Results from the Vancouver Public Library Study
April 12, 2005

ACTION for Health

Document Status:

☐ Published Paper ☐ Practitioner’s Pointers
☐ Working Paper ☐ Briefing Note
☐ Report ☐ Research Tool
☐ Draft ☐ Overview
☒ Presentation ☐ Other

Prepared by:
Karen Smith
MA Student
Simon Fraser University

Anne-Marie Nicol
Post Doctoral Fellow
Simon Fraser University

Ellen Balka
Principal Investigator
Simon Fraser University

Document Contact:
Ellen Balka
School of Communication
Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive
Burnaby, BC, Canada V5A 1S6
tel: +1.604.725.2756
e-mail: ellenb@sfu.ca
website: www.sfu.ca/act4hlth/

SFU Institutional Repository: http://ir.lib.sfu.ca/handle/1892/3701
April 12, 2005

Results from the Vancouver Public Library study

Karen Smith, MA Candidate, SFU
Anne-Marie Nicol, Ph.D., School of Occupational Health and Hygiene, UBC
Ellen Balka, Ph.D., SFU and Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute
Presentation Overview

Brief overview of ACTION for Health grant & how this research fits within the overall project

VPL research purpose & questions

Methods

Findings

Comparison to BC HealthGuide Web Site Users

Next Steps
Several projects underway address end user aspects of health information consumption, including:

- The Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviours of Young Women with Breast Cancer in Relation to the Internet (BC Cancer Agency)
- Rural Women’s Health Information Seeking Patterns (ON)
- Study of Community Centre Users (NFLD)
- BC HealthGuide Online Study
- Content Analysis of Several Health Web Sites
- Impact of a Nurse Intermediary in e-Health Support for Rural Youth
Projects Soon to be Starting:

- Canadian Health Network
- Mid-Main Clinic Patients
- Partnering with Health Care Intermediaries/Natural Helpers to Deliver Information in Rural, Regional, and Remote Australia
- Rural HIV/AIDS Information Networks Study (ON/BC/NF)
Each ACTION for Health project addresses the interaction between...

Technology

Users

Information
Some Detailed Research Questions...

1) What are the problems for which e-health is the solution?

2) When, where, under what circumstances, and for whom is e-health the solution?

3) How does the introduction of information and computer technologies (ICT) change the relationship between the producers and users of information?

4) How does the introduction of ICTs affect the ways in which people access, understand, and use information?
VPL Research Purpose

- To understand the role the public library plays in patrons’ health information seeking, and specifically, whether or not library patrons consulted the Internet prior to seeking helping from library, or planned on consulting the Internet after obtaining assistance from a librarian.
Research Methods & Dates

- Surveys were distributed at the VPL Central Library during October and November 2004.

- 50 surveys were completed overall.
  - 113 library patrons were approached and asked to participate in study.
    - Of this overall group, 63 (56%) indicated a willingness to complete a survey.
    - Of this overall group, 50 (44%) completed and returned the survey.
Research Instrument

Survey consisted of both open-ended questions & multiple choice questions

- Respondents were asked to participate by librarians in the Science & Technology section and the Social Section of the main library branch if the patron asked a health-related question.

- Majority of surveys were completed in Sci & Tech section, as that is where majority of health-related questions were asked.
Research Instrument (con’t)

Questions focused on:

- Information seeking patterns for health info
- Confidence in finding health information
- Self-reported assessment of health status

Awareness of various health information sites such as:

- BC HealthGuide
- Canadian Health Network
- VPL

Demographic characteristics including:

- Age, family composition, education, income, occupation, postal code, housing type, primary language spoken at home, cultural/racial background
Profile of Survey Respondents

54% were under 40 years of age

74% were female

54% had university or higher degree

60% stated their racial/ethnic background as White
  - 22% were Chinese
  - 8% European
  - 4% were Aboriginal

20% were from households with incomes < $20,000
  - 25% were from households > $50,000
Profile of Survey Respondents (con’t)

Those who completed survey:

For 74% of respondents, English was primary language spoken at home
  - 14% spoke an Asian or South Asian language

52% lived in an apartment, townhouse, or condo
  - 42% lived in single, detached, or duplex form of housing

48% were renters
  - 36% were owners; 16% did not respond to question

33% were planning to visit a doctor regarding the health condition/issue they
  were seeking information about

33% were seeking information on behalf of someone else
Resource Awareness

BC HealthGuide Handbook: 48%
Canadian Health Network: 32%
VPL Consumer Health Website: 22%
CDN GVPT Health Website: 34%
"I know where to find helpful health information"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I know how to find helpful health information on the Internet...”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"I can tell high quality health resources..."

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before talking with the reference librarian, what other information sources did you get information from?

1) Internet (including: Internet browsing, searching engines, chat rooms/bulletin boards)
2) Medical professionals (including: doctor, nurse, doctor’s office, walk-in clinic, pharmacist, community health centre)
3) Searched the library
Information Navigation (con’t)

What were the first 3 things that you did in order to find information before coming to the library?

1) Searched Internet
2) Searched library (including: other libraries, librarians, card catalogue, and databases)
3) Consulted medical professional (including: doctor, nurse, and pharmacist)
Information Navigation (con’t)

After you leave here, what information seeking strategies do you think you will pursue?

1) Internet
2) None (i.e., search complete or plan to read library books)
3) **Talk with a medical professional (including: doctor, nurse, or pharmacist)
3. **Other library (including: other libraries or other resources like the catalogue or database)

** Indicates tie
Comparison Statistics to BC HealthGuide web survey

- Researchers Rootman, Krajnak, and Balka are part of a team evaluating the BC HealthGuide program, a self-care health information program sponsored by the BC Ministry of Health
  - One program component is the BCHealthGuideOnLine (www.bchealthguide.org)
  - Pop-up survey ran on web site from mid September 2004 through February 1, 2005
    - Number of completed surveys was 2,927 (50% response rate)
  - Ministry community partner, Kevin Brown, is an ACTION for Health Grant community partner
- What has been learned through the web site survey offers points for comparison
## Comparison of VPL/Web Site Users by Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>VPL Patron (n=50)</th>
<th>BCHealthGuideOnLine (n=2,927)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Comparison Along Household Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>VPL Patron (54% response rate)</th>
<th>BCHealthGuideOnLine (79% response rate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $30K</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $30K</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Spoken at Home</td>
<td>VPL Patron (n=50)</td>
<td>BCHealthGuideOnLine (n=2,927)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or South Asian Language</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Language</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Not specifically broken out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Not specifically broken out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Comparison of Users Along Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>VPL Patron</th>
<th>BCHealthGuideOnLine User</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59 and Under</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 plus</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Comparison Along Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>VPL Patron</th>
<th>BCHealthGuideOnline User</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University or more</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or less</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
#1 - The Internet is not a substitute for other forms of information for all populations

Investment in other forms of information delivery aimed at less educated, less affluent Canadians and those with literacy barriers is essential to universal, equitable health care.
#2 - Librarians play an important role for information seekers, even for those confident in their online abilities.

Designing information-intensive programs around human information intermediaries may improve the outcomes of programs that utilize the Internet as a means of health information delivery.
Next Steps…

Questions arising from this study

Ways to increase participation in study?

Future directions for research

Observations at the online health info classes & follow-up

Next steps…