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# Capturing business intelligence required for targeted marketing, demonstrating value, and driving process improvement

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## Abstract

The University of Wollongong (UOW) in New South Wales, Australia, has undertaken an innovative and collaborative research project to demonstrate the value that can be provided by academic libraries through a tool called the "library cube". The library cube consists of two major components: a backend system containing a multidimensional data warehouse linking student borrowing and use of electronic resources to students' academic marks (grades); and a frontend system that allows users to quickly and easily create cross tabulated data views, such as average student marks by frequency of library resource usage and gender. The project is different from the efforts of other institutions to link usage to student outcomes, in that the library cube is not an isolated research project, but is now an ongoing part of UOW's systems and performance reporting. The library cube represents a fundamental shift in evaluating

the student experience through the integration of discrete systems and datasets. It has revealed a very strong relationship between student library usage and academic performance. This information will improve UOW library's ability to demonstrate value to clients and stakeholders. The library cube has also delivered some anticipated and unexpected findings on the relationship between social variables, such as gender, age, and citizenship, and library usage behaviors; and in doing so has also identified potential target audiences for library promotions and engagement strategies.

## Highlights

- ° Students using library resources more frequently perform better academically on average.
- ° Inexperienced students tend to gain more than their experienced counterparts.
- ° Males use electronic resources less, but benefit more than females when they do use e-resources.
- ° Many students never borrow print material.
- ° Print material has a lesser impact on academic performance than electronic.



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**Brian Cox** has worked in a variety of positions, involving areas such as privacy, copyright, and records management, within and external to academic libraries. In his current position, manager of quality and marketing at the University of Wollongong Library, New South Wales, Australia, he has been instrumental in the revitalization of the library's collection and management of its performance data and developing new

reporting streams focusing on outcomes and value.

**Margie Jantti**, University Librarian at the University of Wollongong, has over a decade's experience in quality management and assurance. The application of quality principles and systems thinking underpins her considerable and successful contribution to a strategic agenda for quality across all facets of the library and the university. She has established and embedded regular review and evaluation programs; robust measurement systems aligned to the vision and mission of the library; and benchmarking and certification processes to test the efficacy of chosen approaches. She has led national and international evaluation teams for Australian Business Excellence Awards Awards.

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