FIVA Evaluation Narrative

Focus Groups

Public Libraries: (representing rural to urban, large to small, $$$ per capita to $ per capita)

Group Members:

>   Clint Rudy, Suffolk
>   Clara Hudson, Virginia Beach
>   Sandy Whitesides, Shenandoah
>   John Huddy, Handley Regional
>   Sherry Bright, Buchanan
>   Amy Kimani, Bristol

This group of library directors met via web conference on Wednesday, January 24, 2018. Upon reviewing usage data, sharing their anecdotal experience, and performing live comparative searches, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Searched content is not able to be cross-referenced for both relevancy and pub date and thus not useful.
- Users are frustrated easily and won't return if encounter difficulty of use or poor results
- Google produced better results (relevancy/pub date) on first try
- Marketing for FVA is buried on their sites because of this
- Branding is dated and unclear
- The search/retrieval rate has an unacceptable return on investment
- The inability to cross search additional content makes all provided digital assets less valuable

Public Schools:

The Virginia Association of School Librarians held regional spring conferences across the Commonwealth in March, to which the following library directors (and one youth services library) presented:

- Shenandoah Region: Diantha McCauley, Director, Augusta County Public Library
- Potomac Region: Nan Carmack, Director LVA LDND
- Roanoke Region: Beverly Blair, Youth Services Librarian, Lynchburg Public Library
- James Region: Jill Hames, Director, Hamner Public Library
- Clinch Region: Charlotte Parsons, Director, Washington Co Public Library
- York Region: Valerie Gardner, Director, Hampton Public Library
- Rappahannock Region: Cherie Carl, Northumberland Public library **this event was rescheduled due to snow and no representative was able to attend on the rescheduled date.

Common themes emerged from all 6 regions:

- School librarians do teach research, along with English and History faculty.
- Many schools in less well funded areas rely solely on FIVA resources, though they articulate the same frustrations as the library director focus groups on the collection
- Elementary school librarians were far less likely to be aware of FIVA resources than middle or high school librarians. Few of any level librarians were aware of Homework Help as an asset.
- All expressed a great desire to collaborate with public librarians but cited the challenges of being tied to their buildings and little time beyond the school day to work on additional projects.

Research Databases

Return on Investment

Public Library usage proved dismal with varying costs per retrieval from as much as $12.33 per retrieval of eLibraries to as little as $1.34 per retrieval from Credo. However, when adding in public school usage, the return on investment improves to under $1 per retrieval.

Search/Retrieval Data

By eCollection, across both public libraries and public schools, Credo, and eLibrary provided excellent search/retrieval rates, both enjoying retrieval rates GREATER than the number of searches, indicating successful searches within them. Gale, however, demonstrated less than a 3% retrieval rate. Further, because eLibrary is not cross-searchable within Gale, the actual searches conducted are quite small and may offer an opportunity for cost reallocation to a product with greater demand.

Reference and research testing

Live searches were conducted with the public library focus groups. The searches conducted were by the search terms "technology careers;" "intermittent fasting;" and "diabetes management." The Gale databases performed poorly in comparison to Google and a trial account with Ebsco's MasterFile in both number of relevant responses, currency, and useful suggestions for additional search terms. Live searches within Credo provided adequate and current research for k-12 school usage but was deemed not "sophisticated" enough for adult or college level research.

Public Library Surveys

Public library directors were asked to consult their staff and respond to a survey regarding digital assets via SurveyMonkey. In hindsight, the questions on the survey attempted too large a scope in trying to determine not only what assets were needed but were also currently subscribed to on an individual basis. Nonetheless, the following assets were ranked according to priority:

Legal Forms type product (54%)
Career development tool (54%)
Newspaper/periodical solution (39%)
Language learning (35%)
Genealogy (17%)

eCollections

Tumblebooks™

Both public and school librarians bemoaned the lapsing of eBooks for children's services as this was an anecdotally and statistically highly used collection and expressed strong desire for a replacement product.

RBDigital

RBDigital offerings, including eMagazines, eBooks and audiobooks range below the $1 per circulation standard, with eZines being the most sought after product. User complaints centered around having to log in to a browser for certain activities instead of a complete service app. RBDigital representatives state that comprehensive app functionality is on schedule for the summer of 2018. Librarians of all stripes enjoy this product and the usage data supports their anecdotal evidence.

Freading

Freading is a pay per use circulation model that is not widely used. Usage data indicates that, despite an inexpensive $.40 per use, the upfront money invested in Freading "tokens," will not run out for several years. Usage data indicates that the highest users are from well-funded systems, such as Loudon and Chesterfield Counties. Less well-funded systems report that they don't bother to even promote the product as it is "just one more platform" they don't have the time to implement or market.

FIVA APP by Boopsie

Usage data suggest that there are less than 7500 unique users per month to Boopsie, resulting an exorbitant rate of $21/user. Because ADA compliance now requires library websites to be mobile friendly, solving the primary function of the FIVA app, the service will be discontinued at the end of the contract.

Collection Development Theory in re: FIVA

As in any collection development endeavor, FIVA resources benefit from a theoretical analysis of development:

- What are the primary goals of the collection?
- Are the needs to the primary user being met?
- What materials best reach these goals?
- Assuming budgetary availability, what priority ranking is applied to secondary collections?

In applying theory to FIVA, the stated goals of the collection are to provide basic reference opportunities to the public and to library staff for all ages, birth to adulthood. Further, Readers' Advisory, quality literature, and lifelong learning opportunities arise as the secondary collection needs as outlined in the LSTA grant project.

Next Steps

1. Submit this data to LVA administration and the FIVA evaluation committee/focus group enlisted at the beginning of this narrative. (March 2018)

2. Continue RFP process for eBooks for children and teens. (March 2018)
3. Begin soliciting quotes for databases and digital assets that are responsive to the findings (April 2018)
4. Develop recommended collection for review by FIVA evaluation and LVA Administration (April 2018)
5. Begin procurement processes (April 2018)
6. Development marketing plan (May 2018)
7. Begin technical installs (August 2018)
8. Begin training public library staff (August 2018)
9. Execute marketing plan (September 2018 – on-going)
10. Roll out to public (October 2018)
11. Continuous improvement – on-going