders to collaborate more effectively by visually grouping and storing messages into threads that permit a discussion to be followed easily, and by supplying tools for conducting secret ballots on important issues.

Evaluations are becoming more complex, with multiple partners, funders, and program sites now the norm. Electronic collaboration tools, which include scheduling, calendaring, approval tracking, and other project management features, help evaluators manage complex evaluation projects while staying on time and on budget. Evaluators often must craft multiple versions of evaluation reports, with each version tailored to the unique needs of a specific audience. Collaboration tools reduce this burden and its potential for error with sophisticated document management functions, such as version control and document routing, so that documents are disseminated to the right audiences at the right time. In short, e-collaboration tools enable evaluators to lighten their workloads and reduce costs while improving the evaluation process by building trust and a truly inclusive participatory process.

Knowledge mobilization. One of the most important applications of ICT is knowledge mobilization—using evaluation findings to mobilize action and drive change. Knowledge mobilization moves beyond disseminating evaluation findings to the strategic use of evaluative knowledge to realize an organization's mission. Technology implementation usually follows a three-step path. The first is acquiring access to technology; for example, virtually all government and nonprofit organizations in the United States and Canada have Internet access. The second step is adopting basic technology (word processing, email, statistical packages, and static websites) and related skills, but only on a limited basis. The third is embracing the networked world and using ICT in a strategic way to promote change and strengthen communities. For evaluators, strategic use of technology means broadening participation, expanding evaluation audiences, forging new collaborations, and maximizing the impact of information in a way that will mobilize change.

Evaluation capacity building. Technology is helping to build the capacity for evaluation and to develop the infrastructure for supporting evaluators and contributing to their professional develop-

ment. Perhaps nowhere is the power of technology for evaluation capacity building more evident than in the experiences in Africa and in Central and South America. When the development aid agenda began to change in the mid-nineties, evaluators in these two regions faced the daunting task of developing indigenous evaluation capacity with little time and even less money. Taking advantage of the Internet, evaluators created mailing lists, online forums, and discussion groups to foster cooperation and build an extensive infrastructure of regional and national evaluation networks. They then created online databases and filled them with articles, documents, and links to resources in the languages and traditions relevant to the region. They built “knowledge networks” that offered online meetings, conferences, and workshops; these knowledge networks are now themselves spawning “child networks” of their own.

In addition to its role in these efforts, technology has already had widespread impact on the very structure of these organizations. Instead of bricks-and-mortar hierarchical arrangements, organizations are choosing to develop as networks and virtual communities of practice, interacting with each other in highly collaborative ways that lend a strong and unified voice across each region to promote evaluation.

A key question is, what will technology do for evaluators and what aspects of evaluation practice will it facilitate or replace?

Challenges and Next Steps

History shows that technology is rarely adopted unless it meets a need. Therefore a key question is, what will technology do for evaluators and what aspects of evaluation practice will it facilitate or replace? Another challenge is the furious rate of technological change, coupled with the common practice of rushing products to market amid overheated sales rhetoric and exaggerated promises. Should evaluators use technology simply because it is available, or should use of technology be based on specific evaluation considerations? Finally, given the potential for misuse and the often high-stakes nature of evaluative information, should stricter standards and ethical guidelines apply to the use of technology for evaluation?

Harnessing the power of ICT for evaluation depends largely on appreciating the pros and cons of these tools and using this knowledge to shape technology to our own ends. The inherent flexibility of electronic tools should encourage us not to fixate on the hardware and software but to direct our attention to improving the evaluation process: making it more inclusive and transparent, building truly collaborative evaluation efforts, removing the drudgery from data collection and focusing more on data analysis and use, and vastly increasing the reach and impact of evaluative information for the betterment of all.

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Wearable Computers and Evaluation

Edward Dieterle, of Harvard University's Handheld Devices for Ubiquitous Learning project,¹ discusses the potential of wireless handheld devices for evaluation and provides a brief glossary of technological tools and terms with which evaluators should be familiar.

Evaluation usually seeks to address questions involving the need, process, outcome, and efficiency (Posavac & Carey, 1992) of an innovation, treatment, or program. To answer these questions, evaluators must travel to program sites to collect data but then return to their desktop or laptop computers to begin analysis. They process information from a stationary, contextually independent position, typically geographically and temporally removed from the program they are evaluating. If evaluators could collect and analyze data in real time while on site, however, they could more rapidly assess needs, monitor the process of program delivery while participants were actually engaged in program activities, supply timely feedback for program improvement, and develop various program models for increasing efficiency and improving outcomes.

Wireless handheld devices (WHDs)—also known as *handhelds*—now offer evaluators the opportunity to collect, model, and analyze data on site and in real time. Until recently, handheld devices, such as personal digital assistants and cell phones, were little more than efficient personal productivity tools and peer-to-peer communication devices. Through recent technological breakthroughs, handheld computers have evolved into powerful wireless handheld devices with the following characteristics:

- *Connectability* – They connect to the Internet wirelessly via wireless fidelity, or WiFi.
- *Wearability* – They are wearable and therefore always at the fingertips of the user.
- *Instant accessibility* – They turn instantly on and off.
- *Flexibility* – They help collect data by accommodating a wide variety of peripheral extensions (e.g., digital cameras, scientific probeware, global positioning system devices, radio frequency identification, and barcode readers).
- *Economic viability* – They have much of the computing capability and expandable storage capacity of laptops at a fraction of the cost.

Motivated by these emerging capabilities, the Handheld Devices for Ubiquitous Learning project (HDUL) at Harvard University seeks to determine how wireless handheld devices can enhance learning and teaching (Dieterle, 2003). During the 2003–2004 academic year, HDUL integrated handhelds into various courses at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) and the Harvard Extension School (HES). This research demonstrates that WHDs can be highly useful as (1) *portable research assistants* and (2) *traveling conduits for online learning*.

¹ The author would like to thank the Office of the Provost at Harvard University for funding the Handheld Devices for Ubiquitous Learning project, and Chris Dede, the grant's principal investigator and the Timothy E. Wirth Professor in Learning Technologies.

Wireless Handheld Devices as Portable Research Assistants

Here are some of the ways that HGSE and HES have made use of WHDs in their capacity as portable research assistants:

- Students in a qualitative interviewing class exploited the potential of WHDs for digitally recording interviews and capturing digital images.
- In a course on improving performance through online learning, students brought their WHDs into the field and conducted surveys of approximately 10 participants. Afterward, the data were aggregated and analyzed by the whole class.
- Students in technology-supported assessment and teaching methodology classes evaluated various educational software packages designed to capture what students know. (Examples include the Educational Testing Service's Discourse and the Center for Highly Interactive Computing in Education's PiCoMap and Sketchy).
- Students in a team-learning class completed Likert-scale² surveys and free-response questions using their handheld computers. Afterward, their results were displayed via a computer projector in real time to facilitate immediate class discussion of the findings.

Wireless Handheld Devices as Traveling Conduits for Online Learning

In a learning and media class at HGSE, students participated in the MIT Teacher Education Program's Environmental Detectives Simulation (Klopfer, 2004). Using wireless handheld devices, students physically explored the MIT campus in *augmented reality* (computerized information superimposed onto the real world), conducting virtual interviews and collecting simulated data of a virtual chemical spill. Through WHDs, such enactments allowed evaluators to record participants' actions and decisions while they were engaged in the simulation.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Funding for these studies will enable HDUL to continue this research through the 2004–2005 academic school year. Building from the lessons learned during our first year of implementation, next year's goals include continued implementation and integration of WHDs in the courses previously mentioned, as well as involvement of a greater number of faculty and students, especially those in evaluation and in HGSE's Teacher Education Program. In particular, we hope that graduate students in the Teacher Education Program will, as student teachers, be able to integrate wireless handheld devices into their classrooms.

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² A Likert scale is a rating scale that measures the degree of a person's agreement with a series of statements. Such scales are often composed of the following five points: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral/don't know*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*.

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Glossary of Technological Terms

The following is a glossary of terms that describe technological tools and related concepts that may be useful for evaluation. These tools can be used for data collection and dissemination. Most are responsive, integrated, low cost, and low resource.

Asynchronous Threaded Discussion Tools – software that supports text-based conversations between two or more users who are not necessarily online at the same time. Threading the responses helps users follow and respond to contributions.

Augmented Reality (AR) – an environment in which virtual information is superimposed onto the real world to produce an enhanced reality (e.g., Dede, 2002; Klopfer, 2004)

Barcode Reader – a card slot extension that allows handhelds to read barcode labels

Card Slot – a component that allows handhelds to connect to various peripherals, including extended memory cards, digital cameras, and other devices

Digital Camera Extension – a card slot extension or device built into a computer for capturing digital images and sometimes digital videos

Global Positioning System (GPS) – a satellite-based navigational system designed to pinpoint a user's position on the earth's surface. GPS also refers to the navigational device itself.

Groupware – software that integrates the collaborative efforts of multiple users on a single document over distance and time (e.g., Groove Networks and Tapped In). Typically, groupware applications bundle synchronous and asynchronous discussion tools, a calendar, and file-sharing space.

Listserv – software that automatically distributes email to subscribed members of a mailing group

Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) – small handheld computer with practical applications, such as address books, calendars, schedul-

ers, and electronic notepads. Often PDAs are identified by their operating systems (e.g. Palm or Pocket PC). Since their introduction, PDAs have grown to become powerful wireless handheld devices capable of connecting to the Internet, playing music and video, and accepting diverse peripheral extensions.

PDA-Phone Hybrids – devices that are primarily PDAs, with mobile telephone capabilities

Peripheral Extensions – an ever-growing collection of hardware devices that connect to a handheld device and increase its ability to collect, interpret, represent, distribute, and project information

Probeware – scientific “probes” or sensors that allow handheld computers to collect and analyze data about an array of events (e.g., temperature, water quality, blood pressure) in real time. For more information see recent works by Tinker (2000), Staudt (2001), and Bannasch and Tinker (2002).

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) – an identification system similar to a barcode system, based on reading a tag (which can be as small as a grain of rice) with a special device via radio waves. For more information on RFID and its societal implications, see Roy Want's recent *Scientific American* article (Want, 2004).

Smart Phones – devices that are primarily cellular telephones with PDA capabilities

Synchronous Discussion Tools – software that supports text-based conversations between two or more users who are online at the same time (e.g., America Online's Instant Messenger and Microsoft Network's Messenger)

Wireless Fidelity (WiFi) – a set of wireless technical standards that enable handheld computers to send and receive data over wireless networks in a wide variety of settings (home, school, office)

Wireless Handheld Device (WHD) – a generic term for any of a growing suite of handheld computers capable of connecting to the Internet

Internet Surveys: Back to the Future

Don Dillman is recognized internationally as a major contributor to the development of modern mail, telephone, and Internet survey methods. He is Regents Professor in the Department of Sociology and the Department of Community and Rural Sociology at Washington State University. He also serves as deputy director for research and development in the university's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center.

Why should we use Internet surveys?

The major advantages of Internet surveys are speed and lower marginal costs. Speed is an advantage because some people respond quickly—hundreds of responses may come back within a few hours. Speed is also an advantage for data processing. We can design Internet surveys so responses go directly into a database, thereby eliminating data entry. We can also set up analysis templates during the survey design phase so we can almost immediately analyze the data and review the results.

Marginal costs are important because, after evaluators have invested in the people, hardware, software, and programming, Internet surveys have the potential to return large numbers of responses at relatively little cost beyond setup. This is in contrast to telephone surveys, for example, where each interview has a significant cost, and those costs accumulate as more responses are gathered.

What are the limitations of Internet surveys?

There are serious challenges to doing *quality* Internet surveys—both human and technical. Good survey fundamentals have to apply, regardless of how the survey is administered. Internet surveys are subject to the same sources of error as all others, including measurement, coverage, sampling, and nonresponse errors.¹ Measurement error can occur from inattention to how a survey will look on different computer screens or from survey design characteristics that may lead a respondent to either abandon the survey altogether or send incomplete information. In terms of coverage, if people do not have access to the Internet, they can't be surveyed. For many populations, lack of Internet access is still a huge problem. For sampling, we do not yet have good lists of people with Internet addresses and can't draw random samples as a general rule. This is a difficult issue to overcome and will keep the Internet, at least for now, from replacing most other types of surveying.

