

Celebrating the Best Ranked HAPLR Index Libraries in Ohio

Thomas J. Hennen Jr.
Hennen's American Public Library Rating Index
Remarks - December 1999

Sponsored by OCLC
& OHIONET

haplr-index.com

6014 Spring Street
Racine, WI 53406
Voice: 414-886-1625
Fax: 414-886-6424

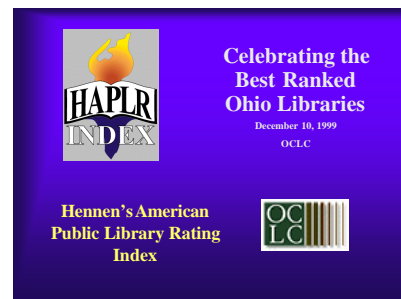
e-mail: thenen@haplr-index.com
Web site: <http://www.haplr-index.com>

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon. My name is Tom Hennen.

Next year I will have been a librarian for 25% of a millennium. In those 25 years, I have visited hundreds of libraries: good ones, bad ones, excellent ones and awful ones. How did I judge? By instinct, professional judgment, and, of course, by whether or not the library had what I wanted when I wanted it - just as any other librarian or library user might do.

Recently, in part inspired by ratings of everything else from cities to hospitals to universities, I decided to try to take a somewhat more systematic approach to evaluating libraries. The result was the HAPLR Index rating system. A report on it has been published twice in American Libraries, in January and September of this year. The





haplr-index.com web site I established has received tens of thousands of visitors since the beginning of 1999. Hundreds of libraries have chosen to order individualized scorecard ratings as well. There have been some objections, of course. That's the trouble with ratings. All in all, I am glad to be doing the HAPLR Index and plan to continue for quite a while. I suspect that most in my audience today are glad to hear that.

It is truly remarkable to consider that Ohio is home to the top rated libraries in 5 of the 10 population categories for the HAPLR Index. Furthermore, fully 25 of the top 100 libraries are in Ohio, a truly amazing record. Congratulations!

This afternoon I want to deal with three things. First, I want to talk about the Index and the ratings of the Ohio libraries here today. Secondly, I will turn to some speculation on why Ohio libraries do so well in these ratings. Finally, I want to mention some of my hopes and dreams for how to use HAPLR ratings and other measurements to improve libraries throughout the United States.

HAPLR Index Overview

Score card ratings for 9,000 U.S. libraries.

The HAPLR Index uses data provided by nearly 9,000 public libraries in the United States to create comparative rankings. The comparisons are in broad population categories with breaks at 1,000; 2,500; 5,000; 10,000; 25,000; 50,000; 100,000; 250,000; and 500,000. The data are from the Federal-State Cooperative Service (FSCS).



Compares to comparably sized libraries in the state or nation.

Each index factor produces a rank and percentile score. All factors are ranked from high to low EXCEPT cost per circulation. It is assumed that the best cost per circulation is the lowest cost.

Does Wind Chill Factor tell you how cold it is?

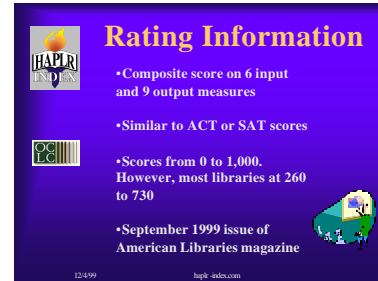
I am from Wisconsin, but I don't have to tell Ohioans that it gets cold there in winter. When I was a kid there was no wind chill index, but on days when I walked home from school without gloves, I suspect it was just as cold as now. It is much the same with a library-rating index. Your libraries are just as good as they were before; the HAPLR Index just makes us notice it more.



Rating Information

Input and Output measures

The HAPLR Index uses six input and nine output measures. The measures are calculated from the Federal-State Cooperative System for public library data (FSCS). Each factor was weighted and scored. I then added the scores for each library within a population category to develop a weighted score.



