Smart Tools: For evaluating information projects, products and services

Description

Tweet

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â??About the Toolkit

The Smart Toolkit focuses on the evaluation of information projects, products and services from a learning perspective. It looks at evaluation within the context of the overall project cycle, from project planning and implementation to monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment, and then at the evaluation process itself, the tools involved and examples of their application.The theme running throughout the toolkit is:

Participatory evaluation for learning and impact

The emphasis is on internal evaluation â?? or â??self-evaluationâ?? â?? rather than external evaluation. Internal evaluation contributes to organisational learning and represents a significant shift from traditional evaluation, which has tended to be donor-driven to meet the demand for accountability and compliance. If evaluation is to achieve its ultimate objectives of enhancing learning and demonstrating impact, it needs to be applied with confidence in a systematic and coherent way.

Why â??smartâ???

In 2001, a group of information practitioners from various development agencies, led by CTA, KIT and IICD, began working together to produce a manual that would support self-evaluation by information practitioners. At their first meeting the word â??smartâ?? was chosen to emphasise â??best practiceâ?? and as an oblique reference to the SMART indicators (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) common in evaluation literature.

Who is the toolkit for?

The Smart Toolkit is aimed primarily at information practitioners in development organisations, particularly those working at grassroots level, who are involved in planning and managing information-related projects and generating new knowledge and key lessons from them. Many of these people would readily acknowledge that not only are they â??non-expertsâ?? in evaluation, but also that they lack the basics in how to evaluate information-related projects.

The field of information and communication management (ICM) has become central to much development thinking, boosted by the huge growth in information and communication technologies (ICTs) in recent years and the potential that ICTs have for development. But there is a noticeable gap in the literature when it comes to identifying evaluation methods and tools that can be applied specifically and successfully to information-related projects.The toolkit seeks to fill this gap to some extent and to encourage practitioners to contribute to this effort.

The toolkit should also prove useful for development project managers in general, as well as for funding agencies and other stakeholders in the production and delivery of information products and services.

Who should read this book, and why

- Are you managing an information project, product or service, such as a library, newsletter, rural radio, training workshop or website?
- Do you prepare information products and services for the wider public?
- Are you in the business of disseminating information?
- Are you an evaluator who has been challenged to evaluate information projects, products or services?
- Do you ever wonder what more you could be doing to meet the needs of your target groups, and whether or not youâ??re providing them with the â??rightâ?? information?
- Have you ever wondered:

  -why your researchers and scientists donâ??t have access to up-to-date credible information?
  -why many of the reports prepared by government ministries and research institutions never find their way to the libraries?
  -how you could get more people to use your information services?
  -why your website doesnâ??t provide the information it should?
  -why you canâ??t find the information when you need it?

If you have answered â??yesâ?? to some of these questions, then this toolkit is for you.â?•

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. Information / Communication Technology (ICT)
2. participation
3. self-evaluation
4. tools

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