

Summary from March 2021 RIPL/PLA Summit

Background:

The [Research Institute for Public Libraries](#) (RIPL) is a national initiative to provide training on data and evaluation to public library staff. It began in 2015 as a project of the Colorado State Library and Colorado Library Consortium, and has been partially funded by an IMLS grant that ends on March 31, 2021. This meeting is one of the last grant-funded activities. RIPL and PLA staff have partnered on activities throughout the grant period, including this meeting, which they are co-hosting.

Goals of the two meetings:

The meeting took place over two days (each day was a 2-hour meeting). The goals for these meetings were:

1. Conduct a needs assessment: Identify the training and tools needed by public library staff to support their work with data
2. Gap analysis: Map the landscape of existing training and tools against the needs identified in the needs assessment; identify gaps in the existing landscape of training and tools.
3. Preliminary action planning How might participants and others fill the gaps? What might be next steps?

Participants:

A total of 19 public library stakeholders participated in this meeting. See Appendix A for the participant list.

Notes from Day One

Goals:

The goals for the first part of the meeting were three-fold:

- Develop a shared understanding of the current suite of data tools and trainings for public library staff.
- Clarify our target “public library staff member” by creating user personas for three different type of users: Data Newbie, Data Geek and Data Expert.
- Conduct an initial gap analysis – how well is the current suite of data tools and training meeting the needs?

Headlines from day one meeting.

What one question do participants want to have answered as a result of this meeting?

Participants were asked what one question they would like to have answered as a result of the meeting. All individual responses are in Appendix A.

Do we have a shared understanding of the current suite of data tools and training?

- Participants reviewed the spreadsheet of the existing data tools and training and made the following observations or asked the following questions:
 - Is there going to be any connection/crosswalk to data from Project Outcome?
 - Eventually that’s the plan. What that might look like is still under consideration.
 - The PLA website has a new section for “data-driven librarianship” with all the various initiatives. You can view it at: <http://www.ala.org/pla/data>
 - The IMLS performance metrics for their grant program lanes could be considered a tool.

Who are we designing data tools and training for? Who are our target users and what are their needs?

After looking at the current suite of data tools and training available, participants then engaged in an exercise to clarify the data tool and training needs of three likely users. These users: “Data Newbie,” “Data Geek,” and “Data Expert” were informed by preliminary data tool and training needs identification developed in the 2017 meeting. Participants separated into smaller groups and built out each “persona” and listed the top five data tool and training needs of each persona. These personas can be viewed by going to the following google documents below:

Personas

- Data Newbie:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/10KOHSSStebDg4Q2OBIf3aP7uDInYdtoWh4xskKF47qE4/edit?usp=sharing>
- Data Geek:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dxSUTLAC9UBZMtu4j8XuHQJn-oKOWUrsY3bVjVhCwrE/edit?usp=sharing>

- Data Expert:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sf3Au2QBfAYFtNhIKiHkq4S1JiUHQJT5Pa6RGrbexy0/edit?usp=sharing>

Preliminary gap analysis

Participants then were asked to reflect on the needs of each persona and conduct a preliminary gap analysis – answering the question, how well does the current suite of data tools and training meet these needs? The results of the preliminary gap analysis can be viewed by going to the following google sheets below.

Gap Analysis

Data Expert:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1HJ6TTHNikO_t5ZvS1ga-HG-qogZSkCDWBLB9k_BYTo4/edit?usp=sharing

Data Geek:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1cubwlgWpliQOuKtDgi8kAJhwSSICLraM_rHIduOGq8g/edit?usp=sharing

Data Newbie:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1k-E_fk1NXTSWMBpmk-kNzB3NLEZPv4tMx6SNW-GNerc/edit?usp=sharing

Notes from Day Two:

Goals:

The goals for the second part of the meeting were two-fold:

- Informed by the gap analysis and personas, identify and prioritize unmet data tools and training needs.
- Action planning – Identify concrete steps the field can take to meet the prioritized data and training needs of the target public library professional over the next three years.

Headlines from day two meeting.

Creating a priority list of data tool and data training needs:

Participants started the day by sharing the library personas and the related data tool and training needs of each persona. The group then separated into four smaller groups: two focusing on creating a priority list of *data tool needs* considering all three public library personas and two focusing on creating a priority list of *data training needs* considering all three public library personas. The results of these discussions can be viewed on the google sheets listed below.

