Digging Deeper: Can Patrons Use Our Resources, and Are Basic Digital Literacy Classes Enough?

Cindy Gibbon
Multnomah County Library, cgibbon@comcast.net

Jill Castek
University of Arizona, jcastek@email.arizona.edu

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DIGGING DEEPER: CAN PATRONS USE OUR RESOURCES, AND ARE BASIC DIGITAL LITERACY CLASSES ENOUGH?

CINDY GIBBON, MULTNOMAH COUNTY LIBRARY IN PORTLAND, OR
JILL CASTEK, PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
MEMBERS OF OUR PROJECT TEAM

- Amy Honisett
- Matthew Timberlake
- Patricia Moran
- Vailey Oehlke
- Judy Anderson

- Gloria Jacobs
- Stephen Reder
- Laura Hill
- Andrew Pizzolato
Advancing Digital Equity in Public Libraries: Assessing Library Patrons’ Problem Solving in Technology Rich Environments (LG-06-14-0076)
TODAY’S PRESENTATION

- Project overview
- Data collection tool
- What we’re learning
- Discussion
NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL EFFORT UNDERWAY TO EXAMINE ADULT SKILLS AND SKILLS USE (AGES 16-64)

Assessment of adult skills by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
PIAAC RESULTS SHOW THAT

- 35 million adults have low literacy (18 percent of the adult population)
- 58 million adults have low math skills (30 percent of the adult population)

Source: PIAAC Gateway http://piaacgateway.com/infographics/
PIAAC RESULTS SHOW THAT

1 in 6 American Adults Have Less-Than-Basic Literacy

Nearly 1 in 3 Have Less-Than-Basic Numeracy Skills

Source: PIAAC Gateway http://piaacgateway.com/infographics/
PIAAC RESULTS SHOW THAT

The U.S. Lags Behind in Digital Literacy, Problem Solving

American adults performed below the international average when it came to using digital technology to acquire and evaluate information, communicate with others, and perform practical tasks.

Source: PIAAC Gateway http://piaacgateway.com/infographics/
What PIAAC Tells Us About Individuals With Low Basic Skills

Many Have Earned a High School Diploma
20 percent of adults with a high school diploma have less-than-basic literacy skills and 35 percent of adults with a high school degree have less-than-basic numeracy skills.

Most Are Underemployed
63 percent of U.S. adults with low skill levels are employed, but earn low wages and lack the skills necessary to go to college or advance in their careers.

Source: PIAAC Gateway http://piaacgateway.com/infographics/
PIAAC RESULTS SHOW THAT

DIGITAL NATIVE DOES NOT MEAN TECH SAVVY

83% of millennials say they sleep with their smartphones.

58% of millennials have poor skills in solving problems with technology.

U.S. millennials ranked DEAD LAST out of 19 countries tested in these skills.

Source: PIAAC Gateway http://piaacgateway.com/infographics/
PIAAC RESULTS SHOW THAT

Skill Levels of Young Adults Are Slipping

Source: PIAAC Gateway http://piaacgateway.com/infographics/
THE PIAAC RESULTS GIVE US A LOT TO THINK ABOUT

But also leave us wondering about…

Our patrons skills?

- Library Services
- Classes
- Electronic Tools and Resources
WHAT DOES THIS PROJECT INVESTIGATE?

- Digital Problem Solving Skills of Patrons
- Using PIAAC’s Digital Problem Solving Assessment
- In order to examine…
  - instruction/training of digital skills
  - presentation of all of the library’s web and digital interfaces and electronic tools
WHY COLLABORATE ON THIS PROJECT?

Extend national work on digital literacy and digital acquisition to inform local efforts.

Maximize resources to meet community needs around lifelong learning and digital access.

Bring libraries into the national & international PIAAC conversation.

Using Data from PIAAC’s Digital Problem Solving Assessment (PSTRE)
WHY ARE PIAAC DATA RELEVANT FOR LIBRARIES?

Libraries are institutions that …

- Support interest-driven lifelong learning
- Provide hubs for Internet access and digital literacy training
- Deliver services using technology

Include libraries in workforce development through the use of the PIAAC
What are Digital Problem Solving Skills?

As measured within PIAAC’s Assessment Problem Solving in Technology Rich Environments (PSTRE)

Using digital technology, communication tools and networks to acquire and evaluate information, communicate with others and perform practical tasks.
CONTEXTS WHERE THESE SKILLS ARE ASSESSED

Workplace
• Use of skills in careers

Personal
• Use of skills at home or for recreation or hobbies

Civic
• Use of skills in the community
You ordered a desk lamp from KE-Lamps.com.