Rating Information

- Composite score on 6 input and 9 output measures
- Similar to ACT or SAT scores
- Scores from 0 to 1,000. However, most libraries at 260 to 730
- September 1999 issue of American Libraries magazine

12-499 haplr-index.com

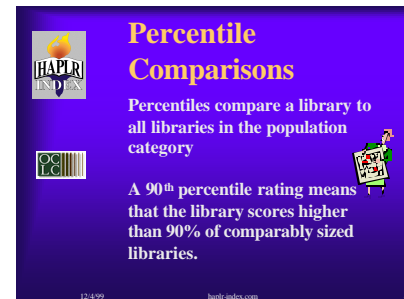
Similar to ACT or SAT scores

The HAPLR Index is similar to an ACT or SAT score with a theoretical minimum of 1 and a maximum of 1,000. About 90% of libraries in each population group scored between 260 and 730.

Percentile Comparisons

Percentiles compare a library to all libraries in the population category. A 90th percentile rating means that the library scores higher than 90% of comparably sized libraries.

The graphs compare each library to comparable libraries throughout the country. For each factor the graph illustrates the library's percentile score. A 50th percentile score means half of all libraries in the group scored higher, half lower.



Percentile Comparisons

Percentiles compare a library to all libraries in the population category

A 90th percentile rating means that the library scores higher than 90% of comparably sized libraries.

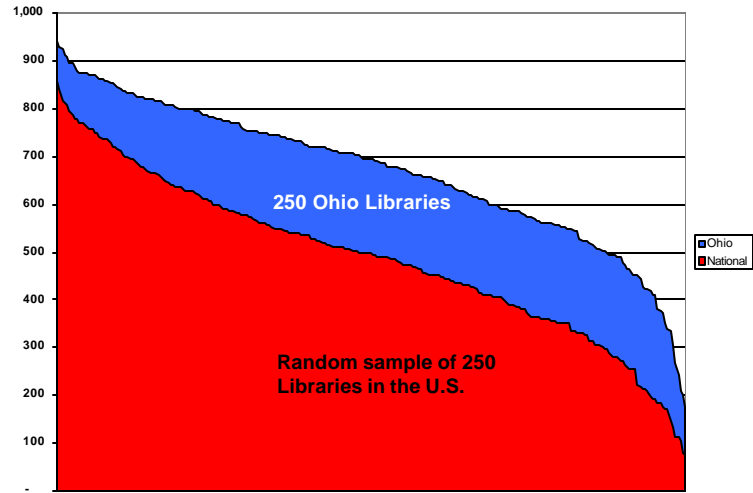
12-499 haplr-index.com

The libraries in the population category were ranked with weighted scores for each factor to produce the composite HAPLR Index score, rank and cumulative percentile noted next to the library name for each library.

Percentile scores in the top (or bottom) quartile on EVERY measure are exceptionally rare in the national data.

