



ComPADRE Evaluation

The success of the ComPADRE Pathway will depend on meeting user needs through content selection, presentation, discovery, and through user services. We will also need to evaluate operation and management of the library. This is an outline of the questions to be addressed and some of the measurement methods planned.

Usage and Usability

- Can users find the resources that they come to find? Measurements:
 - Usability testing – Task-based interviews with users and potential users to follow their interactions with ComPADRE. Usage will be recorded by an interviewer. Open questions are asked at the end of the testing.
 - Collection Surveys – Use of survey tool for questions specific to a particular collection. This can be targeted to new tools and design efforts. Find out what people are doing while on ComPADRE
 - Broad Surveys – Use ComPADRE and Society (?) member lists for feedback from a broader community. Use email invitations although limit spamming. This can track marketing efforts.
 - Web metrics – This will track searches, detail page views, return visits and exit links. All data is in aggregate; single users will not be identified.
 - Page feedback – All pages will have specific feedback links. This can be used for comments on both usability and content.
- Are the ComPADRE tools being used? Measurements:
 - Numbers – Track the number of Personal Filing Cabinets and Personal Profiles created, discussion messages posted, and reviews completed.
 - Features – Track traffic related to featured items in the collections.
 - Repository – Are items in the ComPADRE repository being accessed and used?
- Is the material useful and complete? Measurements:
 - Surveys & Comments – Gather user feedback on the materials in the collection and needs that are not being met.
 - Analysis of content distribution – Perform a bibliographic analysis of the topics covered in the collection and the topics not covered, and the resource types included

Impact

- Are the target audiences coming to and using the collections? Measurements:
 - Web metrics - Numbers of visits and number of return visits (encourage login). Collect geographical data to track spread of usage and for a better measurement of percentage of users in a particular market.

- Society participation – Discover through surveys the fraction of society members that know/use/like ComPADRE. Interview members of the societies’ governing structures (board, forums, committees, sections, etc.)
- Are resource authors and providers participating? Measurements:
 - Fed Search – Track the number of participants with whom we are sharing Fed Search. Track the number of partners who we are searching.
 - Invitations to participate – Track the number of invited projects (CCLI, FIPSE, Labs) who have added (or requested) ComPADRE records.
 - Submissions – Track the number of items submitted by authors
- Are Communities being served? Measurements:
 - Discussions – Track the use of discussions and comments for sharing tips and help within communities. Study differences in community type and size to determine factors that help or hinder community interaction.
 - Group and individual participants – Track the number and size of “Project Pages” created by users.
 - New collections – New collections or “mini-collections” indicate the use of ComPADRE by specific groups. This will include the number of conferences and workshops, and their attendance, supported by the ComPADRE infrastructure.
- What impact are special features having, such as databases? Measurements:
 - Web metrics – Track the usage collections and databases (REU, RET, Scholarship, etc.) during their introduction. Also track traffic to other areas of the collections and cross-collection traffic.
 - Database Impact – Track traffic through databases to web sites listed. Gather information from both “users” and “providers” of the databases.
 - Submissions – Track the submission of resources to the collections in relation to the addition of databases and features.
- How are the ComPADRE materials being used by teachers and students? Measurements:
 - Volunteer usage logs – Have teachers track their usage of materials found on ComPADRE. Perform a longitudinal study of these volunteers for changes in teaching practice.
 - Focus groups – Invite registered (frequent?) users of the collections to focus groups at meetings.
 - Workshop participants – Follow up with workshop participants to determine their continuing use of the collections. Capture, review, and host the products created by the workshop members.

Administration

- Are resources loaded efficiently and accurately? Measurements:
 - Time – Average time of items from submission to availability on collections. Frequency of cross-collection sharing. Analysis of a random selection of resources for similarities and accuracy of cataloging (similar resource types and levels in particular).
- Are the collections and communities being supported? Measurements:
 - Review – Annual review of collections and project support by editors and advisory groups.

- What is the impact of marketing efforts? Measurements:
 - Web metrics – Monitor web traffic around marketing events, workshops, and meetings.
 - Surveys – Include in surveys questions of how users are introduced to ComPADRE.

The following ideas were presented in the Pathway Proposal and/or were discussed at the December 2005 project meeting:

Evaluation instruments being used or planned: task-based usability interviews, online surveys and web metrics, user activity logs, focus groups and interviews of community members, and data collection on feature usage. Each instrument addresses usability, information seeking, and impact issues, each with a different focus.

The formative evaluation of ComPADRE through task-based interviews and surveys addresses issues of usability, navigation, and the information needs of users.

- Task-based interviews: Users participate in usability interviews where their progress completing specific tasks is monitored. This testing, used in the first years of ComPADRE, has led to several changes in organization of links, content details, and instructions for users.
- Online Surveys: Online surveys are used to gather broader user feedback on content and information architecture. These surveys solicit simple demographic and usage information, such as user role, purposes for using the collection, how the user was introduced to ComPADRE, successes or failures during use, and content breadth, depth, and descriptions.
- Web Log Analysis: Web log analysis, combined with surveys, indicates potential problems in users finding desired resources.

In the future, the surveys will be refined to address specific issues, and the survey tool will be updated to provide greater data-mining capabilities, with the ability to focus on issues unique to specific users.

User activity logs will explore the use and potential for impact on teaching of ComPADRE. Volunteers will maintain records of their visits, their goals, their search processes, and their success or failure on ComPADRE. They will record the use of the materials found and the impact on their classes. The evaluation team will interview the volunteers about their experiences to gather additional perception and impact data. These logs will provide longitudinal data as participation is tracked over two to three years. Together with surveys, this work will evaluate the success of the ComPADRE collections in meeting audience needs.

Focus groups and interviews will be used to identify the key issues that need to be addressed by ComPADRE. The views of community leaders will be gathered to determine the priorities of the societies and their membership for online resource collections. The views of users of the collections will be solicited for use in both short-term and strategic planning.

In addition to the efforts detailed above, ComPADRE will be working with the NSDL Core Integration in maintaining a meta-framework in which evaluation results will be inventoried across collections and ultimately available in aggregate. The specific

initiative will be known as a “Resource Lifecycle” meta-framework model and will incorporate five components:

- Resource creation quadrant
- Resource review
- Aggregation of evaluations
- Sharing with community
- Feedback

The following table relates issues and instruments. In all cases, demographic information is collected (e.g., position and comfort/experience with the Web for teaching and learning). Flora McMartin, our external evaluator, will review and critique these efforts’ results.

Issues Instruments	Site Usability: Web site design Navigation	Information-seeking: Information discovery Information description	User Impact: User goals Material use
task-based interviews (Underway and Ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find material useful for your class. • Create an account, and login. • Submit materials and use Filing Cabinet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the organization confusing? Useful? • How useful are the descriptions and other information? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What features are useful? What features are needed? • Will you use the collection again?
online survey (piloted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which factors did you find helpful: content, resource types, grade levels, descriptions and other information, search/browse tools, layout and navigation? • Which caused difficulties? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often do you use ComPADRE? • Are goals met? • Do you contribute?
activity logs and process-based interviews (to be done)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your search path. Include search terms, buttons, and links. How long did this search take? • What design features were helpful or frustrating? • Did you find what you were looking for? Did you find something else? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you use the content found? • Describe its use in the classroom.