Regarding nonresponse error, I am disturbed to see groups sending Internet surveys to tens of thousands of potential respondents, getting a small percentage back (say 1,000), and then suggesting the results are representative of the larger population surveyed. Suppose 1,000 responses represent only 5% of possible respondents. We have no idea what the other 95% thought, or the characteristics of those nonrespondents.

¹ Dillman, D. A. (2000). *Mail and Internet surveys: The tailored design method*. New York: Wiley and Sons.

How can we get acceptable response rates with Internet surveys?

An acceptable response rate is over 50%, with careful work done to make sure there is no significant nonresponse error. To get this kind of response, we need to draw careful samples and spend resources to get as many people as possible in that sample to respond. Additionally, Internet surveys require repeated contacts, usually by several modes (email, mail, and/or phone). Mixed-mode surveys tend to get higher response rates. For example, a print survey sent by regular mail with a cash incentive enclosed would then be followed up with an email; this email would include a web address where respondents could go to complete the survey online if desired.

Are there special considerations for designing Internet surveys?

Evidence shows that layout is important. We can't simply pick up a paper-and-pencil survey, type the questions into an online format, and assume the instrument is the same. In addition to wording and question order, visual survey design and layout can affect survey responses.² Graphics are significant because what one person sees on his or her computer screen may not be what another sees. Differences in browsers, screen configurations, and Internet connection speeds may affect how respondents see the survey. I suggest that most programmers work at a level less advanced than they would like in order to allow more people to view a given survey in a similar way. I encourage special efforts to be made to get the same images on as many respondents' screens as possible. We also need to test surveys using both fast and slow electronic connections.

Another consideration is the tendency for Internet surveys to ask one question "per page." That approach may lead to respondents losing context as they answer questions. If a person gets interrupted while responding to a line of related questions (e.g., the same series of questions being asked for each of several jobs held) for example, that person may forget the question's context when he or she returns to it later. We can solve this problem by paying careful attention to the way our items are worded and by changing them from the way they might have been presented in a mail survey to help them stand alone.

What are some fundamentals of high quality Internet surveys?

For starters, keep surveys short. How short depends on the population. I've been concerned for many years that survey designers try to get too much detail from respondents. The result is survey abandonment, which the Internet makes relatively easy. We can't expect people to sit for 30 or 40 minutes, as we sometimes try to do on mail and telephone surveys. Also, we need to test and retest

² See also www.sesrc.wsu.edu/dillman.



our surveys and administrative procedures. Look at each question to determine whether respondents are abandoning the survey because of a particular item. Examine the data to determine what went wrong when someone tried to respond, rather than just ignoring those issues as casualties of the process.

Finally, we must design our surveys well, regardless of whether we use telephone, face-to-face, mail, or Internet. Carrying out successful surveys takes some understanding of survey methodology, sensitivity to the group or population being surveyed, and good questions that make sense and can be answered.

What developments can we look forward to in this field?

We are relatively new at Internet surveying and do not know exactly what changes are ahead. To draw a parallel, when I started working on telephone surveys in 1969, I did not predict the im-

port of answering machines, cell phones, the near elimination of long-distance charges, and the personal computer. The technology changed and so did our culture. For example, when telephone surveying started it was difficult for people to hang up on someone because cultural norms did not permit it. Over the years answering the telephone and staying on the line became more voluntary. Cultural norms regarding Internet usage are still developing.

This is an exciting but developmental period in Internet surveying. Given the challenges I outlined, right now I recommend use of the Internet in combination with other survey modes. As computers become much more integral to our lives, this may change. We will only know in time.

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Evaluating a Literacy Program Using Web Surveys¹

Frontier College, a 105-year-old nonprofit organization, provides tutoring in literacy skills to children, youth, and adults in a range of settings across Canada. The College has over 3,500 volunteers working in both English and French at over 250 sites. In 2001 the College undertook an extensive evaluation to examine four key program components: learners, volunteers, community organizers, and community partners.

Traditional evaluation methods such as focus groups and interviews were used, as well as an extensive web survey. The survey examined three questions: How can volunteers be better supported and trained? What specific learning outcomes did volunteers observe? How does this experience impact volunteers?

A link to the survey was sent in both English and French to 2,941 volunteers; the return rate was 28.6%. Although this percentage was higher than expected, response rates were inconsistent nationwide. Our findings indicated, broadly, that we needed to refine our tutor training by providing more concrete material, introducing evaluative components into training, and improving volunteer retention. Each of our 25 regional staffs received a detailed breakdown of their own data and the aggregated national data—information invaluable in developing program plans.

This survey taught us that we tried to collect too much information and that applying good survey design principles was crucial. With these lessons in mind we launched our second web survey in January 2004. Because of our initial experience, we made this survey shorter and more focused, put a link to it on our website, and printed flyers with the website address for people who did not receive email.

Our return rate for this second survey was 36.7%, with 1,264 responses. The design changes resulted in a more evenly distributed response pattern, which allowed us to compare data more effectively. Key findings included the fact that initial volunteer management steps, such as interviewing and screening, are being consistently used, and that volunteers wanted specific aspects of tutoring activities to be refined further.

The benefits of using web surveys for ongoing evaluation include cost-effectiveness, the ability to reach a highly mobile volunteer base, ease of data analysis, and the ability to track volunteers over time for trend analysis. However, this technology presents important challenges, including limited ability to work in multiple languages, accessibility barriers, and high volumes of email that may compete for respondents' attention.

We will continue our web survey in spring 2005, with a more detailed outcome matrix to track learner progress from a volunteer perspective. Details will be available in summer 2005.

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¹ The author wishes to acknowledge the Canada Volunteerism Initiative for funding the online evaluation for 2003–2004, and Melanie Valcin of Frontier College for her tireless work on the project.

Empowerment Evaluation's Technological Tools of the Trade

David Fetterman, from the Schools of Medicine and Education at Stanford University, describes how technological tools can be integrated into the practice of empowerment evaluation.

In less than a decade, empowerment evaluation has become a global phenomenon, reaching the four corners of the earth. Empowerment evaluation has also evolved: Definitions have been refined, principles have emerged, and practice has improved. Technology has been an integral part of the development of empowerment evaluation; the two have evolved side by side.¹

Empowerment evaluation treats technology and its tools as more than simple mechanical devices or novelty gadgets. As described in this discussion, technological tools can greatly facilitate the conduct of empowerment evaluation at critical junctures in the evaluation process.

Empowerment Evaluation in Brief

Empowerment evaluation helps communities use self-evaluation and reflection to help themselves and improve their programs. In this type of evaluation, communities conduct their own evaluations while an external evaluator coaches or helps facilitate the process (Fetterman, 2001). The approach is guided by a set of 10 principles: (1) improvement, (2) community ownership, (3) inclusion, (4) democratic participation, (5) social justice, (6) community knowledge, (7) evidence-based strategies, (8) capacity building, (9) organizational learning, and (10) accountability (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2004).

The empowerment evaluation process involves three steps:²

1. *Establishing the mission.* The evaluator serves as a coach or critical friend, helping each community establish its mission or vision.
2. *Taking stock.* The evaluator helps the community take stock or assess where it is in its efforts. This serves as the community's baseline assessment.
3. *Planning for the future.* A plan is created for the future, with specific goals, strategies, and evidence. Traditional evaluation methods, such as interviews and surveys, are used cyclically to test whether strategies are working and to allow the community to make midcourse corrections. The community then conducts another assessment of its activities and compares findings to the initial baseline assessment to measure growth or change over time.

Using Technological Tools in Empowerment Evaluation

The principles and the three-step model help guide the use of technological tools in empowerment evaluation practice. The

¹ See Fetterman (2001) for a chapter on the use of the Internet to disseminate empowerment evaluation worldwide.

² See www.stanford.edu/~davidf/empowermentevaluation.html for more details and free guides.

principle of inclusion, for example, might recommend the use of virtual conferences and videoconferences to include geographically remote groups during all three evaluation steps.³ During steps two and three, the capacity-building principle reminds the evaluator to provide community members with an opportunity to collect their own data, through online surveys, for example. The accountability principle guides community members to hold each other accountable for reaching specific standards or delivering specific results, products, or outcomes. Outcomes might be documented with QuickTime videos, digital pictures, and other technological tools with tremendous face validity.⁴

The discussion below describes in more detail some of these and other tools that can be used to facilitate empowerment evaluations. Examples are drawn from empowerment evaluations of the \$15 million Hewlett-Packard Digital Village Program,⁵ the Hewlett Foundation's \$5 million One East Palo Alto Project, and the Arkansas Department of Education's Rural Delta Academically Distressed School Districts Project (see homepage.mac.com/profdavidf for more details).⁶

- *Digital movies.* The entire empowerment evaluation process can be captured with digital pictures and digital videotape, and then used to produce movies that are placed on a community's website and burned as DVDs for large group presentations (Fetterman, 2002). The videos can be used as a form of documentation for funders concerning group or collaborative activity; provide transparency for the larger community by sharing what is being done and said; function as a reminder of group commitments; and serve as a marketing tool for additional funding.
- *Videoconferencing.* Videoconferencing can be used to share data, solve problems, exchange lessons learned, and build a bond between site personnel and the collaborating evaluation team. For example, one project's goal was to enable videoconferencing from an American Indian reservation to remote sites. The videoconference itself represented documentation of the

³ Individuals without access to these tools are not excluded. Efforts are made to introduce technological tools when possible. The telephone, fax, and face-to-face communication are used when technology becomes a barrier.

⁴ Face validity is the extent to which videos, photos, etc., appear to provide valid documentation of a given outcome.

⁵ This project's aim is to help three communities leap across the digital divide: one African American urban community in the northeast, a Latino and African American low-income community in northern California, and 18 American Indian tribes in California. Projects included distributing laptops in schools, providing community centers with computers and Internet access, helping people grow small businesses, and developing web-based tools to enhance community access to local resources.

⁶ Special thanks are extended to Bess Stephens, Hewlett-Packard's vice president and global director for corporate philanthropy and education, and Dr. Charity Smith, assistant director of the Educational Accountability Section of the Arkansas Department of Education, for their support and guidance on these projects.

group's accomplishments. Internet videoconferencing programs, such as CU-SeeMe, iVisit, and iChatAV (with an iSight camera/microphone), are free or inexpensive, with no long-distance charges or expensive equipment purchases (Fetterman, 1998).

- *Web page, virtual conference, and file sharing.* Empowerment evaluations are conducted locally. However, they typically require collaboration with external evaluators and other communities. Web pages, virtual conference spaces, and file sharing can facilitate communication across remote sites and constituencies. For example, in a hospital-based empowerment evaluation, health care providers were often pulled out of evaluation meetings for emergencies or were unable to attend important workshops because of previously scheduled activities. A web page and virtual conference space enabled nurses and physicians to keep up with transcribed mission statements, taking stock of ratings and dialogues, and the community's plans for the future.

For the Hewlett-Packard Digital Village Program, the Stanford evaluation team maintained reports, digital photographs, and QuickTime videos in a virtual conference space on the Internet. The file-sharing capacity of this space enabled communities to draft, review, and approve reports (Fetterman, 1998). It provided around-the-clock accessibility of community-generated information and enhanced trust in the process.

- *Online surveys.* Online surveys are invaluable to empowerment evaluation. Communities have the capacity to survey large groups rapidly and inexpensively. The community helps determine the survey's purpose, specifies the topics, and recommends specific wording. The evaluator or coach helps refine the survey's questions and logical flow. Community members

Related Resources

Fetterman, D. M. (1997). **Videoconferencing over the Internet.** *Qualitative Health Research*, 7(1), 54–163.

