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ISO 2789 and ISO 11620: standards as reference documents in an assessment process

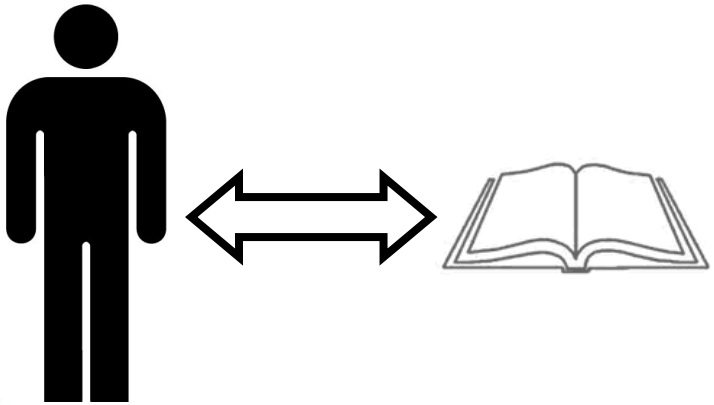
Pierre-Yves Renard
French statistical office (INSEE)
04/07/2007

Preliminary precautions, when speaking about standards and evaluation

- *An acknowledged naïvety*. Consider the difference between the reality as-seen-through-the-standards and what-really-happens-in-libraries.
- *An hypothesis of honesty.* You need to be *two* to play the game of assessment.
- *A national context.* My point of view is necessarily oriented by my french field of *experimentation*.

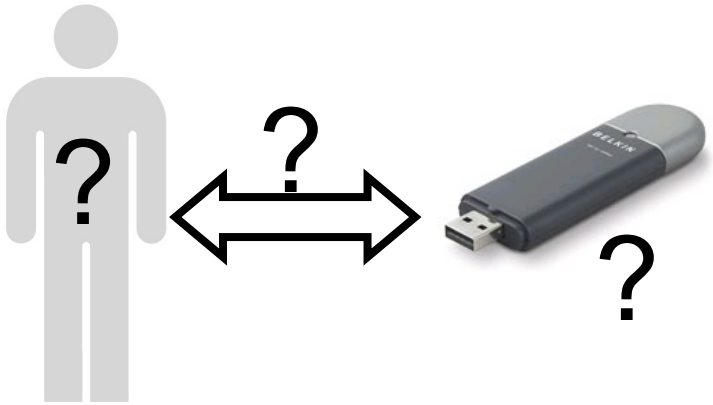
Library statistics running after reality

› Yesterday (overdone !)