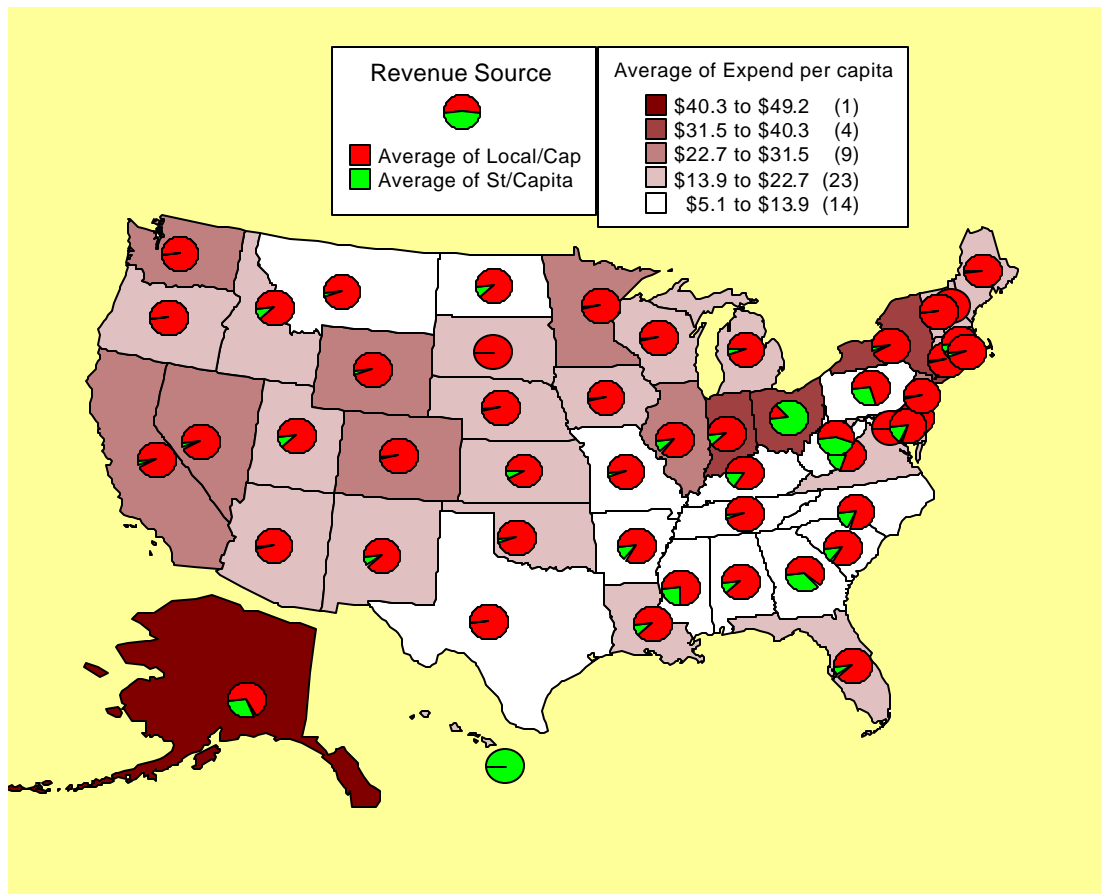
Grading on the Curve

As mentioned earlier, most scores are between 260 and 730. Comparing the national trend to that in Ohio is very instructive. The graph compares a random sample of 250 libraries nationally to the actual scores of all 250 rated Ohio libraries. As some have said, immodestly: Buckeyes rule! At least they consistently outscore their national counterparts.



Getting what you pay for

As most of you know, and the map below illustrates, total spending in Ohio is higher than in almost all other states. State funding as a percent of the total exceeds that of all other states except Hawaii.





INPUT measures for Ohio:

The separate paper on Ohio Library statistics that I prepared for OCLC indicates the following for Ohio. For Input measures specifically the following observations can be made:

1. In every population category, Ohio libraries outspend those in the rest of the country.
2. Ohio libraries devote a greater share of their budgets to materials.
3. In all categories, Ohio libraries spend more on materials per capita.
4. Regardless of population category, Ohio libraries are more fully staffed than most libraries.
5. Small Ohio libraries have many more magazines to read; larger libraries have about the average amount.
6. All sizes of Ohio libraries have more books to choose from than their national counterparts do.

Input measures for Ohio:

1. outspend those in the rest of the country.
2. devote a greater share of their budgets to materials
3. spend more on materials
4. are more fully staffed than most libraries.
5. Small Ohio libraries have more magazines, larger libraries are about average.
6. have a more books to choose from than their national counterparts.