Fetterman, D. M., & Wandersman, A. (Eds.). (2004). *Empowerment evaluation principles in practice.* New York: Guilford Publications. This new book, edited by David Fetterman and Abe Wandersman, represents the most current thinking about empowerment evaluation. The principles of empowerment evaluation are made explicit, ranging from inclusion to accountability. In addition, large-scale case examples are highlighted, including the \$15 million Hewlett-Packard-sponsored Digital Village Program mentioned in this article. Another case example, also mentioned, demonstrates how empowerment evaluation has been used to improve test scores in academically distressed schools in Arkansas. The book is fundamentally about improvement and capacity building as people learn how to help themselves through evaluation.

complete the survey online, saving mailing costs, data entry time and expense, and sorting time. Surveys are automatically entered into a database and sorted, providing the community with frequencies and bar graphs instantaneously (Fetterman, 1998).

- *Picture and text messaging.* Cell phones have the capacity to send pictures and text messages, and can be used to provide information about an ongoing problem or to document achievements. For example, one Arkansas Delta School District evaluation-team member sent a picture of students roaming the hallways during class time. This single photograph documented problems with student discipline and administrative follow-through.

Digital photographs captured and transmitted over cell phones can also document program accomplishments. For example, a picture of a community-based organization distributing laptops to students and teachers was worth a thousand words. It documented one of the community strategies that emerged from the empowerment evaluation's plans for the future. Ease of access and use, and affordability, make camera phones an indispensable technological tool.

Although this discussion focused on the use of technological tools in empowerment evaluation, these tools can be applied to almost any evaluation. They are not a panacea and, like the dot-coms, require a healthy dose of skepticism and sensitivity. However, technology has the power to unleash tremendous untapped evaluation potential. That potential is restricted only by the limits of our imagination.

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WIDE: Using Networked Technologies to Promote Professional Development

Stone Wiske and David Eddy Spicer, from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, describe the school's Wide-Scale Interactive Development for Educators program—also known as WIDE World—which uses new technologies to promote professional development.

At WIDE World our mission is to generate and spread useable, research-based knowledge to improve teaching and learning. WIDE provides professional development to educators, using technology to disseminate research-based approaches to informing and improving classroom practice. Participants in WIDE's online courses are from 65 countries and consist primarily of classroom teachers, curriculum developers, professional development staff, and administrators of K–12 schools.

To improve the performance of those enrolled in its online courses, WIDE explores the potential of networked technologies to create the sustained support necessary for true understanding in content areas such as learner-centered assessment. Our teaching approach follows a *framework for understanding*, which has five principles:

1. Organize learning around a generative topic
2. Make goals for learning clear and explicit
3. Organize learning that actively involves participants in applying knowledge
4. Build in opportunities for ongoing feedback to gauge progress
5. Engage learners in reflective, collaborative learning communities

WIDE uses networked technologies in several ways to increase educators' *performances of understanding*, meaning the application of knowledge in their everyday work. WIDE's application of technology, as outlined below, also fosters communities of learners, facilitating dialogue, goal sharing, exchange of resources, collaboration, and constructive feedback.

1. *Study groups with coaches.* Courses cluster participants into online study groups of roughly 10 individual learners or school-based teams of 3 to 5 learners. At first the newness of the technology and the absence of face-to-face contact might engender, as one participant described, the feeling of “shooting an arrow into the dark night sky.” But over time and with the help of a coach who draws them in, answers their questions, and promotes fruitful exchange among groups, participants come to feel they are part of an intimate learning community. Responsiveness, encouragement, and practice all help participants overcome any initial apprehensions they may have.
2. *Asynchronous design with structured cycles of learning.* Courses consist of six sessions, with each session spread over a 2-week period. This online, asynchronous design allows flexibility in the timing and location of participation. People from different time zones, as well as people working in the same setting but with limited time, can interact with one another. WIDE participants who are currently working with their own students can acquire knowledge, apply it in their own classrooms, and

report on it—all in the span of one session. To take advantage of peer learning in the networked online environment, learners are often asked to pose a question about their own project by a certain date, then encouraged to give feedback on others' projects by a later date within one 2-week session.

3. *The written word supports reflection.* Active course participation calls for written responses. The act of putting ideas into writing allows educators to contemplate, articulate, and review their ideas in ways that face-to-face discussions might not. It also makes their work visible to the entire study group, which promotes peer learning.
4. *Online tools.* Threaded discussion tools make individual reflections accessible to all course participants and allow them to give feedback on each other's work. A Collaborative Curriculum Development Tool (CCDT) structures planning and enables participants to modify and co-create lesson plans online by saving prior versions and allowing select colleagues to access and contribute ideas via a message board. The CCDT also helps learners organize related work, including web links, handouts, and other relevant documents, all in one place.
5. *Ongoing networks and resources.* Through the WIDE World online community, graduates continue to stay connected to one another well beyond course participation. They also continue to have access to the online tool, CCDT, for curriculum planning.

WIDE conducts online course surveys for formative evaluation purposes and for assessing short-term outcomes such as understanding course content. We are working to embed evaluation into the design of courses so that learning tools can simultaneously serve as evaluation tools. In addition, we are planning a staggered-start evaluation, in which subsequent cohorts of course participants serve as a baseline comparison group for currently enrolled participants. We will conduct observations and interviews to assess continued knowledge application in the classroom. Because we recognize that long-term outcomes are subject to broader influences, such as the institutional culture of schools, we are shifting both marketing and research activities to include schools and school networks as an audience.

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Bringing Together Information Technology and Professional Development to Transform the Settlement Sector

Etagegnhue Woldeab and the Information and Technology team from the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants describe two web-based tools that facilitate the work of immigrant-serving organizations in Ontario, Canada, and help ease the transition of newcomers to that country.

One of the primary challenges for social service organizations is how to move beyond basic access to the Internet and other technologies to mobilizing knowledge in a strategic way for improving services, advocating change, building communities, and transforming society. The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), a nonprofit collective of immigrant-serving agencies, is at the forefront of using technology in strategic and proactive ways to improve the lives of refugees and immigrants. Members of OCASI include more than 160 community-based organizations in cities and regions across Ontario. Since 1978, OCASI and its member agencies have been instrumental in assisting tens of thousands of new immigrants in the settlement process each year.

To assist newcomers effectively, settlement agencies require quick, easy access to information and resources. OCASI plays a key role in promoting the use of technology and increasing the level of computerization within immigrant-serving agencies. With funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, OCASI is engaged in ongoing development and maintenance of the Settlement.org websites, two web-based tools that serve as portals to a wide range of up-to-date, comprehensive information and resources for refugees and immigrants settling in Ontario and for settlement professionals serving newcomers.

Settlement.org/At Work

The first tool, Settlement.org/At Work, acts as both a portal for settlement service professionals and a gateway to professional development opportunities. At Work's goals are as follows:

- Improve the quality of information and services provided to newcomers
- Strengthen the knowledge and expertise of agencies and individual workers
- Increase the productivity of agencies and individual workers
- Enhance communication and collaboration within the newcomer sector

At Work meets these objectives by providing an electronic community where agencies and workers can post announcements, make contacts, discuss current issues or projects, find answers to frequently asked questions, and access a database of online documents. While the main target audience remains settlement workers and other staff in the immigrant-service sector, a strong secondary target group includes all social service workers who provide services to newcomers.

As a professional development tool, At Work has enormous power and practical advantage. It enables member agencies to

research issues and access timely sector-related resources and professional development opportunities. Before meeting with a client, for example, a settlement worker could log on to At Work to review referral and resource information needed for the meeting. Afterward, if the worker wanted to seek advice or share concerns with colleagues, he or she could return to At Work and post questions to the discussion forums or obtain training information to improve his or her capacity to deal with similar problems.

Settlement.org for Newcomers

The second web-based tool, Settlement.org for Newcomers, primarily focuses on newcomers, although it also serves a wider audience that includes settlement professionals and the general public. The site offers an array of information: advice on accessing professions and trades, finding a place to live, obtaining social insurance and health cards, and more. It also features general introductions to key topics identified by newcomers and settlement workers. These introductions help create a context for the information and terms that newcomers and settlement workers deal with every day.

Discussion Forums

The discussion forums at both sites deserve special mention because they have emerged as essential components. The initial design has evolved into a highly interactive, publicly accessible resource. Content is driven by the needs of users, who are actively involved in contributing to the knowledge base. Participation rates have soared, and, at Settlement.org for Newcomers, the discussion forums have become one of the site's most sought-after features.

Monitoring and evaluation, as tools for continuous improvement, have contributed greatly to the success of the discussion forums. OCASI carefully monitors the quality and reliability of information exchanged through the forums, paying particular attention to accuracy of information, timeliness of postings, and responsiveness to users. Due to this commitment to quality, the forums have become a trusted and valued resource for newcomers to Ontario.

Settlement.org websites are driven by users and by effective content partnerships, both within and outside of the immigrant-service sector. They are overseen by a community steering committee and rely on continuous feedback and surveys of site users to ensure relevance of content and delivery model. With over 2,000 members, Settlement.org's popular discussion area is a testament to OCASI's responsiveness to users.

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A conversation with Jonny Morell

Jonathan (Jonny) Morell is an organizational psychologist who researches and writes about how organizations change and about how their internal dynamics are influenced by political, social, economic, and technological environments. Much of his research and evaluation concerns the nexus of business processes and information technology. Dr. Morell is editor-in-chief of the international journal *Evaluation and Program Planning* and is on the editorial boards of the *International Journal of Electronic Business* and the *International Journal of Services Technology Management*. He is also a senior policy analyst at the Altarum Institute, a nonprofit institution whose mission is to promote sustainable societal well-being by employing new knowledge and decision support tools to solve complex systems problems in the healthcare, national security, and energy, environment, and transportation sectors. Dr. Morell holds a Ph.D. in psychology from Northwestern University.

Q What contributions can technology make to evaluation practice?

A First, we need to define the term *technology*. Here, I am thinking of technologies based on electronics, networking, and information processing. These include personal data assistants, cell phones with cameras, computers, global positioning systems, and many others. The common threads are information capture, processing, and transmission, all fueled in large measure by electronics. Technology, in this sense, is therefore a collection of tools, each useful for a different purpose, each to be drawn on as needed.

I see the value of technology on a two-dimensional grid (see the figure). The x-axis represents *efficiency*—doing the same thing you always did, but better, faster, and cheaper. The y-axis represents *innovation*—applying technology to address questions you did not realize could be addressed or that you did not realize even existed.

Most people begin somewhere on the middle of the efficiency axis and very low on the innovation axis. They see that technology can make them more efficient but not that it can help them innovate. As they move along the efficiency axis and become more experienced with technology, however, they see new possibilities and tend to move farther along on the innovation axis as well.

Evaluators need to appreciate what technology will allow them to do. The greater the appreciation, the more they can innovate. Take online surveys, for example. At first blush, they seem useful because they are efficient. They allow automated data entry, fewer mailings, lower cost in reaching respondents, greater ease

in tracking them, and so on. Those are the reasons that first drew me to the technology. Soon after, I came to see that the technology would also allow me to ask a new class of questions.

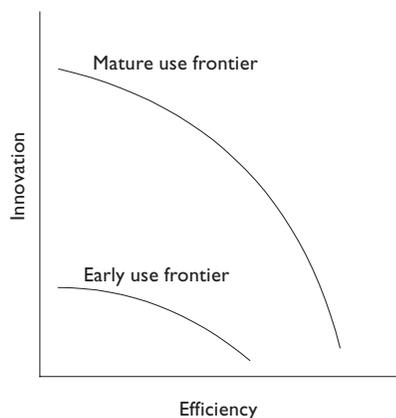
By way of example, I'm involved in a study of how various organizations use six continuous improvement methodologies. In the course of this study, I realized that online surveys made it possible to build a novel (to me, at least) kind of "if-then" question. In this design, if a respondent says "yes" to using *any* three of the six continuous improvement methods, the survey then returns a specific set of questions. If the respondent indicates using two methods or fewer, the survey returns yet a different set of questions. Without computer-assisted technology I never would have considered this line of questioning.

