

## **Evaluation of Information Services in the Library: Areas identified by Graduate Students**

**Naresh Kumar Agarwal<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Simmons College, 300 The Fenway, Boston 02115  
agarwal@simmons.edu

**Abstract:** Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the operation and/or the outcomes of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy (Weiss, 1998). Neal (2006), in the context of academic libraries, says that “decisions are routinely not supported by the evidence of well-designed investigations” and that “research in the field is poorly communicated, understood and applied” (quoted by Peter Hernon, in the forward to Matthews, 2007). In addition, more and more libraries are either closing down or being forced to cut down on services due to recession (Powell, 2009; Applegate, 2009). Thus, identification of different areas of library services for systematic evaluation becomes extremely imperative in the current economic scenario. In an assignment to graduate students in a Master of Science in Library and Information Science program (with most students currently working in library or archive settings), the students were asked to describe an evaluation research scenario and a problem statement based on the scenario. An important criterion for grading was the significance of the scenario proposed. Using the areas of library (and archive) evaluation identified by the students as a case study, as well as review of recent evaluation studies, this study seeks to propose research questions and current areas of interest in the evaluation of library services. The study should shed light on the evaluation areas of importance in the current economic scenario and also help drive future research in this area.

**Keywords:** evaluation of library services, evaluation research scenario, graduate students, assignment, research questions

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