

Appendix of External Evaluation Activities

Throughout the project, Rockman et al (REA), an independent research and evaluation company, consulted with PFA on the development, implementation and analysis of formative and summative evaluation procedures and instruments for the CineFiles project. REA brought experience and expertise in evaluation methods and design to the project. Evaluators worked with PFA staff to share this knowledge with two goals in mind: (1) to ensure PFA received best possible feedback as they progressed with redesign, and (2) to build PFA's capacity to collect audience data and make decisions based on these data.

Initial steps. The evaluators assisted PFA in the development of an evaluation timeline, identified appropriate evaluation tasks for each stage of the project based on concrete goals, and also provided feedback on PFA's logic model for the evaluation. The evaluators also worked with PFA to determine that their first step should be a needs assessment to determine how and why teachers used their resources in the classroom.

Surveys. PFA developed a number of survey instruments throughout the project, including:

- Survey of high school teachers on use of media and supporting documents in the classroom
- Survey of college professors on use of media and supporting documents in the classroom
- Post-workshop survey of CineFiles workshop participants

The evaluators provided PFA with training and tools on survey development, such as sample surveys and the importance of having key groups represented, and feedback on/suggestions for each survey. Survey feedback included such things as the use of standardized response options (e.g., strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree and strongly agree), question wording and sequence, and advice on analyzing results and making use of data.

Focus groups. PFA conducted focus groups with high school and college educators to gain more in depth information regarding how and why they used the film archive resources and website. The evaluators provided PFA with information and resources on focus groups, including how to ask questions without leading, how to structure effective focus groups, and the appropriate size for a focus group (e.g., 15 was too many).

Through the focus groups, the PFA staff was able to gain feedback that either

confirmed or rejected their assumptions about what teachers wanted. PFA used the data from these focus groups (and the surveys) to build their mock-ups for the user testing.

Usability. PFA conducted a series of usability testing sessions for its website redesign. Over the course of the project, evaluators engaged in a number of activities to assist PFA in the development and evaluation of these sessions, including:

- Provided training and resources on website usability testing, including the various types and goals;
- Based on the REA training, PFA staff developed a plan for usability testing with the evaluators, including who to include (i.e., a balance of people who had and had not used CineFiles previously);
- Provided feedback on and suggestions for user testing tools (website mockups and script) and surveys developed for testing sessions;
- Served as first test subject and offered feedback, including: how to remain neutral when asking questions of participants and giving participants chance to speak without leading them.
- Observed and evaluated practice test session conducted by PFA staff and provided feedback/suggestions;
- Attended Advisory Committee meetings on website redesign; and
- Offered feedback on and suggestions on website redesign.

Information gained in the usability tests directly informed the final CineFiles site redesign. PFA staff incorporated suggestions on how to make the site more user friendly and how to make searching for and accessing material easier. For instance, since teachers use the film documents based on the content they are teaching, PFA has worked to organize material along California content standards and to provide teacher resource guides to go along with materials. So, rather than searching for a film by title or director, a teacher can search for materials listed under “Civil War/Slavery & Emancipation.”

By working with evaluators throughout the course of this project, PFA staff members were able to design, implement, and apply data from professional evaluation tools and instruments. Further, PFA was able to expand its internal capacity to conduct evaluation activities, which will be invaluable as it moves forward with the CineFiles and other projects. To that end, PFA solicits ongoing feedback on the CineFiles site via a Web survey.