12/4/99 haplr-index.com 11

OUTPUT measures for Ohio

The separate paper on Ohio Library statistics that I prepared for OCLC indicates the following for Ohio. For OUTPUT measures specifically the following observations can be made:

1. It costs less to circulate an item in all but the smallest Ohio libraries.
2. Ohio libraries are visited more often on a per capita basis than their national counterpart libraries.
3. Collections in Ohio see a collection turnover rate very close to that of the rest of the country.
4. Circulation per staff member is very similar to that found in most sizes of libraries nationally.
5. People check out a lot more books per person in all sizes of Ohio libraries.
6. Reference per capita in Ohio Libraries is much higher than one finds nationally.
7. Regardless of size, Ohio libraries check out more items per hour that the library is open.
8. The larger libraries in Ohio are visited less often per open hour than their national counterparts.
9. On an average visit, Ohio residents usually borrow more items from their libraries than most U.S. residents do.

Output measures

1. it costs less to circulate an item in all but the smallest Ohio libraries.
2. libraries are visited more often on a per capita basis
3. collection turnover rate very close to that in the rest of the country.
4. circulation per staff member is very similar to that found in most sizes of libraries nationally.
5. people check out a lot more books per person in all sizes of Ohio libraries.
6. reference per capita is much higher than one finds nationally.
7. libraries check out more items per hour that the library is open.
8. larger libraries are visited less often per open hour than their national counterparts.
9. on an average visit, Ohio residents usually borrow more items

12/4/99 haplr-index.com 12



Recipe for Ohio's excellence?

We can only speculate on the reasons for the high scores on the HAPLR Index for Ohio libraries. The following are my speculations. I believe that in some measure, the high rankings are attributable to five conditions. The recipe may perhaps be summed up in the phrase:

Think and finance globally; act locally.

1. **High per capita spending.** Ohio is second nationally in spending levels per capita.
2. **High ratio of state spending.** Only Hawaii has a greater percent of state support.
3. **Legal basis for county service.** Libraries that serve multiple jurisdictions county, metropolitan, and so forth appear to do better. There are many such libraries among the top Ohio libraries.
4. **Right mix of urban and rural.** Some states are dominated by politics that pit a single urban area (Chicago or New York) against the rest of the state. Other states end up dividing over rural and urban divisions. Ohio seems to have enough urban centers, but none to dominate. There appear also to be enough rural centers to balance things.
5. **Library utility in your backyard.** One cannot help but wonder whether or not having one of the premier library consortiums in the state does not help to inspire the type of cooperation that leads to better outcomes.

Recipe for excellence?

Think and finance globally, act locally.

1. High per capita spending
2. High ratio of state spending
3. Legal basis for county services
4. Right mix of urban and rural
5. Library utility in your backyard

12/4/99 haplr-index.com 11

Ohio's Top Five

Arranged by size of community served the top five libraries in the state are:

1. Columbus Metropolitan Library
2. Westerville Public Library
3. Washington Centerville Public Library
4. Bexley Public Library
5. Twinsburg Public Library

Ohio's Top Five (by size of library)

1. Columbus Metropolitan Library
2. Westerville Public Library
3. Washington Centerville Public Library
4. Bexley Public Library
5. Twinsburg Public Library

