Staying Ahead of the Curve... A Continuous and Systematic Approach to Evaluating Electronic Resources

Karen Grigg, Assistant Director of Collection Services; Duke University Medical Center Library, Durham, NC

Charlie Lackey, Assistant Director of Cataloging and Bibliographic Services; Duke University Medical Center Library, Durham, NC

Why?

- Shrinking or flat budgets
- Continuous emergence of new technology and products
- To stay abreast of technology improvements
- Vendors see that we continually scan marketplace
- Assess ongoing quality of what we already have
- Involves all library staff in collection decisions
- Enables solicitation of user feedback

Steps for Evaluating Databases

1. Evaluating use and feedback of current product
2. Scanning the marketplace for competing products
3. Environmental scan of peer institutions
4. Assembling a team of reviewers
5. Query listservs of peers
6. Creating review criteria
7. Securing the trials
8. Listing trials on "Database Testing Zone" web page
9. Obtaining price quotes
10. Dividing teams into sub-teams that evaluate each database using same criteria
11. Inviting vendors to visit and make presentations
12. Reassembling and comparing databases as a larger group
13. Promoting trials and soliciting feedback from users
14. Creating final report to guide our decisions
15. If new database is purchased, initiating rollout procedures

The Database Evaluation Group may opt to generate a representative set of questions to query all databases being evaluated and compare results... Here are the sample questions we queried Dynamed, FIRST Consult and eMedicine to compare with results in UpToDate

1. What are the most useful tests for diagnosing pheochromocytoma?

2. In those patients with HIV/AIDS and thrush, which is more effective in the long term treatment of thrush - continuous or intermittent fluconazale therapy?

3. In patients with AIDS and pancytopenia, what are the possible etiologies to worry about?
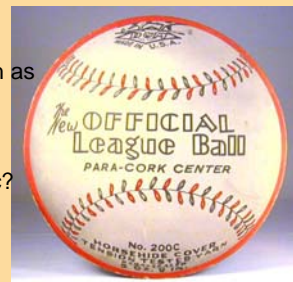
School	UpTo Date	Clinical Evidence	Evidence Matters	DynaMed	EMedicine	InfoPOEMS/ Retriever
John Hopkins	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Washington University	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
UPA	Y	Has print. Discontinued	N	N	N	Y
UCA San Francisco	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
U of WA	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
Stanford	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
U of M, Ann Arbor	Y	Print.	N	N	N	N
UNC, Chapel Hill	Y (for now)	N	N	N	Y	Y
Drexel	N	N	N	N	N	N
U of I, Chicago	N	Y	N	N	N	N

Environmental Scan of Selected Databases

The Database Review Group sets relevant criteria for evaluating the products....

Sample Criteria, UptoDate Product Review

- Is database evidence-based?
- Are there systematic reviews?
- Is content peer reviewed?
- Are cited studies described and summarized in content?
- Who are the primary users?
- Are monographs indexed?
- How easy is product to learn?
- Does product have extended search capabilities, such as automatic truncation and spelling correction?
- How much work does patron have to do in order to synthesize and filter information?
- How easy to find are author affiliations with each topic?
- When was topic last updated?
- What is the cost?
- Is off-campus access included?
- Does vendor offer site license and/or concurrent user model?

Duke University
Medical Center Library