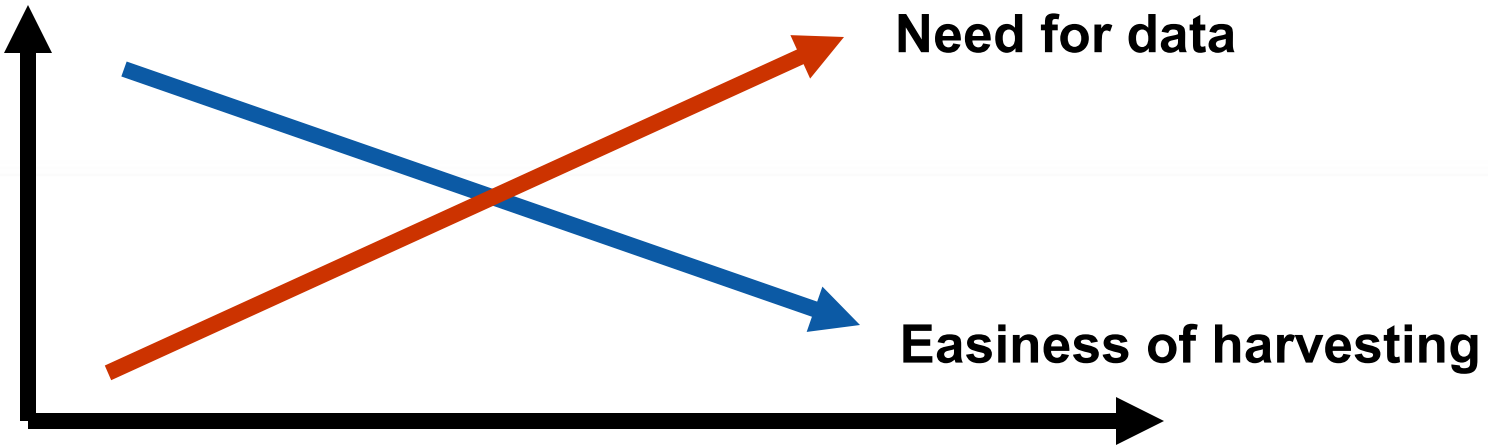


People / using / book

› Today



users / doing things / library stuff



Standardization running after the libraries reality

› Standardization requires :
- Time
- Consensus
- Stand back, feedback

› While libraries evolve :
- Quickly
- In different ways
- Experimentaly

What can actually be measured and evaluated (at a reasonable cost)

What should be known about impact and missions fulfilment

ISO 2789 : a standard for defining, classifying and counting in libraries

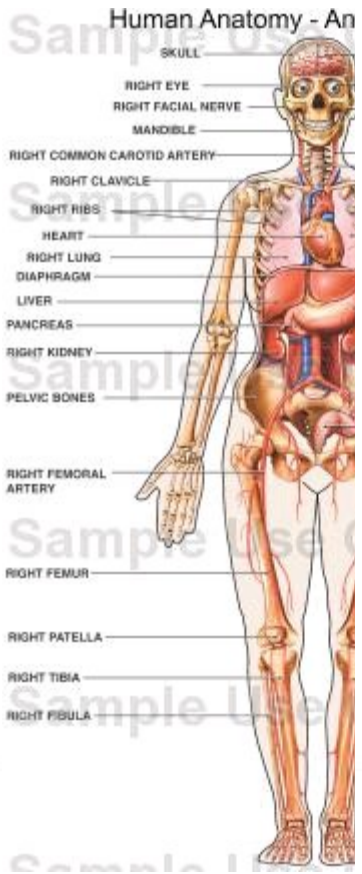
› What you decide to count and the way you classify says something about how you see the world.
  – example : indicator number of visits
  – external example : how to measure « well-being ».

› *“Classifications are theories about the basis of natural order, not dull catalogues compiled only to avoid chaos.”*