The desk lamp arrived, but it was not the color you ordered.

Using the company's website, arrange to exchange the lamp you received for the one you ordered.

Once you have finished, click Next to go on.

KE-Lamps.com
The best way to light your life

Bedroom Lamps
Desk Lamps
Floor Lamps
Table Lamps
New Arrivals
SALE!

Customer Comments   Customer Service   Employment Opportunities   About Us
LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY

**Level 1**
Sort emails into pre-existing folder using given criterion

**Level 2**
Respond to a request by locating information in a spreadsheet and e-mailing the requestor

**Level 3**
Manage requests to reserve meeting room using a reservation system. Discover schedule conflict, e-mail to decline the request.
Digging into the Data
National digital problem solving data by AGE

U.S. PSTRE Levels By 10 Year Age Cohort
Bar Chart

Age ranges include:
18–24,
25–34,
35–44,
45–54,
55–65,
over 65

Count

PSTRE level. Includes: Below level 1, Level 1,
Level 2, Level 3
**IMPLICATIONS: WHAT DOES AGE DATA MEAN FOR OUR LIBRARY?**

- Avoid making assumptions about digital problem solving skills based on age.

- Younger doesn’t mean more skilled
- Older doesn’t mean less skilled
WE SUPPLEMENTED THE PIAAC DATA WITH A SELF ASSESSMENT

When I'm trying to do something online...

- I can usually figure it out
- I can figure it out but it's really hard
- I almost always get stuck

Do you have the skills to do what you need or want to do online?

- Yes
- No
Most people think they’re skilled and efficient at digital problem solving, but most aren’t as skilled as they think they are. Integrate skill building into what patrons come into the library to accomplish.
NATIONAL DIGITAL PROBLEM SOLVING DATA BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS
Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

- Full-time employed (including self-employed)
- Part-time employed (including self-employed)
- Retired
- Unemployed (not employed and looking for work)
- Unemployed and not looking for work (e.g., student, retired, homemaker, permanently disabled)
IMPLICATIONS AT THE LIBRARY

To Impact Employability

Digital problem solving skills

Basic digital literacy
Education and PSTRE scores do not go hand in hand.
WHAT THIS MEANS FOR LIBRARY PROGRAMMING?

Formal education and/or completion does not equal strong digital skills.

Provide interest-driven learning; opportunities to use digital skills and gain experience.
Where do you use the web/Internet most often? For example, Facebook, email, Trimet, Google, etc.

- At home
- At work
- At the library
- Other: [ ]
Bar Chart

Where do you use the web/Internet most often? Includes: at home, at work, at the library, other

- home
- work
- library
- both work and home
- apple store
- cell phone

PSTRE level. Includes: Below level 1, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3
IMPLICATIONS FOR LIBRARY PROGRAMMING

For patrons use the web/Internet most often at the library
OR most often use their Cell Phone for Internet access

Provide Devices; supplement their access & give them more time
What does a score at a certain PSTRE level imply about what that patron can and cannot do in the library using digital tools and interfaces?
How easy or difficult do you find it to [Find something to watch, read or listen to] using the library website?

- very easy
- somewhat easy
- somewhat hard
- very hard
- not something I do at all

PSTRE level. Includes: Below level 1, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3
How easy or difficult do you find it to do the following activities using the library website (or library resources such as Hoopla or Overdrive)? [Get a reading suggestion]

- Not something I do at all
- Somewhat Easy
- Somewhat Hard
- Very Easy
- Very Hard

PSTRE level. Includes: Below level 1, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3
USE OF LIBRARY RESOURCES & DIGITAL PROBLEM SOLVING

Bar Chart

How easy or difficult do you find it to do the following activities using the library website (or library resources such as Hoopla or Overdrive)? [Find health information]

- Not something I do at all
- Somewhat Easy
- Somewhat Hard
- Very Easy
- Very Hard

PSTRE level. Includes: Below level 1, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3
WHAT DO THESE DATA SUGGEST ABOUT USE LIBRARY INTERFACES?

Do patrons know what the library has?

Patrons do not know ALL of what’s available to them.

Can they Use what we offer them?

While patrons find things easy or somewhat easy, many still need help.
Discuss with a small group…

What do these trends mean for the tools you offer patrons?
What do these trends mean for the training you offer patrons?
What might this mean for the process you use to select vendors and online tools/products?
How can you make resources more accessible to patrons with lower skills?
What additional questions do these questions raise in your context?
Cindy Gibbon - cindyg@multcolib.org
Jill Castek - jcastek@pdx.edu