While that example involved data collection and processing, the possibilities also extend to evaluation design and interpretation. Technologies like the Internet, the World Wide Web, collaboration technologies, and conference phoning extend possibilities for collaboration and participation among stakeholders, evaluators, and anyone else who has something useful to contribute. The efficiency such technology offers is obvious. As the cost of telecommunications decreases, accessibility increases. More people can be involved without having to travel and

without having to be involved all at the same time. And consider what can happen as such technology leads to greater opportunities to get stakeholders involved in interpreting data or agreeing on critical evaluation questions. The possibilities go beyond "faster and cheaper"; they make our work participatory in ways that would be difficult or impossible without technology.

Modeling and simulation technology offers yet another ex-

Relationship Between Efficiency and Innovation in Technology Application



ample. This is a specialty, requiring special software and a lot of expertise. While I am not an expert, I can see many possible applications to evaluation. For instance, observing a model or simulation can provide insight into how a system is working, even if the model does not reflect the “true” internal operations of the system. Also, it is the only way I know to see the effects of feedback loops and interactions between parts in the system, as these involve nonlinearities that do not show up in the normal logic models¹ we construct.

That said, models that are practical for us to build may not work well enough to provide useful guidance. And, models that would be useful might require a greater degree of program specification than we can muster. Even with these reservations, I know evaluators are experimenting with using this technology. I am motivated to do this, too, because I am convinced that our logic models are much too simple to explain the realities we deal with, and I am intensely curious as to whether modeling and simulation technologies can help.

Most of these examples have a quantitative focus, but more qualitative topics are relevant as well. One example is the virtual focus group, in which individuals can participate simultaneously from different locations or via asynchronous online bulletin boards that are active for several days and accessible at times most convenient for participants.

Q What methodological issues or cautions apply when using technology for evaluation?

A There is no single answer. It depends on the technology being used. For example, using the Internet to conduct virtual focus groups requires a different set of skills than doing computer-assisted telephone interviewing. But several pieces of general advice are important. First, understand that without deep knowledge of a specific technology, one can get into trouble. I speak from experience. I used an online survey package for a project that required quite a lot of if-then question branching. Because many people had input into many drafts of the survey, questions were revised numerous times. As we made revisions, I discovered that the branching logic² of the survey package was tied to the precise wording of the questions. For instance, changing *important* to *critical* in a question’s wording required re-specifying the branching logic. I never even thought about checking this when selecting the survey package.

We assume technology can do various things that make sense to us. Sometimes we are right; sometimes we are not. As a general rule, assume the worst. My definition of an expert is someone for

whom a given problem is routine. Get expert advice (or become an expert yourself) on the precise technologies you plan to use.

The second piece of advice is to remember the basics. No matter what the technology, the basics will always be important. Reach appropriate stakeholders. Get representative samples. Use reliable measures. Attend to the logic of causal inference. Understand program logic. All of this is, and always will be, the foundation of good evaluation.

Finally, beware of technology’s seductiveness: It can be wasteful. When all is said and done, technology is just a tool. Like all tools, it is value neutral. Technology can make for much better evaluation, but when inappropriately or ineffectively applied, it can also make evaluation worse. We may have to use technology because our clients expect us to, or because fads make it hard to publish if we don’t. But we should be realistic about when we need technology and for what purpose.



Jonny Morell

Q How should evaluators think about the opportunities that technology offers?

A When people think of technology they tend to think of data manipulation and analysis. A broader way to look at the use of technology is to assume that it may be useful at any point in the evaluation life cycle, from planning through design, implementation, analysis, and reporting. The challenge lies in appreciating the possibilities along that cycle.

At the planning stage, technology affects methodological choices. For instance, easy access to secondary data may influence choices about the need for primary data collection. With respect to implementation, consider any multisite evaluation where different people are doing evaluation in different locations but in a common way. Technology can be used to manage the various evaluation teams or to exchange useful experiences from each location.

As for reporting, consider the example of performance monitoring. Before, data could be collected and reported only at relatively long intervals (e.g., monthly, quarterly, yearly). Data were often useless if the reporting interval exceeded the timeframe for corrective action. Now, technology offers the opportunity to tailor reporting to specific information needs. And, of course, the simple ability to post a report to the Web can have enormous consequences in terms of revealing findings to the public.

For more details on Dr. Morell’s work see his digital scrapbook, at www.jamorell.com.

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¹ A logic model illustrates how an initiative’s activities connect to the outcomes it is trying to achieve.

² *Branching logic* refers to the decision rules built into a questionnaire that determine how a respondent moves from one question to the next.

Youth and technology are like a hand and glove—a natural fit. Inspired by conversations with Time Warner Inc. Office of Corporate Responsibility, this Special Feature section offers a set of articles on how youth programs are using media and video production to engage youth in participatory evaluation, and the challenges and benefits of using technology in youth programming and other settings.

Girls Make the Message: Community Action Through the Girls Incorporated Lens

Faedra Lazar Weiss and Deborah Aubert of Girls Incorporated¹ describe how young women are using video production technology for community needs assessment and action.²

On a typical day a young woman may be confronted with messages from numerous media—radio, television, newspaper, World Wide Web, billboards—before she even gets to school. How will she process this barrage of information? To help young women acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to think critically about media messages—particularly with respect to portrayals of girls and women—Girls Incorporated has launched Girls Inc. Media Literacy. The program is a revised and expanded version of Girls Re-Cast TV, which was first implemented in 1995. The new program aims to teach young women to critique media messages creatively through experiential activities and through the use of media that they generate themselves.

Girls Inc. Media Literacy includes five age-appropriate components for girls and young women ages 6–18: Media and Me, for girls ages 6–8; Media Smarts, for girls ages 9–11; Take a Second Look, for girls ages 12–14; Girls Get the Message, for girls ages 15–18, and the program’s fifth, culminating component, Girls Make the Message, for girls ages 14–18.

In this last component, young women learn digital video production skills in community action projects. As they work together to identify issues they care about, conduct research, and take action to address those issues, these young women realize their own power and affirm their rights and responsibilities as active citizens in their community. Through implementing a community action project, they expand their capacity to contribute and bring about positive change.

In the preproduction stage, small groups of participants choose to focus on one issue important both to themselves and to the local community. (The association between teen-on-teen violence and gang membership is one example.) Participants then learn and practice storyboarding, camera, audio, lighting, and interview skills before venturing out to videotape interviews with

community members about the chosen issue.

In postproduction, participants learn and use digital video editing skills, such as importing footage; editing clips; adding sound effects, visual transitions, titles, and credits; and exporting work into various formats for exhibitions, including public screenings and web-based presentations. The same techniques and processes are used to craft public service announcements expressing each group’s point of view about their topic. At the public screenings, groups share their persuasive community interviews and public service announcements with local notables and the general community.

Throughout the production process, the young women create relationships with interviewees, local media, and unsung as well as acknowledged community leaders. At the same time, the participants, individually and in groups, build portfolios that document changes in their knowledge, skills and confidence—both in video production and as change agents in their community. Portfolios include reflections on program activities, video journals, and certification to use a video camera—based on a comprehensive proficiency test—as well as worksheets, video clips, and similar records of work in progress.

Participants gain a lot in Girls Make the Message; we hope that the community gains even more. Publication of press releases, attendance at the screenings by public figures, ongoing media attention to the issue at hand, and above all, community action inspired by the participants’ videos, are the true measures that young women are making a difference.

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¹ Girls Incorporated is a nonprofit organization that inspires all girls to be “strong, smart, and bold.” [This is Girls Incorporated’s mission statement. See Girls Incorporated. (2003). *Girls Inc. annual report 2003*. New York: Author. Available at www.girlsinc.org/ic/content/annual_report_2003.pdf (Acrobat file).]

² This project is supported by a grant from the Time Warner Inc. Office of Corporate Responsibility.

Information Technology and Outcome Measurement at Girls Incorporated

PeiYao Chen discusses how information technology is used in outcome measurement at Girls Incorporated.¹

With local roots dating to 1864 and national status since 1945, Girls Inc. has long responded to the changing needs of girls through research-based programs and public education efforts that empower girls to understand, value, and assert their rights. In 2002, Girls Inc. was able to reach 685,000 girls through its affiliates, website, and educational publications.

Girls Inc. has a history of committing resources to outcome measurement in order to provide evidence of the effectiveness of its programs and to help continuously improve its work. An example of this commitment is the Affiliate Results Project, which uses information technology to support and coordinate the efforts of Girls Inc. affiliates in measuring and reporting outcomes for girls. Launched in the fall of 2003, the project has two main components. The first is the development of a national evaluation system to document changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes of participants in specific Girls Inc. identity programs. Identity programs are research-based programs created by Girls Inc. that focus on science, math and technology, health and sexuality, economic and financial literacy, sports skills, leadership and advocacy, and media literacy for girls ages 6 to 18.

In the past, Girls Inc. has included sample pretests and posttests (i.e., measures of participants' knowledge, skills, and attitudes before and after participation) with each program curriculum, and affiliates have adapted these for their own reporting, to funders and others. These tests, however, were not used for national data collection. With the development of a computerized, primarily quantitative, national system, affiliates will be able to measure and submit outcomes to the national office, which will supply them with analyses and comparisons for their use.

The project team, composed of researchers and program technology specialists, first worked with affiliate volunteers to simplify and refine the existing pre/posttests for selected identity programs. These tests are then mounted onto an already developed, secure, and confidential website, Girlhood, which is connected to a structured query language (SQL) server.² Once participants are registered, affiliate staff members schedule the dates on which the pre/posttests will be available for individual girls to complete online. The data are then transmitted directly to the national office for analysis, and results are reported back to the affiliate.

Recognizing that girls are the experts in evaluating and improving the community in which they participate, we are partnering with four affiliates to launch Girls Study Girls Inc., a participatory evaluation that engages girls ages 12–18 as evaluators, to explore the meaning and impact of Girls Inc. and uncover ways the Girls Inc. community could be improved. This second component of the Affiliate Results Project focuses on developing primarily qualitative tools for girls to measure and report outcomes from participating in comprehensive Girls Inc. programming, and identifying key factors that account for those outcomes. This endeavor is guided by our theory of change,³ which posits that by creating a community that fosters a sense of belonging, safety, and responsibility, Girls Inc. empowers girls to be strong, smart, and bold, and to gain competence and confidence by exercising leadership skills, confronting gender barriers, and engaging in decisions that affect their lives—in short, to achieve their full potential.

At each affiliate, between 10 and 20 girls will be recruited to receive training on research and evaluation, including lessons on concepts, methods, and processes. With the support of staff members, girls will use photography and interviews to collect data to answer the research questions they have created. In the data collection process, they will use a secure and confidential website to file and organize their data and share their work with team members if they so choose. When the project is completed, they will present their photos and findings through Girls Inc. websites, printed materials, and public exhibits to which families, friends, colleagues, and people in the community will be invited to learn about the research.

While the two components deal with different types of evaluation methods and outcome information (quantitative pre/posttests versus qualitative participatory evaluation), in both cases the use of information technology will help streamline the evaluation process, enhance outcome data management, and promote greater information sharing that will lead to program improvement.

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¹ Girls Incorporated is a nonprofit organization that inspires all girls to be “strong, smart, and bold.” [This is Girls Incorporated’s mission statement. See Girls Incorporated. (2003). *Girls Inc. annual report 2003*. New York: Author. Available at www.girlsinc.org/ic/content/annual_report_2003.pdf (Acrobat file).]

² Structured Query Language is a language used for entering and requesting information from a database.

³ A program’s theory of change explicitly articulates how the activities provided lead to the desired results by linking service receipt to intermediate changes (such as changes in attitudes or in-program behaviors) to short- and longer-term outcomes in participants.

A Lens on Learning: Teaching Youth to Produce Documentaries

Steven Goodman, director of the Educational Video Center and author of Teaching Youth Media, describes a program that teaches media literacy and documentary production skills to youth in New York City, with an eye toward fostering civic engagement.

