New Data Directions
APASO Conference
April 2014

Chicago, IL culturaldata
Cultural Data Project... data

- **10** Years of data collection
- **16,022** Organizations in the CDP
- **46,155** Data Profiles
- **6,964** Organizations with 3 or more years of data
Stakeholder Engagement

Technology Review

Business & Organizational Assessment

Benchmarking
12 Months
16 Cities
60 Interviews
1,980 Survey responses

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Technology Review
- Business & Organizational Assessment
- Benchmarking
Create value and deepen impact on arts and cultural organizations
Strategic Shifts

From an accountability **task** to a management **tool**

**Days of Cash on Hand**
This metric represents the number of days the organization can operate at current expense levels with existing unrestricted cash.

**Current Data**

2014

53

Days

**Fundraising Efficiency**
Your development productivity ratio compares the amount fundraising expense.

**Historic Trends**

2012 2013 2014

**WHAT THIS MEANS**
Your organization has been steadily improving its Fundraising Efficiency over the last 3 years.
Strategic Shifts

Advance a triple bottom line paradigm for success

- Programmatic excellence
- Financial and organizational strength
- Public value and impact
Forge a national partnership and agenda for cultural data

Strategic Shifts

Cultural Data & Learning

- Arts & Cultural Orgs
- Service Providers
- Funders
- Arts Advocates
- Cultural Data Project
- Policy Makers
- Research
- NSOs
New Data Directions for the Cultural Landscape:
Toward a Better-Informed, Stronger Sector
Concerns about the accessibility, quality and comparability of cultural data

“Trained researchers find accessing the data challenging; until such data become easier to access and understand, cultural nonprofits will continue to rely on informal networks to gather relevant anecdotal information.”
Challenges: system-wide

**Undervalued data** limits usefulness of cultural data as a decision-making tool

>“Without clear uses and benefits... it gets knocked down a few spots on the list of organizational priorities.”

>“A growing focus on data invites concerns that those things which cannot be measured easily will be deemphasized or overlooked.”
Lack of coordination and standardization in existing cultural data collection efforts

“I’d like to see more connecting the dots between research stemming from academic institutions and... agencies and consultants.”

“There are many definitions out there; the issue is political – getting everyone to agree.”
Many organizations are really in survival mode and focusing time on data inquiries comes at a cost.

There is a profound lack of skilled staff and consultants who understand that data is a tool and not an end.
Organizational culture dynamics that can undermine the effective use of data

“Arts organizations have many masters and many pressures on decisions. Decisions tend to be made idiosyncratically by overworked staff or under-informed board members in-the-moment.”
Lack of a strong vision for how to use data in planning and decision-making

“Data is welcome for demonstrating value and case-making, but interest in using it ... to ask hard questions about organizational performance and the state of the field isn’t widespread.”

“I have not seen widespread interest in or adoption of data to inform artistic/programmatic performance.”
Recommendations

- Establish coordinated leadership and vision
- Include and engage artistic and programmatic staff in data conversation
- Shift use of data from an accountability task to a decision-making tool
- Define objectives and plan for future research and data collection
- Train and develop data-related skills
- Improve the cultural data infrastructure
The conversation continues...

In person

Events in San Francisco, Boston, and Philadelphia

Online

www.culturaldata.org
#culturaldata

*New Data Directions* companion report
Arin Sullivan, Cultural Data Project
asullivan@culturaldata.org
www.culturaldata.org

www.culturaldata.org/conversations/culturaldatalandscape