12/4/99 haplrindex.com 15



What the Following graphs mean

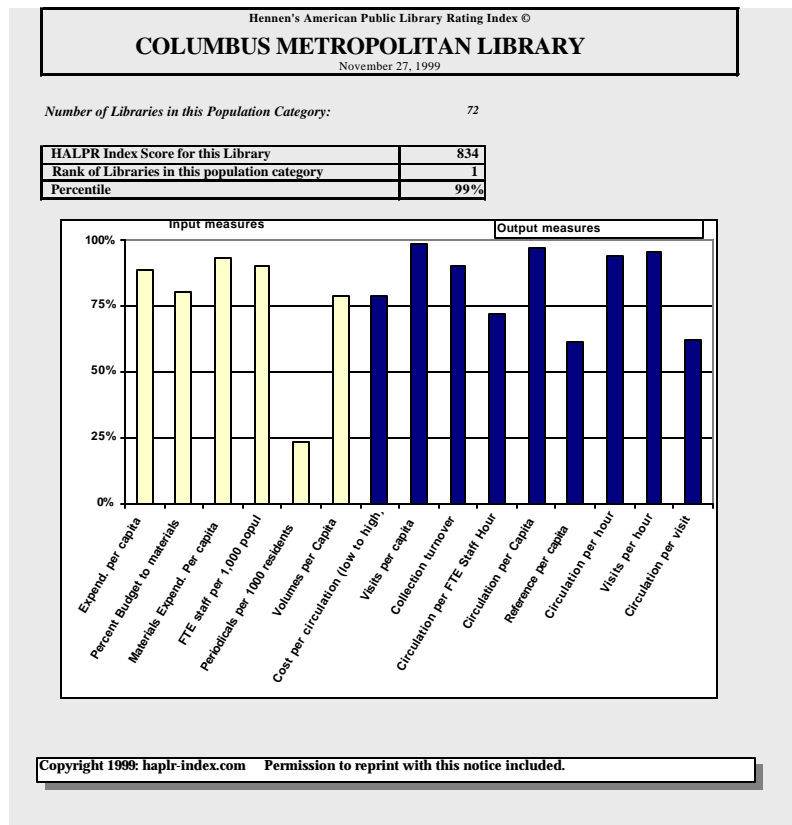
The graphs compare the library to comparable libraries throughout the country. For each factor the graph illustrates the library's percentile score. A 50th percentile score means half of all libraries in the group scored higher, half lower. The libraries in the population category were ranked with weighted scores for each factor to produce the composite HAPLR Index score, rank and cumulative percentile noted above. Note that all factors are ranked from high to low EXCEPT cost per circulation. It is assumed that the best cost per circulation is the lowest cost.

Columbus Metropolitan Library

Columbus Metropolitan Library is Central Ohio's Center for Lifelong Learning. It is one of the most-used library systems in the country. In 1997, customers borrowed nearly 12 million items and asked almost 1.3 million reference questions.

CML includes the Main Library, Outreach Services Division and 19 branches conveniently located throughout Franklin County. CML also jointly operates the Northwest Library in cooperation with the Worthington Public Library.

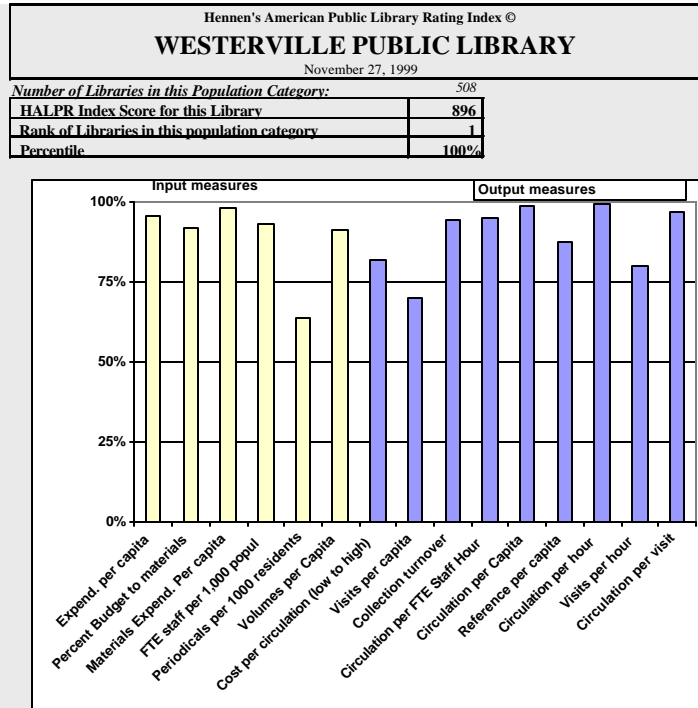
CML offers a collection of nearly three million items, plenty of exciting services for children, and special services for people with physical or visual problems. CML offers services accessed right from home or office including Discovery Place, the online catalog, and the telephone information line, 645-2ASK. It will also fax articles to your computer or fax machine.