Four high school students walk down a midtown-Manhattan street, outfitted with a video camera and other filmmaking equipment. Each has a different role to play: interviewer, scout, sound operator, and cameraperson. On the third attempt, the designated scout succeeds in bringing a passerby over to the crew. The interviewer introduces the group, explaining that they are students making a documentary about homeless youth in New York City. The sound operator slips the headphones on and nods, signaling that everything is okay. The cameraperson flips open the viewfinder, zooms in, and pushes the record button. The tape starts rolling.

These students are experiencing their first shoot on the street as part of the Educational Video Center's (EVC) documentary workshop. EVC is an independent, nonprofit organization that has worked since 1984 to teach documentary production and media literacy to students while nurturing their intellectual development and civic engagement. Participants come from high schools all across the city; they spend four afternoons each week earning academic credit by collaboratively researching, shooting, and editing a documentary on a social issue of immediate importance to them.

In the 20 years EVC has been offering documentary workshops, students have investigated a broad range of public problems, including the juvenile justice system, AIDS, race relations, equity in schools, foster care, and environmental pollution. In each case, EVC's methodology has successfully engaged some of the most hard-to-reach youth. Its success derives in part from

empowering youth by putting video technology into their hands and teaching them to use the visual, sound, and text languages of the media to document their world. Youth learn to operate digital video cameras, and about editing and audio technology. More important, they learn to take a critical, questioning approach to the taken-for-granted problems in their communities and engage with the individuals and grassroots organizations working to improve them. In choosing a subject they care deeply about and presenting it to public audiences, youth develop a sense of their own power as learners and cultural producers.

EVC's methodology can be described by three of its overarching principles:

1. *Students construct knowledge through sustained and collaborative social inquiry.* Learning to ask questions is at the heart of the documentary-making process. Youth learn to conduct interviews and other research in their communities and make sense of their findings by editing them into a coherent story.

2. *Students present their work as a product for a public audience, with a public purpose.* Students edit together all their tapes into a final, completed product that they present to the public. The school and community screenings and the question-and-answer sessions that follow are opportunities for students to present new perspectives, make marginal voices heard, change ways of thinking and even, in some cases, move audiences to action.

3. *The process of student learning is publicly assessed through portfolio roundtables.* Throughout the course of their documentary project, students collect a variety of records, which help them reflect on their intellectual, social, and artistic growth. These records may include journal entries, taped interviews, edit plans, rough-cut edits, research notes, interview questions, tape logs, and phone logs. Students then present this portfolio at a roundtable comprised of members of the community, which may include parents, students, teachers, interviewees, researchers, producers, and artists.

During the roundtables, students refer to rubrics of criteria for skill development and present several drafts of their work to demonstrate their learning over time in various skill areas. Guests are asked not to assign a grade but to look carefully at the work, acknowledge the learning that is evident, and encourage deeper learning through constructive feedback.

This approach to assessment fosters an intergenerational, reflective, and democratic community committed to using media and technology for learning and social change.

To learn more about EVC's library of documentaries and publications, see their online catalog, at www.evc.org/screening/catalog.html.

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Related Resources

Butler, A., & Zaslow, E. (2004). *Voice, self, and community through video production: An evaluation of the long-term impact of the Educational Video Center's youth documentary program*. Unpublished manuscript.

Carini, P. F. (1987). *On value in education*. New York: The City College Workshop Center.

Goodman, S. (2003). *Teaching youth media: A critical guide to literacy, video production and social change*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Goodman, S., & Tally, B. (1993, August/September). *The tape's great, but what did they learn? The Independent Film and Video Monthly*, 30–33.

YouthLearn: Using Technology to Create Meaningful Learning Experiences for Youth

Tony Streit, from Education Development Center, discusses the challenges and potential rewards of using technology to enhance learning in both formal and informal settings.

One of the greatest challenges educators face is not how to teach basic technology skills but rather how to use technology to develop thoughtful learning experiences for young people. It is fairly easy to implement software-based learning, where youth are plugged into computer-directed activities and experiences. A more difficult task is promoting technology-infused experiences that take youth beyond access and simple application of tools to creative experimentation and innovation.

A similar challenge for educators is facilitating the development of critical thinking skills as they pertain to new technology. The Internet and the multimedia capacity of the latest hardware and software offer youth the opportunity to explore the meanings behind media-generated images and messages. Truly literate young people in this age need the ability to decipher this type of content and to recognize bias. Effective technology learning experiences help young people to become smart, healthy consumers as well as innovative producers of media content.

YouthLearn, an independent project based at Education Development Center,¹ works to support educators as they integrate technology into their curricula, so that they may deepen their work as facilitators of learning and provide information-rich, experiential learning activities for young people. Working with practitioners in a range of settings, from formal classroom environments to community-based youth programs, YouthLearn offers professional development, research into best practices, and consultation on effective program design.

Building Capacity to Use Technology for Learning

At the core of YouthLearn's work is the belief that learning for young people must be experiential—relevant to their lives, their families, and their communities—allowing them to create and explore as they learn independently and in collaboration with others. Technology functions best as a tool for learning when it is used to support and extend project-based, experiential learning.

YouthLearn encourages educators to locate themselves and their programs on a continuum from passive to active learning, and to chart steps for strengthening their programs. A project-based approach gives young people the opportunity to engage in a learning process that frequently involves collectively creating and presenting a product to an audience. Technology tools assist in each phase of the process, from research and planning to production and exhibition, helping youth develop technology skills as they are applied within the project. This integrated approach

¹ Education Development Center (EDC) manages more than 350 projects in 40 countries to advance learning and healthy development. EDC's work includes early childhood development, K–12 education, community development, and learning technologies, among others. The YouthLearn Initiative was originally created by the Morino Institute and is now a project of EDC's Education, Employment & Community (EEC) program division. www.youthlearn.org.

enables programs to match infrastructure to organizational capacity while offering opportunities for community engagement and youth leadership.

Laying the Foundation

Without buy-in and vision at the management level, technology initiatives in schools and community organizations will have limited impact. Organizational leaders need to understand the demands that technology places on their staffs and programs. This understanding, or lack thereof, often influences how technology is deployed. For example, while many schools and agencies have fairly sophisticated labs with networked workstations and high-speed access, these settings are not always conducive to hands-on learning or to integrating technology into other activities. A particular site might be better served by applying wireless technology and portable equipment so that educators have tools at the ready. It is important for organizational leaders to help educators build a technological capacity that complements their program needs rather than trying to get the most technology bang for the buck. And, beyond infrastructure, professional development is often sadly lacking, when in fact it is frequently the most important investment.

Training Implications

A key shift that needs to take place in the training of educators is the development of communities of practice that support the ongoing, day-in, day-out exploration of methods and best practices. For that reason, a number of YouthLearn services are centered on creating peer networks and allowing colleagues to collectively identify and address their professional development needs. YouthLearn has an ever-growing online community of more than 2,000 educators, both in the U.S. and abroad, who connect via a discussion list to share ideas, insights, and opinions. A complimentary newsletter and weblog culls research, articles, and opportunities that support this community's needs. Additionally, YouthLearn's website offers detailed information about technology integration, teaching techniques, curriculum design, and youth development principles. With these kinds of services at its base, YouthLearn builds tailored training activities to fit the needs of specific audiences, often using a blended-learning approach where face-to-face training is complemented by online e-learning activities.

Regardless of the delivery method, the application of new knowledge should be a primary outcome of training. For educators, training should mean advancement of skills, experimentation with new tools, and discovery of new technology-enhanced approaches that will truly empower them and their young people.

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The Child Trends DataBank: An Evolving Resource for Policymakers, Researchers, and Practitioners

Brett Brown, Kristin Moore, and Sharon Bzostek describe the Child Trends DataBank, an online “one-stop shop” for the latest data and research on indicators of child and youth well-being.

In the last decade, social indicators have become indispensable tools in the world of child, youth, and family policy. Uses range from needs assessment to goals tracking, accountability, self-assessment, and, under some circumstances, evaluation. In response to the increased reliance on social indicators, Child Trends has developed the DataBank,¹ an online one-stop resource offering the latest data and research on over 85 indicators of child and youth well-being.

The indicators are offered in a consistent and accessible format designed to meet the needs of diverse audiences, including practitioners, policymakers, researchers, journalists, advocates, students, and the general public. Areas covered include health status and behaviors; social and emotional development; income and work; education; basic demographic characteristics; and the family, peer, and community environments in which children develop. New indicators are being added regularly in each area. In the 2 years since the DataBank was launched, its popularity has grown steadily: The site now averages well over 30,000 visitors each month.

Continuous Updates

The DataBank features national estimates, which include trend data and, when available, separate estimates across key population subgroups. Data are presented in several formats, including tables, figures, and descriptive text. All indicators are completely updated within a week of the public release of new estimates, assuring users that they can always find the most recent estimates available. Though the site focuses on national data, estimates at the state, local, and international levels are also identified, and links to them provided when available. These estimates are paired with brief descriptions of the indicators' importance, written in plain language and grounded in the best available research. This research is also updated on a regular basis, and citations and links to relevant research articles and reports are also offered, for those who want to dig deeper on particular points.

In addition, Child Trends has recently added a new feature, What Works for Child and Youth Development, to most of the indicators on the DataBank. What Works is a summary of available research on existing practices intended to affect a given outcome (e.g., teen birth rates, youth violence, and childhood obesity). The new feature consists of easy-to-use interactive tables that link to relevant evaluation research. It draws heavily on recently completed, comprehensive literature reviews produced by Child Trends that examine the research evidence on key factors and

programs that may promote positive development among young children and youth. Like the indicators, these reviews will also be updated over time.

Easy Access and Multiple Formats

Information can be viewed online and can also be downloaded and printed as portable document format (PDF) files. Figures are in JPEG image format and can be loaded directly into the Microsoft PowerPoint presentation graphics program and other software for further use.

To help users find what they need quickly, access to the indicators is organized in several ways. One way is by topic area—for example, health, education, and social and emotional development. Indicators are also available by age group, for those interested in data related to early childhood, middle childhood, or adolescence. Third, those who are interested in estimates for particular sociodemographic groups (e.g., poor children, immigrant children, minority children, and children in single-parent families) can quickly identify all indicators on the DataBank that offer estimates for those particular groups. Finally, users can use a standard keyword search to find relevant indicators on the site.

A New Data Brief Series

In addition to offering over 85 individual indicators of well-being, the DataBank has recently launched a data brief series, called *CrossCurrents*, which addresses broader topics covering multiple related indicators. The initial brief presents an overview of violence in the lives of children and youth, and includes data on topics ranging from exposure to television violence to rates of child abuse, physical fighting, dating violence, and violent death. Briefs to be released this September will present indicators of early school success and a portrait of well-being in the transition to adulthood.

The Foundation for Child Development recently awarded Child Trends a grant to add to the site new indicators related to the integration of pre-K and early schooling experiences. Child Trends plans to expand the number of indicators offered by the DataBank while continuing to update and enhance those already in place.

The DataBank can be viewed at www.childtrendsdatabank.org. Additional information on Child Trends can be found at www.childtrends.org.

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¹ From the Child Trends DataBank's inception, funders have included the Foundation for Child Development, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Making Voices Heard: Using Multimedia to Give Evaluation a Cutting Edge

Suresh Balakrishnan describes the use of multimedia to disseminate evaluation results in Bangalore, India.

When water taps run dry, doctors at public clinics play truant, garbage piles grow, poor households the world over usually have no option except to cope as best they can with the apathy and inefficiency of public services. Is there a real alternative? Although initiatives like the Millennium Development Goals¹ provide an opportunity for change, sustainable improvement depends on a real push from the people who value public services the most: the users themselves. This article describes an evaluation of public services using Citizen Report Cards, a tool developed by Public Affairs Centre (PAC), in Bangalore, India. Citizen Report Cards are independent and objective evaluations of the performance of public services based on direct feedback from the citizens who use them. The Report Cards make use of multimedia to provide policymakers with cutting-edge evaluation information and compel them to action.