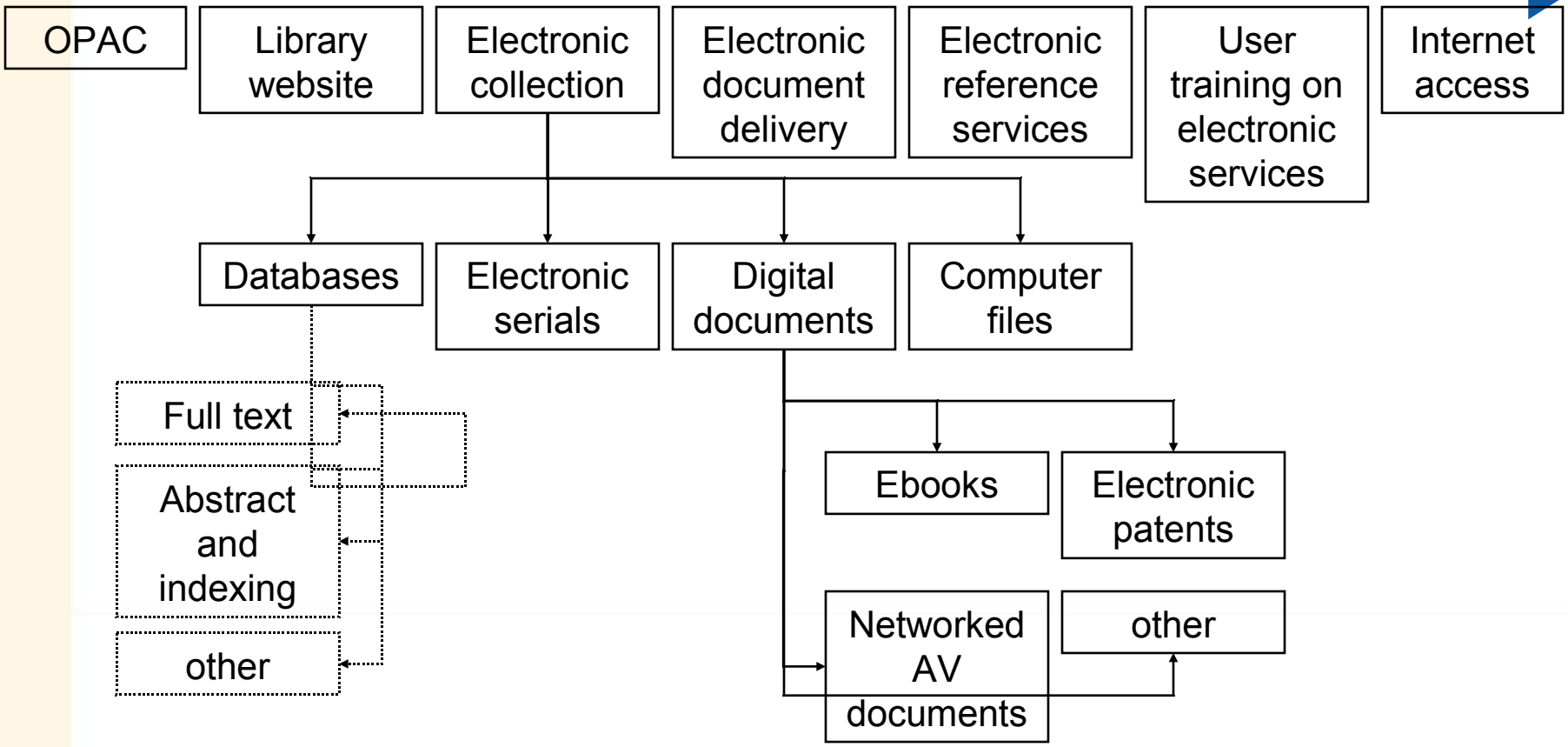
Stephen J. Gould, *Wonderful life : the Burgess Shale and the nature of history*

What to find into ISO 2789 ?

- ISO 2789 *International library statistics*
  - Definitions
    - Libraries
    - Collection
    - Use and users
    - Access and facilities
    - Expenditure
    - Library staff
  - Uses, benefits and limitations of statistics
  - Reporting statistical data
  - Collecting statistical data
    - Same divisions as *definitions*
  - Annex A : measuring the use of electronic library services
  - Annex B : recommended categories for further analysis



The question of electronic services : a clear classification of services



The use of electronic services : a small set of data

Three core datasets have been identified which should, if possible, be collected for all services, separately for each service as well as summed for all services :

- number of sessions;
- number of downloads (split up into content downloaded and record downloaded);
- number of virtual visits;

In addition to these core datasets which provide basic information on the use of electronic services, some additional data have been found relevant and should be collected when possible and appropriate:

- session time;
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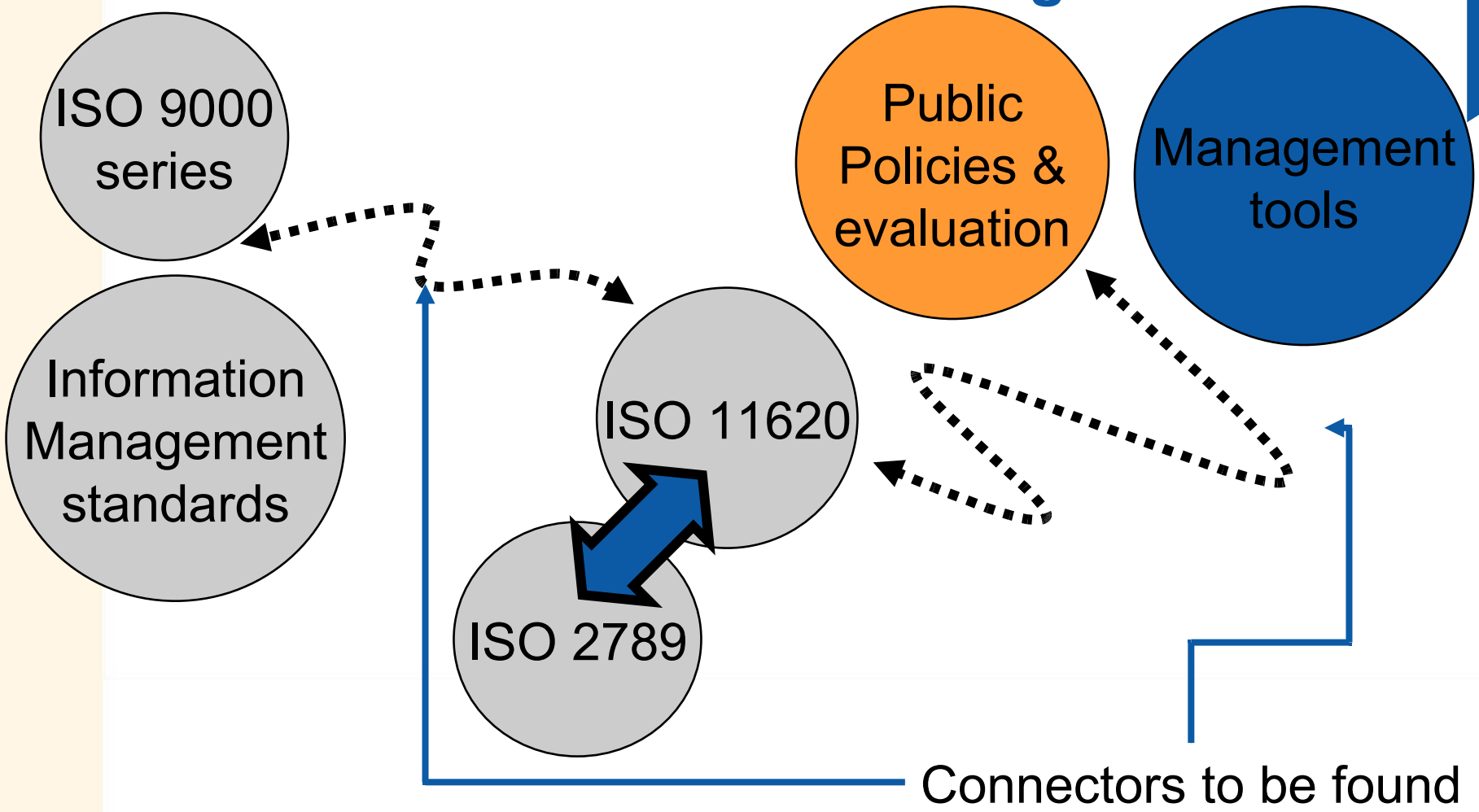
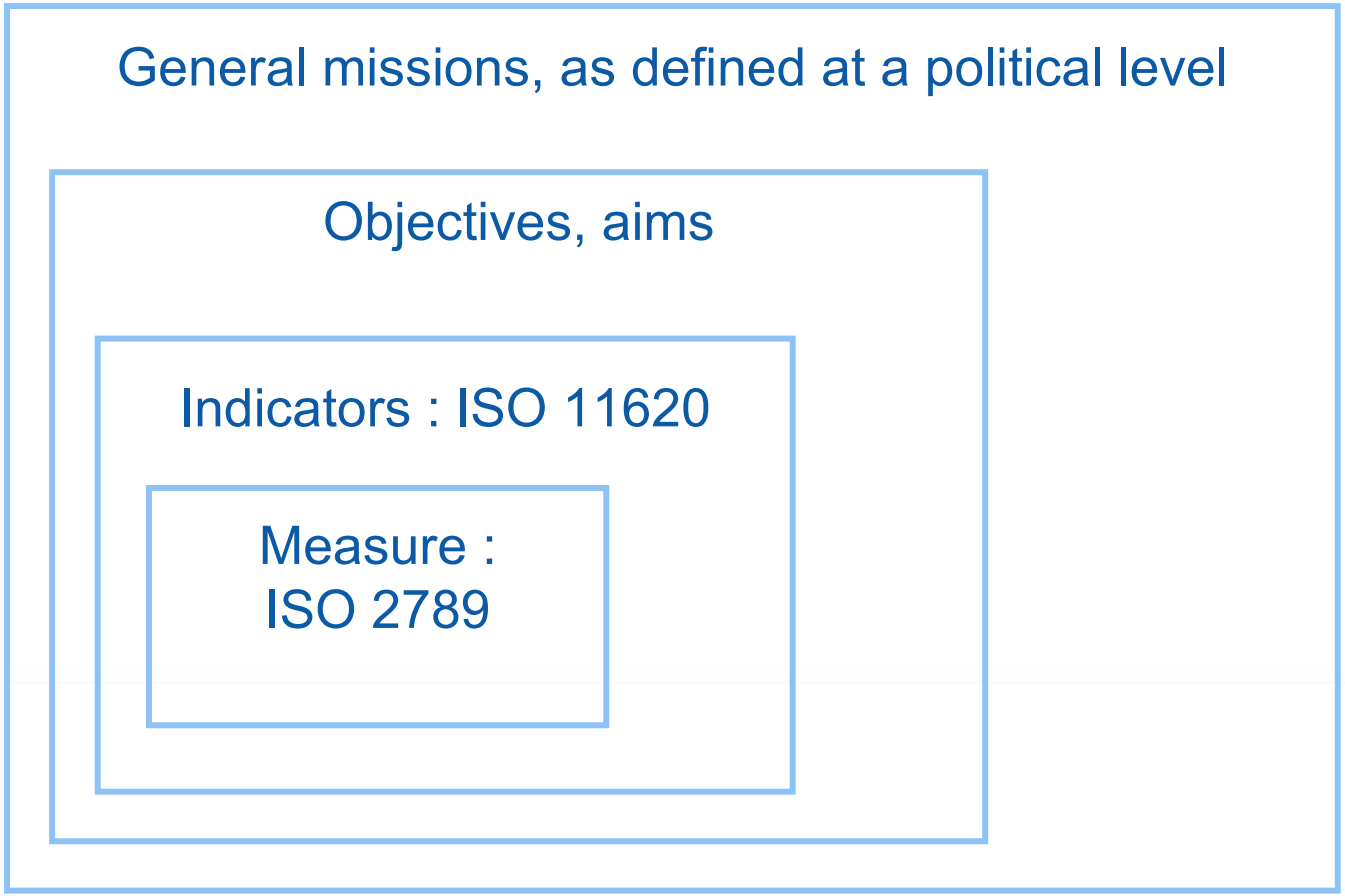
- number of searches;
- number of Internet sessions.