Westerville Public Library

The Westerville Public Library is one of seven public library systems in Franklin County. It is a school district which serves northeast Franklin County and southeast Delaware County. As a school district library, the geographic boundaries are the same as the Westerville School District.



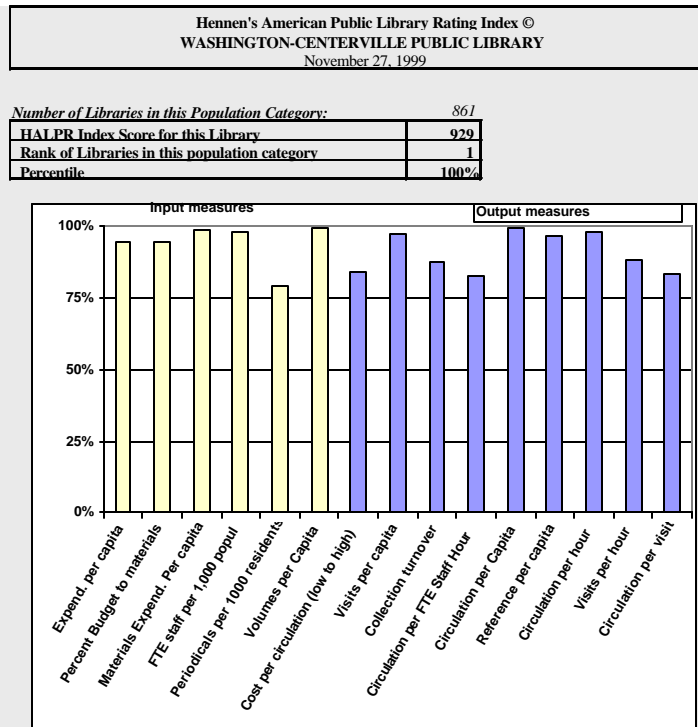
Copyright 1999: haplr-index.com Permission to reprint with this notice included.

Washington Centerville Public Library

Washington-Centerville Public Library can trace its history back more than 185 years to 1810.

While the Library Club was a social club, its members strived not simply to entertain, but to educate. Its motto:

"The noblest motive is the public good."



Copyright 1999: haplr-index.com Permission to reprint with this notice included.



Bexley Public Library

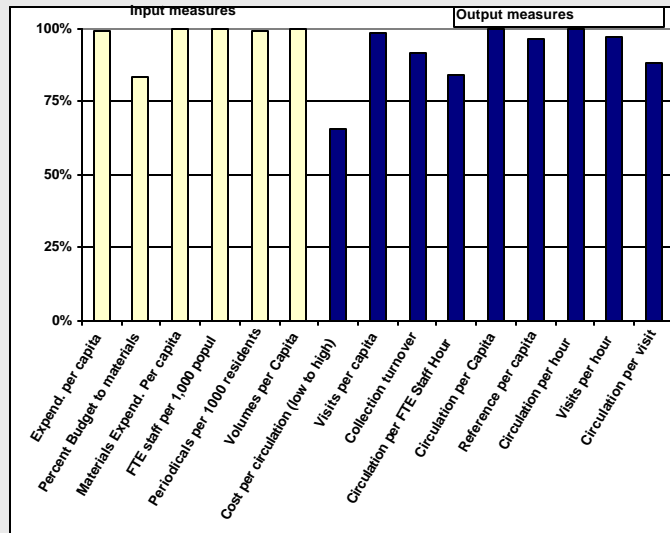
It is hard to find a library with better input data in the whole country.

The output data matches.

Hennen's American Public Library Rating Index ©
BEXLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY
 November 27, 1999

Number of Libraries in this Population Category: 1672

HALPR Index Score for this Library	926
Rank of Libraries in this population category	1
Percentile	99.9%



Twinsburg Public Library

Twinsburg is famous for its twins reunion and now for its library rating.