The concept of Citizen Report Cards evolved in Bangalore in the early 1990s as a civil society response to poor urban services. Instead of waiting for reform to occur, a small group of citizens—led by Dr. Samuel Paul, who would later found PAC—organized a user-survey-based evaluation of urban services, such as drinking-water supply, bus transport, garbage disposal, and so on. The assessment was limited in scope, since it was based entirely on what users could observe and experience, for example, ease of availability and reliability of services, politeness of staff, and intensity of corruption. The impact of this experiment led to the creation of PAC, which has developed and facilitated such evaluations across India and other countries.

This initiative used multimedia (e.g., videos that included graphical data, photographs, and presentations of quantitative and qualitative data in computer slide shows) to share evaluation findings. The findings reflected the “voice” of citizens, who included in their report comparisons of different agencies on key dimensions, such as proportion of satisfied users and extent of bribery encountered. This comparison put agencies that were performing poorly to shame and created pressure for change.

Service providers responded quickly to this “voice” of evaluation. While some tried to ignore the initial round of feedback, many service agencies found the process useful for identifying quick wins and treated satisfaction ratings as an independent performance assessment. The comparative ratings injected a form

¹ The Millennium Development Goals is a set of goals, targets, and indicators established by the United Nations (UN) in 2000 for the new millennium. The goals and targets are based on the UN Millennium Declaration, and the UN General Assembly has approved them as part of the secretary general’s road map toward implementing the declaration. The UN Development Program worked with other UN departments, funds, and programs; the World Bank; the International Monetary Fund; and the Organization for Economic Cooperation Development to identify over 40 quantifiable indicators to assess progress.

of competition and incentive to change among these largely unmovable monopolies. By initiating and owning these assessments, civil society was able to level the playing field with reference to powerful state institutions and have their demands for better services heard for the first time.

The impact of these evaluations depended heavily on how the results were disseminated. Dynamic multimedia presentations that accentuated variations in quality and gaps in service were crafted specifically for public meetings and for in-house delivery to service agencies. Simple visuals worked best with large public audiences: Videos allowed audiences to hear and see the actual beneficiaries or victims of the service-delivery system present the evaluation evidence. This reporting method surfaced a cutting-edge tool for evaluation and a compelling case for change.

Simple linkages between managerial actions and outcomes experienced by the users of public services become powerful calls for public accountability. By helping to illuminate these linkages, multimedia extended the ownership and reach of evaluations, and generated wider attention and deeper discussions than had taken place before.

International development agencies have recognized the potential of delivering Citizen Report Cards via multimedia for benchmarking and monitoring service standards in a manner that empowers citizens. The experience in Bangalore is being shared across India and other countries, in Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America. Video has been used extensively to introduce Citizen Report Cards to administrators and communities with significantly greater impact than written documents.

Ironically, the success of this technology has also brought some serious challenges in its wake. Multimedia presentations and short videos helped make it much easier to show evaluation findings and set agendas for action. They are not as helpful, however, as a means of portraying enabling factors and providing guidance about the amount and type of hard work over time required to achieve these outcomes. To meet these challenges, PAC is now working on a set of web-based tools and learning products to better respond to the many calls for assistance to initiate Citizen Report Cards.

For more information about the Public Affairs Centre visit www.pacindia.org.

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Using Internet and Communications Technology to Foster Evaluation in Africa

Zenda Ofir and Jean-Charles Rouge reflect on how Internet-based communication strategies have contributed to building evaluation capacity in Africa.

Africa is home to over 700 million people and includes 34 of the 50 poorest countries in the world. For several decades, due to efforts to end the cycle of poverty, disease, hunger, and violence ravaging the continent, Africa has been the beneficiary of a large portion of the world's development aid. The traditional approach to development evaluation relied heavily on “fly-by” evaluations: A team of outside consultants would fly in for a brief site visit, conduct some interviews, write a report that might never be given to program staff, then say goodbye.

Over the last few years the world's development agenda changed from simply making and assessing investments to building institutions and creating knowledge. Development evaluations are now expected to be more participatory, involve local evaluators, measure results with credible methodology, and contribute actively to organizational learning and sustainability. In Africa, however, the numbers of trained local evaluators who could respond to the new agenda were few, and those few toiled in isolation, with little opportunity to broaden their experience through contact with fellow evaluators.

To meet the daunting challenge of building indigenous evaluation capacity, African evaluators, in the last 5 years, formed the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA), as well as nearly 20 national evaluation associations or networks. These “knowledge networks” have provided evaluators with a sense of community and access to information, expertise, and resources. They have brought together disparate groups with a common interest in evaluation, generated opportunities for capacity building, and served as platforms for advocating evaluation.

With little funding available, Internet and communication technologies (ICT) were the primary tools used to build these networks. While lack of access is usually the major barrier to using ICT in developing countries, when AfrEA was formed in 1999, more than 80% of the 400 African evaluators in its database already had Internet access. This critical mass (and good fortune) allowed AfrEA to develop a website, listservs, and email communication that enabled it to reach its audience of national evaluation networks throughout Africa in the most cost-effective manner.

Of the initiatives centered in individual countries, the Niger Monitoring and Evaluation Network (Niger M&E) has been the most effective in implementing ICT strategies to support its communities of practice. Its website is the sole Internet workspace on monitoring and evaluation in West/French-speaking Africa. Because face-to-face training opportunities are rare, Niger M&E Network members regularly post on the website a wide range of ready-to-use knowledge products—best practice notes, manuals, publications, training materials, and a virtual library containing

more than 100 M&E documents—available for download free of charge.

The national networks and AfrEA are linked to international evaluation networks through websites and listservs, such as XCeval, which serves cross-cultural evaluators, and EvalPres, for presidents of evaluation associations and networks. These connections have helped cultivate a growing community of evaluators across different countries, led to higher requests for information from networks, and increased the international involvement and engagement of African evaluators.

Yet major challenges remain. For example, while developed countries view ICT as the path for Africa to participate in the knowledge economy, nowhere is the digital divide as visible as it is in Africa.¹ Although some government and nongovernmental organizations have Internet access, for many Africans a mere telephone call remains a remote prospect. Further, African Internet users represent only 1.6% of all users worldwide, and nearly 50% are located in just two countries, South Africa and Egypt.² In sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) only 1 in every 400 people has access to the Internet (Mutume, 2004),³ compared to 1 in every 2 people, on average, in North America and Europe.

Furthermore, several fledgling evaluation networks have failed to use the Internet effectively to sustain themselves. Connections can be painfully slow and computers are often shared among many, so communication between evaluators remains deficient. In rural areas Internet access can be either nonexistent or extremely expensive.

Finally, some political structures in Africa see knowledge and freedom of expression as a menace and view the Internet as a threat. A culture of communication, vigorous debate, and information sharing on listservs and other discussion forums needs to be created. Only when these issues are resolved will African evaluators be fully able to exploit the Internet and other communication technology to work together to develop and publish theory and best practices that will contribute to the evaluation field and cultivate respect for African evaluation expertise.

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¹ World Economic Forum. (2000). *Digital divide*. Retrieved June 28, 2004, from www.weforum.org/site/homepublic.nsf/Content/Global+Digital+Divide+Initiative

² Miniwatts International. (2004). *Internet usage statistics: The big picture*. *World Internet usage and population statistics*.

³ Mutume, G. (2004). *Africa takes on the digital divide*. Retrieved June 28, 2004, from www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol17no3/173tech.htm

Electronic Collaboration Tools: Opening Up a New World of Possibilities for Evaluators

Benoît Gauthier, president of Circum Network, discusses the use of electronic collaboration tools for evaluation, an increasingly popular, cost-effective means of enhancing evaluation practice.

The evaluation landscape today has new contours. Current evaluation practice prizes participation, inclusiveness, and collaboration. Managers, staff, program participants, and other key stakeholders are expected to participate fully in the evaluation process. Program design and delivery are also becoming more and more collaborative and complex, with partnership arrangements and multiple delivery locations the norm. In keeping with these changes, evaluation models are evolving as well, as witnessed by the growing demand for stakeholder-based and participatory evaluations, horizontal (cross-cutting) evaluation studies, multisite and cluster evaluations, multi-organization evaluations, and multinational evaluations.

To meet these challenges, evaluators are increasingly turning to electronic collaboration tools that facilitate participation and complement face-to-face meetings, email, and teleconferences. While trimming time and expense, these tools support participation by stakeholders, regardless of their location, and foster open communication by ensuring that evaluation team members have the right information in a timely manner. Additionally, they streamline project management through a “one-stop” evaluation project desktop and make the dissemination of evaluation findings and knowledge management easier and more effective. Team members, furthermore, can operate asynchronously (i.e., they do not have to be online together to communicate or share information), an advantage that enables collaboration and overcomes barriers posed by time zones and work schedules.

The electronic collaboration tools listed below share some basic functions, including the following:

- Filtering and distribution of messages according to need-to-know rules (filtered groups can include, for example, evaluation teams, evaluation consultants, project managers, working groups, and steering committees)
- Construction of threads, where messages are visually grouped in a way that permits a discussion to be followed easily
- Storage and rapid retrieval of text and data files for solving problems and building corporate memory

Some electronic collaboration tools feature additional, more advanced functions, some examples of which follow.

- Common-access white boards
- Shared calendars
- Project management tools to assign resources and responsibilities, track project progress, enforce deadlines, and manage sign-off for deliverables
- Electronic voting with proper authentication of voters and assurance of confidentiality
- Chat rooms to enable dynamic, real-time discussions (synchronous)

- Advanced document management (versioning, searching, production, and auditing)
- Ability to interact in several languages and link to translation software, a function that is important for multilingual, multicultural, or international programs

Several well-known commercial products exist already to satisfy these needs, such as eRoom, Sharepoint, and Notes. The most interesting ones offer integrated solutions for all of these requirements. They can be quite expensive and technically challenging to maintain, however. Some free or low-cost, open-source software solutions, such as Plone and Intranets.com, are becoming available as well. Because access to the Internet and web browsers is now commonplace, the preferred low-cost collaborative tools tend to be web-based.

Despite their obvious advantages, using electronic collaboration tools may mean facing various challenges:

- Potential exclusion of some stakeholders because of lack of access or fear of technology
- Barriers posed by language differences
- Constraints posed by cultural values and norms that do not support open discussions and sharing of power
- Investments in technical knowledge and time

If these issues are considered carefully, they can be reduced or eliminated by careful planning, training, and support.

Besides streamlining the evaluation process and making it more effective, electronic collaboration tools can facilitate evaluation capacity building and the forming of communities of practice. For example, in 2003, in Lima, a free, custom-programmed collaborative tool was used to coordinate the efforts of evaluation leaders around the world in organizing the inaugural assembly of the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE), the umbrella organization of over 50 national and regional evaluation associations and networks (ioce.net). The same tool is being used by the Canadian Evaluation Society to coordinate the ongoing work of its National Council members, who are spread throughout Canada, and also by the program committee for the joint 2005 Canadian and American Evaluation Conference, to actively collaborate with an international advisory committee. In the years ahead, electronic collaboration tools are likely to become a vital pathway for evaluators to reach out to each other, share knowledge, and form diverse communities of practice across the globe.

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Software Programs for Nonprofit Evaluation

Erin Harris from HFRP provides an overview of software programs for nonprofit program evaluation.

A wide variety of software packages are available to help nonprofit organizations track program management data and outcome measures for evaluation. One advantage of an “off-the-shelf” package is that these packages are often “tried and true.” Another is that the software makers often supply training and technical assistance to users. On the other hand, organizations should carefully consider whether the available packages are

appropriate for their needs. In some cases, organizations may find it more useful to design their own tracking systems, although the process can be time-consuming and may require extensive technical training. The following table provides a sampling of software programs that are geared to nonprofit organizations and that include components that may assist in program evaluation. See the relevant websites for more details.

No endorsement of any of these products is implied, nor have any of these products been used or tested by HFRP.