ISO 2789 & 11620 and other management tools

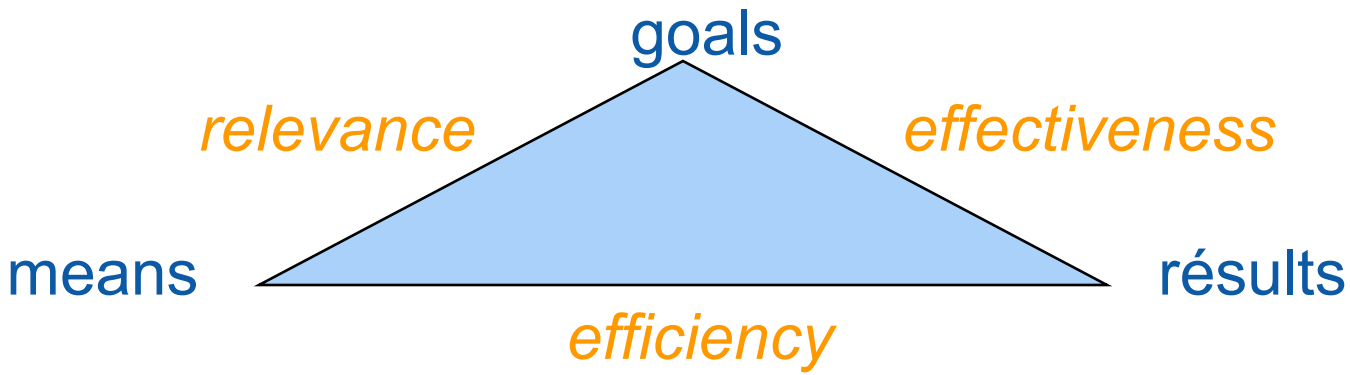


The delimited area of action of ISO 2789 and ISO 11620



What does underpin ISO 11620 ?