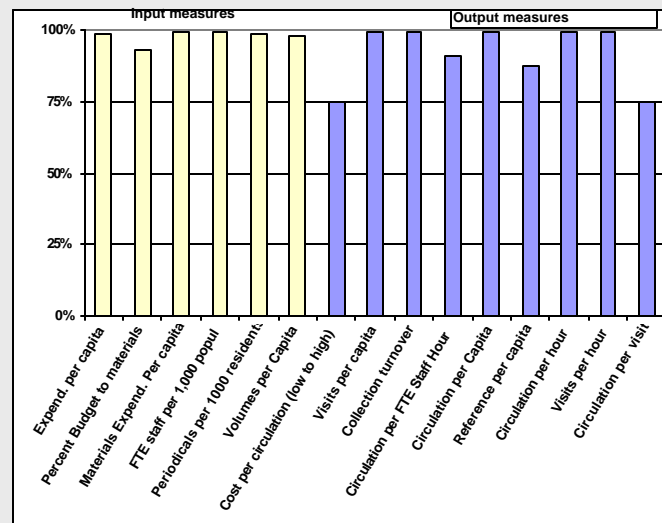
The library web page notes the HALPR rating.

The library has storytimes, excellent hours, and accessible meeting rooms.

Hennen's American Public Library Rating Index ©
TWINSBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY
 December 2, 1999

Number of Libraries in this Population Category: 1492

HALPR Index Score for this Library	942
Rank of Libraries in this population category	1
Percentile	100%





Future Prospects.

I intend to continue publishing the HAPLR Index for as long as possible. I hope that it will have a positive impact on library development throughout the nation. I hope that it will be part of the development of tools to re-invent public libraries for the 21st Century.

In brief, here is how I would like to use benchmarking tools like the HAPLR Index.

1. Use the HAPLR Index to identify 100 (or more) candidates for library mentor grants. Libraries so identified could then choose to enter into a grant process.
2. Applicants would be subjected to a peer review process that lets seasoned professional librarians rate the libraries. This will assure professional judgment of the libraries in a process similar to that applied to library schools for certification.
3. The applicant libraries would also be tested with a customer satisfaction inventory using a national agency such as the Gallup poll to assure that in addition to the statistics in the HAPLR Index and the Peer Review, they are also providing customer service in an excellent manner.
4. Have libraries go through a quality assurance process similar to that used by private industry using the ISO 9000 standards. This would assure that libraries would have the necessary documentation on planning and development to allow other libraries and library schools to study their best practices.
5. Enlist the agreement of Library Schools to provide field placements at the mentor libraries. This would allow new graduates exposure, either on site or using virtual library discussions, to examine the best practices of the top libraries. It would also, of course, provide a pool of enthusiastic graduate students to study and further refine these best practices at the mentor libraries.
6. Establish virtual training centers using distance education technology to discuss and examine the best practices at the mentor libraries. The distance education centers would allow library staff at all libraries to join a virtual community to examine the best practices at the mentor libraries using the Internet, Internet telephony, and distance education tools.
7. Provide a limited number (50, 100) Best Practices Library Grants to libraries that succeed in getting through all the steps outlined. These would be similar to Genius Grants. The library would receive the prestige for the award and a cash grant from government or private foundation sources. The awards would be without any strings with the assumption that the chosen libraries would use them to define improved practices for the future.



Conclusion

An index number encapsulates a lot of data into a single number. No index number is perfect.

Was the weather better before climatologists invented the wind chill index?

Does a library-rating index change things, or, like the wind-chill index, does it just seem that way?

The HAPLR composite average scores for Ohio libraries are about 20% higher than libraries nationally. Ohio libraries ranked first in 5 of the ten population categories considered. There were 25 Ohio libraries in the top 100 listing.