Software Applications Nonprofits Can Use for Evaluation¹

Program Name	Target Users	Types of Data Tracked and Managed	Company and Website
Academics Plus (APlus)	21st Century Community Learning Centers and other after school programs	attendance, registration, student academic achievement	Cayen Systems www.cayen.net
AWorks	direct-service providers, human service organizations	case records, activities, outcomes, statistical query	Agency Systems www.agency-sys.com
Client Management Systems	health, human service, and social service agencies; funders	outcomes, accountability, agency management, grant writing	JABR Software www.jabr.com
Client Track System	nonprofit organizations	demographics, services provided, client progress, outcomes	Shah Software www.shahsoftware.com
Efforts-to-Outcomes Software	human service organizations	demographics, outcomes, assessment	Social Solutions www.socialsolutionsonline.com
Hull Outcome Monitoring & Evaluation System	human service organizations	outcomes, case management	Canadian Outcomes Research Institute www.hmrp.net
Impact Manager	funders, nonprofit organizations, government agencies	benchmarks, financial, community and program performance	B2P (Business to Public Sector) www.measuringimpact.com
KidTrax	youth programs	time and attendance data, facility usage, member demographics	NFocus Software www.nfocus.com
Kinderstreet	schools, community parks, childcare centers, after school providers, preschool, daycare, camp programs	administrative functions, state licensing and reporting requirements, communication with families	Kinderstreet Corporation www.kinderstreet.com
Member Track	nonprofit organizations	clients, outcomes, program scheduling, fund development, marketing	Member Track LLC www.member-track.com
NonProfit Administrative Software Suite	nonprofit organizations	organizational responsibilities ranging from financial management to services delivered	Dynamic Enterprise Solutions www.des-inc.net
Online Data Manager	social service agencies, funders	client/agency, output/outcome	Community TechKnowledge www.communitytech.net
Outcome Tracker	nonprofit organizations	people, organizations, activities, outcomes	VistaShare www.vistashare.com
Outcomes Results System	human service agencies	outcomes, demographic data, client tracking, service hours rendered, referrals, income and expenses	Design Data Systems www.ddco.com Outcomes Results System website: www.ddco.com/ors
Outcomes PLUS+	social service agencies	client, program, participation, outcomes	Technology Investments Group www.techinvestgroup.com
Tapestry	social service agencies	information and referral; multi-agency case management; agencies, programs, and service profiles; volunteer and donor coordination	VisionLink Community Information Systems www.visionlink.org
YouthServices.net	youth service providers and funders	participant registration, attendance, outcomes, expenses, provider performance	CitySpan Technologies www.cityspan.com YouthServices.net website: www.youthservices.net

¹ More detailed profiles of many of these software programs and others can be found in: Outcome Measurement Resource Network. (2003). *Outcome measurement data management systems for agencies*. Alexandria, VA: United Way of America. national.unitedway.org/outcomes/resources/data_management_systems.cfm

Using Internet Technology to Develop Evaluation Capacity and Practices in Latin America and the Caribbean

Ada Ocampo¹ and Marco Segone describe the ways electronic networks are being put to use in Latin America and the Caribbean to build evaluation capacity.

During the last decade evaluators in Latin America and the Caribbean faced an important challenge: how to develop a dynamic community of evaluators in a region that includes over 400 million people, has nearly 60 political entities, and spans huge geographical distances—and do it all without any additional funds.

The Programme for Strengthening the Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean, or PREVAL, exists to strengthen programs that combat hunger and rural poverty in developing countries through monitoring and evaluation.² From its inception in 1996, PREVAL has focused on using electronic networks to build evaluation capacity. The Internet enables PREVAL to link throughout a vast region evaluators and institutions concerned with evaluation practice. PREVAL members can share information with each other via the Web, provide evaluation training and support, and build vibrant virtual communities that transcend the limits of time and distance.

Latin America has demonstrated that the Internet is a powerful and low-cost tool for capacity building and for strengthening monitoring and evaluation. Since 1997 the Internet has contributed to a number of significant developments in Latin America:

- A highly visible community of evaluators has been created that is recognized worldwide. For example, Latin America hosted the inaugural assembly of the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) and presently has two seats on the IOCE Board.
- Links between institutions have been forged or reinforced. With the support and participation of these institutions, international conferences and other important events that were not imaginable a few years ago are now taking place in the region.
- Access to information has been significantly broadened at low cost. For example, relevant articles and publications in Spanish, Portuguese, and English have been widely disseminated through listservs and websites.
- Greater recognition is being given to the evaluation profession and its contribution to poverty alleviation throughout the region.
- Evaluation knowledge and experiences are being exchanged among evaluators through online conferences and discussion groups. In 1998, for instance, PREVAL hosted an electronic conference that involved over 300 participants from around the world. PREVAL also has hosted two month-long electronic work-

shops in addition to hosting an electronic library.

- Various approaches and improvements to monitoring and evaluation are being continuously debated by several hundred participants in the discussion listservs of PREVAL (www.preval.org) and the Brazilian Evaluation Network (www.avaliabrasil.org.br).

Although these achievements are highly significant, the most important development to date has been the creation of the Network for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Systematization of Latin America and the Caribbean (ReLAC). The mission of ReLAC is “to strengthen the monitoring, evaluation, systematization culture and practice as a fundamental social and political process aiming to improve policies, programs, and projects considering better transparency and population participation.”³

ReLAC, as well as the national networks that comprise this organization (representing Brazil, Central America, Colombia, and Peru, among others), strongly advocates using the Internet for effective networking among members and for promoting high quality evaluation practice and an evaluation culture. The Internet has permitted the Latin American national evaluation networks to undertake their activities and contribute to development efforts in the region without relying on external financial support. Without the availability of such low-cost tools, the creation of ReLAC and the continued building of evaluation capacity in Latin America and the Caribbean would not be possible.

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³ Excerpted from ReLAC's mission statement. Available at www.preval.org/php/redlatino.htm.

Related Resources

The following three CD-ROMs are available from PREVAL and Fida International: *Biblioteca electrónica sobre seguimiento y evaluación de proyectos* (2nd ed.), published in 2002; *Las imágenes que hablan: Evaluación por imágenes. El Caso MARENASS*, published in 2003; and *Sistema de seguimiento y evaluación del proyecto PROCHALATE: Una experiencia*, also published in 2003. Each CD-ROM includes an array of features, among them videos, photographs, and documents formatted in PDF (portable document format). For further details visit www.preval.org.

¹ Ada Ocampo is the former coordinator of the Programme for Strengthening the Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity of the International Fund for Agricultural Development Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean.

² Formerly known as the Programme for Strengthening the Regional Capacity for Evaluation of Rural Poverty Alleviation Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Videotaped Interactions in the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project

Rebecca Ryan, Christy Brady-Smith, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn describe the use of videotapes in the national evaluation of Early Head Start.

Early Head Start (EHS) is a comprehensive child development program that serves low-income pregnant women, and families with children up to age 3. One of the ways EHS promotes healthy development among infants and toddlers is by encouraging close, supportive relationships between parents and children. To assess the program's impact on these relationships, over 2,000 mothers and children engaging in a series of teaching and play tasks were videotaped as part of the EHS Research and Evaluation Project, a randomized evaluation of some of the nation's first federally funded EHS programs. The interactions were then coded for key parent and child behaviors, such as parent sensitivity, cognitive stimulation, and child engagement.

In 8 of the 17 participating EHS research sites, study children were also videotaped interacting with their fathers and father figures, as part of the EHS Fathers Study, a substudy of the larger EHS evaluation. The EHS Fathers Study is part of a federal research initiative to incorporate fathers in national studies on families and children. EHS' study is the only one in the initiative gathering videotape data on father-child interactions and on the parenting behavior of low-income men, a group traditionally excluded from large-scale research projects. Unlike survey measures or other observational instruments, videotapes enable us to examine the nature and quality of father-child interactions rather than just the frequency of father involvement.

The videotaped activities were administered during in-home interviews conducted when children were approximately 14, 24, and 36 months old, for mothers, and 24 and 36 months old, for fathers. Both mother-child and father-child dyads were given a

series of semi-structured tasks to complete. The tasks and the coding scales¹ were adapted from free play activities used in two other studies: the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care, a national study, and the Newark Observational Study of the Teenage Parent Demonstration program, a study of low-income African American families.

The videotape data have revealed favorable program impacts² on increasing maternal supportiveness and decreasing maternal detachment. EHS Research Consortium members have also used the data to analyze the effects of maternal parenting on child development with a focus on at-risk populations, such as teenage mothers, depressed mothers, and mothers from different ethnic and immigrant groups. Papers using the father videotape data have examined the impact of father parenting on child cognitive development independent of mother parenting; the interplay between father and child behaviors over time; and the joint impact of mother and father parenting on child cognitive development. In the future, the father videotapes will be used to examine more theoretical questions about the nature of fatherhood, such as how maternal and paternal parenting differ and whether maternal and paternal behaviors carry different meanings for children and for their development.

All three waves of the videotaped data from the EHS study, as well as the prekindergarten follow-up, will be available for restricted public use at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study's Murray Research Center. By making these unique data available to the public, the Administration for Children and Families and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (which have jointly funded the father studies), together with the EHS Research Consortium, aim to foster continued research in the areas of mothering, fathering, and early childhood development in low-income and diverse populations.

Related Resources

Berlin, L. J., Brady-Smith, C., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2002). Links between childbearing age and observed maternal behaviors with 14-month-olds in the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 23, 104-129.

Cabrera, N., Brooks-Gunn, J., Moore, K., West, J., Boller, K., & Tamis-LeMonda, C. S. (2002). Bridging research and policy: Including fathers of young children in national studies. In C. S. Tamis-LeMonda & N. Cabrera (Eds.), *Handbook of father involvement* (pp. 489-523). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., Shannon, J. D., Cabrera, N., & Lamb, M. (in press). Fathers and mothers at play with their 2- and 3-year-olds: Relations to children's language and cognitive development. *Child Development*.

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¹ The coding scales, developed by a multiethnic team at the National Center for Children and Families at Columbia University, measure dimensions of parenting, such as sensitivity and cognitive stimulation, on a scale from 1 (*low incidence of the behavior*) to 7 (*high incidence of the behavior*), on the basis of the frequency and quality of observed behaviors indicative of the dimension in question.

² Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services. (2002). *Making a difference in the lives of infants and toddlers and their families: The impacts of Early Head Start, volume 1: Final technical report*. Washington, DC: Author. www.mathematica-mpr.com/PDFs/ehsfinalvol1.pdf (Acrobat file)

The National Youth Participation Study: Using Online Surveys to Reach Large Numbers of Youth

Lynne Borden, from the University of Arizona, describes the use of online surveys in a national study of the out-of-school time activity participation of middle and high school youth.

As part of the National Youth Participation Study, researchers at the Pennsylvania State University and the University of Arizona are conducting a national online survey of middle school and high school youth (ages 12–18) to help better understand why they participate in structured activities and programs, such as band, debate team, sports, and 4-H clubs, during the out-of-school time (OST) hours. The study's goal is to tap youth's points of view about what makes programs appealing to join and what makes them worthy of continued participation, as well as why youth stop participating.

On the survey, youth are asked to respond to questions about their OST experiences in reference to three different activities: (1) a program in which they are currently participating, (2) a program in which they used to participate, and (3) a program in which they were never involved.

The survey, which takes about 20 minutes to complete, asks youth to discuss the following:

- How they made their decisions to join certain activities
- What they do in those activities
- Why they chose *not* to join an activity
- Why they decided to stop attending an activity
- What they get from being involved in those activities

The online format was selected for a number of strategic reasons. First, it offered the best opportunity to take the study to a national scale. Second, it was clear to researchers that they would need to survey a large number of youth. They expected a significant diversity of responses as to why youth participate in after school programs and their patterns of participation; they hoped that the online format would facilitate reaching large numbers of youth. Third, the format offered the opportunity to target subpopulations of youth from across the United States—in both urban and rural areas.

In our previous research, we have found that some subpopulations of youth are often underserved. Moreover, whatever programs are offered may be poorly attended if they do not match the needs or interests of the young people they hope to serve. While sacrificing the benefits of a representative sample, the use of online methods provides a unique opportunity to include a large and diverse group of youth, which is essential to the success of the study.