Link to Data Training Priority Needs – Group 1:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18gpCRuDahmsYGP4j5ovmyzTUOPiTYmmqpXwknsg5HVg/edit?usp=sharing>

Link to Data Training Priority Needs – Group 2:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1yP0Q2_9cMST9-00AL3PLigUx5wtDcFW9JxNebKFOio/edit?usp=sharing

Link to Data Tools Priority Needs – Group 1:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1BcVNE9kytRCuHY2tsRKCKmznIWwYC_qAuaHChzxRyDg/edit?usp=sharing

Link to Data Tools Priority Needs – Group 2:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rKZaSIEy2VeKzC7jphGGHPMYj04VMJiFqomA3N9fjVM/edit?usp=sharing>

Action Planning

Data TRAINING Grp 1 – 5 Bold Steps:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1wCZPf1GORuxm3JqknHGeorIJDE9F5d20mRc26FK-GZQ/edit?usp=sharing>

Data TRAINING Grp 2 – 5 Bold Steps:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1XnWR--R_8KigVPYarHKB4gtbCf6RoWQBAmEj5YR5b24/edit?usp=sharing

Data TOOLS Grp 1 – 5 Bold Steps:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1OJHnGKK-B5ywMoC6g4kEQOooGfv2il7qP2DpcoeKXko/edit?usp=sharing>

Data TRAINING Grp 2 – 5 Bold Steps:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/12NYavTqj2bS6CB3tvmfPNkAV3FBE60bLdoU9sE-Womk/edit?usp=sharing>

Appendix A
RIPL/PLA Summit – Participant List

First	Last	Title	Organization
Lourdes	Aceves	Associate Director, Digital Programs	Urban Libraries Council
Jaime	Ball	Library Development Administrator	Arizona State Library
Renee	DiPilato	Director of Libraries and Historical Resources	Sarasota County Libraries (FL)
Toby	Greenwalt	Director of Digital Strategy and Technology Implementation	Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (PA)
Grant	Halter	Data Analysis Manager	Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)
Lynn	Hoffman	Director of Operations	Somerset County Library System (NJ)
Katina	Jones	Statistical Research Analyst	Mid-Continent Public Library (MO)
Chris	Jowaisas	Senior Research Scientist	TASCHA, University of Washington
Amy	Koester	Learning Experiences Manager	Skokie Public Library (IL)
Jen	Nelson	State Librarian	New Jersey State Library
Bree	Norlander	Research Coordinator & Analyst	TASCHA, University of Washington
Vailey	Oehlke	Executive Director	Multnomah Public Library (OR)
Jennifer	Pearson	Director	Marshall County Memorial Library (TN), ARSL Past President
Veronda	Pitchford	Assistant Director	Califa/Infopeople
Julianne	Rist	Director of Libraries	Jefferson County Public Library (CO)
Sharon	Streams	Director	WebJunction/OCLC
Derek	Wolfgram	Director	Redwood City Public Library (CA)

Facilitator: Joan Fanning, Luma Consulting

Hosts: Linda Hofschire, Director, RIPL and Training Coordinator, Infopeople; and Sara Goek, Program Manager, PLA

Appendix B

Responses to “What one question do you want answered as a result of this meeting?”

- Is there a golden goose to deliver the data needed for every type of library?
- How can the Public Library Data Alliance (PLDA) help make whatever's going to happen, happen?
- How do we make data work for small libraries with fewer/less educated staff?
- How can we best support the smallest libraries in using data?
- How do we create a data informed public library culture?
- I want to have a stronger sense of what types of data trainings/supports are available to staff at all levels/in all roles--the right opportunity for the staff need.
- Why do data matter?
- Do public library staff have an awareness of these data tools?
- Are library data needs different post-COVID than what we might have anticipated otherwise and how?
- How can we ensure that all the data that staff spend time compiling actually gets put to good use?
- What data is most needed for libraries?
- How do we build a unified understanding of library impact measures that works for both internal and external stakeholders?
- How to we show the library's value through data and stories.
- Where is data tools/training on the priority list for libraries and does that priority need to shift?
- What data could make library staff happier
- Share your name, organization and your response to the question then pick the next person to go.
- How can we encourage library decision makers to use and prioritize data?
- How can we best build library confidence to present data to external stakeholders?
- What aren't we doing as libs that data is telling us we should be doing to serve community need?