The website that houses the survey was designed to be easily accessible and appealing to young people. The website's designer, who has expertise in user-friendly survey technology, employed exciting and colorful design elements and made use of formatting familiar to young people to ensure that they found the survey engaging. The study is inclusive, as respondents don't have to belong to particular organizations in order to participate. It is

also completely anonymous—there is no identifying information requested in the survey. In addition, the data are secured—stored in a password protected database—and no one but the researchers can access them.

One lesson that was learned in developing this online study was that the effort to make the protocol simple for participants did not make the process any easier for the evaluators. Dealing with the technology for creating and implementing the online survey proved to be very complex and challenging. Another hurdle associated with this new data collection technique was meeting a university institutional review board's strict but reasonable criteria of anonymity and security to protect youth's rights. This survey will be conducted for several years, to allow as many young people as possible to participate. The first report will be generated by August 2005.

To view the survey visit agexted.cas.psu.edu/fcs/dp/survey/participation/survey.cfm.

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Sample Survey Items for a Young Person's Involvement in a Current Activity

Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how true each statement is for you, where 1 is *not true at all* and 5 is *very true*.

- I like it. / It is fun.
- The activity is consistent with my religious/cultural values.
- I like belonging to a group.
- Other people look up to me. / I get to be a role model.
- I can spend time with friends.
- I feel safe.
- The adults care about me.
- I get to know youth who are different from me.
- I can get there easily; transportation is not a problem.
- It is very different from school.

This section features an annotated list of papers, organizations, initiatives, and other resources related to the issue's theme.

Barnard, R., Campbell, D. A., & Smith, S. (with Embuldeniya, D.). (2003). *Citizen re:generation: Understanding active citizen engagement among Canada's information age generations*. Toronto, Canada: D-Code. This study explores the interconnectedness of the ways young people engage with civil society and offers suggestions for those seeking to communicate with and involve young people in civic participation. www.d-code.com/citizenregen.html

Computerized Neighborhood Environment Tracking (ComNET) introduces handheld computers to community organizations to facilitate trained observer ratings. This methodology is being used in numerous cities across the United States. www.fcny.org/cmgrp/comnet.htm

Education Week. (2004). *Technology counts 2004: Global links: Lessons from the world*. Bethesda, MD: Editorial Projects in Education. *Education Week's* seventh annual report on school technology presents an overview of technology in schools around the world. It also includes a review of national trends in the use of educational technology and state-by-state snapshots of the steps states have taken to use educational technology more effectively. www.edweek.org/sreports/tc04

Ess, C., & Association of Internet Researchers. (2002). *Ethical decision-making and Internet research: Recommendations from the AOIR ethics working committee*. Association of Internet Researchers. This document offers a series of recommendations designed to support and inform those responsible for making decisions about the ethics of Internet research. aoir.org/reports/ethics.pdf (Acrobat file)

Haythornthwaite, C. (2004). **Introduction: The Internet in everyday life**. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 45(3), 363–382. This special issue of *American Behavioral Scientist* focuses on the impact of the Internet on access to resources, social interaction, and commitment to local community. The issue's introduction summarizes the results of studies and other data to examine and define the various ways the Internet affects everyday life.

Hoffman, J., & Clark, K. (2003). *After school physical activity program evaluation report*. Solana Beach, CA: Hoffman, Clark & Associates. This report summarizes the results of a comprehensive evaluation of the development of a website to provide after school staff with resources and training to increase the quality and quantity of physical activity in after school.

The Internet and Higher Education is a quarterly, peer-reviewed journal devoted to addressing developments related to learning, teaching, and administration on the Internet in postsecondary settings. www.elsevier.com/locate/iheduc

Johns, M. D., Chen, S. -L. S., & Hall, G. J. (Eds.). (2004). *Online social research: Methods, issues, and ethics*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing. This collection of essays by online researchers provides illustrations of how traditional research methods can

be modified for effective online research. Authors also identify and discuss critical issues and dilemmas encountered in online research. commerce.peterlangusa.com/genBook.asp?CategoryName=Media+Studies&CategoryType=All+Disciplines&ProductID=0-8204-6101-6

The *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation* is a new, free online journal that aims to communicate current developments in evaluation to a diverse readership of evaluators, evaluation users, and would-be evaluators. evaluation.wmich.edu/jmde

Kosma, R., McGhee, R., Quellmalz, E., & Zalles, D. (2004). **Closing the digital divide: Evaluation of the World Links program**. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 24, 361–381. This article presents evaluation findings on the World Links program, an effort to provide schools in developing countries with networked computers and training to support the integration of technology into teaching.

Love, A. J. (2001). **The future of evaluation: Catching rocks with cauldrons**. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 22(3), 437–444. This article provides an overview of the profound ways in which developments in technology will affect the evaluation field.

Luckey, A. (2003). *From improving IT infrastructure to achieving social good: Outcomes of nonprofit technology assistance providers (NTAPs)*. Seattle, WA: Blueprint Research and Design. This paper draws from the work Blueprint has done over the past 3 years with NTAPs and their funders to raise key issues regarding evaluation of IT assistance to nonprofits. www.blueprintrd.com/pubs.htm

McDonald, H., & Adam, S. (2003). **A comparison of online and postal data collection methods in marketing research**. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 21(2), 85–96. This paper reports on a study which directly compares online and postal data collection methods using the same survey instrument on two samples drawn from the same population of football club subscribers.

MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership's **After-School Program Clearinghouse** offers after school program coordinators a wide array of online resources to help them connect young people with existing mentoring opportunities, as well as develop new ones. www.mentoring.org/afterschool

Montgomery, K., Gottlieb-Robles, B., & Larson, G. O. (2004). *Youth as e-citizens: Engaging the digital generation*. Washington, DC: Center for Social Media. This report argues that an online youth civic culture has taken root on the Internet and is fostering participation in U.S. politics and community among those in "Generation Y"—those born after 1979. www.centerforsocialmedia.org/ecitizens/youthreport.pdf (Acrobat file)

National Center for Education Statistics. (2004). *The status of public and private school library media centers in the United States: 1999–2000*. Washington, DC: Author. This report summarizes findings from the public and private School Library Media Center Questionnaires, a component of the 1999–2000 Schools and Staffing Survey. Topics addressed include library media center characteristics, staff characteristics, library expenditures,

collection holdings, and library policies. nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004313

The National Science Foundation's Online Evaluation Resource Library was developed for professionals seeking to design, conduct, document, or review project evaluations. oerl.sri.com

Plant, R. (2004). Online communities. *Technology in Society*, 26(1). This article examines the concept and practice of online communities, first establishing their historical and technological roots, then developing a three-dimensional taxonomy through which they can be examined.

Rouse, C. E., & Kreuger, A. B. (2004). Putting computerized instruction to the test: A randomized evaluation of a "scientifically based" reading program. *Economics of Education Review*, 23, 323–338. This article presents results from an evaluation of Fast ForWord, an instructional computer program designed to improve language and reading skills. The randomized study assessed the program's impact on students having difficulty learning to read. www.sciencedirect.com

The School Information Partnership hosts a website, [School results.org](http://Schoolresults.org), which displays data for schools, districts, and states required to be publicly reported under the No Child Left Behind Act. The goal is to empower parents, educators, and policymakers to use the Act to make meaningful improvements in schools. www.schoolresults.org

Segone, M., Patel, M., Rouge, J. C., & Russon, C. (2003). *Facilitating sustainable monitoring and evaluation capacity development*. Brasilia: Brazilian Evaluation Network. This paper aims to examine the rapid, multinational process of strengthening monitoring and evaluation capacities that has been occurring over the last several years. A large part of the analysis is based on the experiences of the African Evaluation Association, and the National Associations and Networks in Africa. www.avalibrasil.org.br/FirstpageRebramaEnglish.html

Strack, R. W., Magill, C., & McDonagh, K. (2004). Engaging youth through photovoice. *Health Promotion Practice*, 5(1). This article describes the use of the photovoice method—a process that uses photos taken by people with little money, power, or status, to enhance community-needs assessments, empower participants, and induce change—in an after school program.

Strickland, O. L., Moloney, M. F., Dietrich, A. S., Myerburg, S., Cotsonis, G. A., & Johnson, R. V. (2003). Measurement issues related to data collection on the World Wide Web. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 26(4), 246–256. Using examples from the nursing field, this article identifies measurement issues related to Internet data collection that are relevant to qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

TechSoup, a one-stop resource for technology needs, provides free information, resources, and support. www.techsoup.org

University of Pittsburg, Office of Child Development. (2004). Internet-based solution to measuring outcomes is catching on.

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New Resources From HFRP

We have recently published three new research briefs in our *Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation* series:

- Brief 6, *Moving Beyond the Barriers: Attracting and Sustaining Youth Participation in Out-of-School Time Programs* (July 2004), presents promising strategies to attract and sustain youth participation in out-of-school time (OST) programs. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/issuebrief6.html
- Brief 7, *Understanding and Measuring Attendance in Out-of-School Time Programs* (August 2004), examines three research-based indicators of attendance—intensity, duration, and breadth—and offers different models for how attendance in out-of-school time programs can influence youth outcomes. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/issuebrief7.html
- Brief 8, *Promoting Quality Through Professional Development: A Framework for Evaluation* (August 2004), examines professional development efforts in OST in light of the critical role that staff play in promoting quality OST programs and offers a framework for evaluating them. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/issuebrief8.html

We have also published a new *Snapshot* in our *Out-of-School Time Evaluation Snapshots* series. *Detangling Data Collection: Methods for Gathering Data* describes the common data collection methods used by current OST programs to evaluate their implementation and outcomes.

Both of these series of publications will be continued through 2006. To be notified when new briefs and *Snapshots* are available, sign up for our out-of-school time updates email at www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/subscribe.html.

The Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE) has added two new research digests and a new bibliography to the FINE website (www.finenetwork.org):

- The first digest, entitled *The Role of the Family in the Educational Experiences of Second-Generation Chinese Americans*, describes the ways Chinese-American college students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds characterize the role their families played in their paths to college.
- The second digest, *Adolescence: Are Parents Relevant to Students' High School Achievement and Post-Secondary Attainment?*, uses data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study to show that parents' high educational expectations positively affect students' academic achievement in high school.
- FINE's new bibliography of research on family involvement in adolescence covers the years 1999 to 2003 and includes books, journal articles, dissertations and theses, reports, and research briefs.

Developments, 18(1). This article explores the use of Evaluation Station, an Internet-based tool developed for family service providers in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, to measure the impact of services on the lives of troubled children and their families. www.education.pitt.edu/ocd/publications/dev2004-03.pdf (Acrobat file)

Using new technologies, the Carnegie Foundation's **Knowledge Media Laboratory** develops tools and resources to exchange information and produce innovations that can transform teaching and learning at many levels. www.carnegiefoundation.org/kml

The William T. Grant Foundation's **Consultation on Design of Group-Randomized Studies** is a newly established consulting service created to assist in the design and analysis of group-randomized trials. www.wtgrantfoundation.org/info-url_nocat3040/info-url_nocat_show.htm?doc_id=227403&attrib_id=9485

An expanded version of New & Noteworthy is available on our website at www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue27/newfull.html.

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Upcoming Employment Opportunity

Harvard Family Research Project will be seeking a talented master's-level evaluation professional with at least 5 years of applied experience to work primarily on HFRP's evaluation-related projects. This role will require the full range of skills associated with research and evaluation: constructing instruments/protocols; gathering data through interviews, site visits, focus groups, or document reviews; designing and executing coding and analysis; making evaluative judgments; communicating with evaluation partners; presenting results; and leading small teams to carry out evaluation tasks.

For information about this and other upcoming career possibilities at HFRP, please send an email to hfrp@gse.harvard.edu with the subject heading "Evaluation Opportunity" or visit our website at gseweb.harvard.edu/hfrp/about/jobs.html.



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