› A classical performance assessment model



› 4 families of indicators, from an adapted *balanced scorecard* approach

- resources, access and infrastructure
- use
- efficiency
- potentials and et development

Content of ISO 11620 : building robust indicators

- Definitions
- Criteria [of admissibility for the indicators] and descriptive framework
- Uses of performance indicators
- How to present indicators
  - Objective ; Scope ; Definition ; Method ; Interpretation and factor affecting the indicator ; Related indicators
- List of indicators
- Description of each indicator

- *Each indicator has been tested and published before*

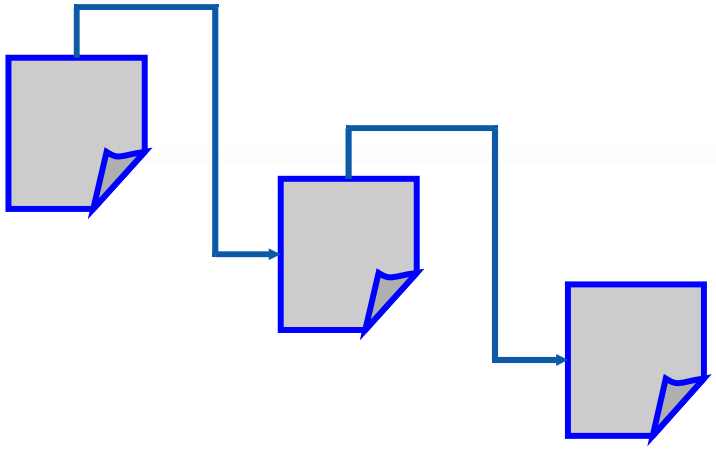
To sum up : relevance of the standards, today

- They *do* exist !
- They express what can be *surely* and *clearly defined* and *calculated* today
- As international standards, they give a real weight to the works which rely on them, especially during political or budgetary discussions
- They offer a common language
- You don’t need to re-invent definitions, indicators, etc.
- *Use them as reference guide, not as roadmaps*

Path for the future : toward a family of standards

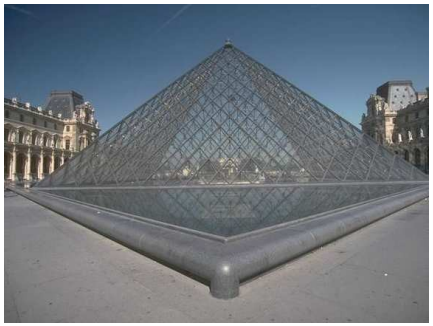
- Other standards/technical reports are developped into the same ISO sub-committee
  - performance indicators for national libraries (regarding their special missions) ;
  - library buildings (design and uses)

- Possibility : merge or reoganize the different standards, including
  - Meta-standard allowing connection with quality standards and public policies evaluation
  - Definitions
  - Collection of data
  - Building indicators
  - …



Path for the future ? The question of *intangible assets*

› A new field for states, a new way to measure the value of assets which are not material, which have no direct market price



= € ?

› Example : the *Louvre* trademark *sold* to Abu Dhabi for some years for M€ 400

› Intangible assets are, for example :

- the staff's skills, the know-how, …
- the content of databases, patents, trademarks, …
- the quality of information systems

› *Note that ISO 2789 & 11620 can help in measuring some of these items*

Path for the future ? The question of *intangible assets*

› It's also a new way for states to consider :

– the national and cultural heritage

– The intellectual and scientific value of academic organisations

› ISO 2789 and 11620 can help libraries :

– measuring themselves as intangible assets' sources ;

– demonstrating their involvement in promoting intangible assets.

› Libraries sould not be left apart from this new direction in public policies.

Path for the future ? Be imaginative !

› How to answer the question of social impact of libraries ? Two possibilities

– work on synthetic indicators of library activity or « health » = imagine indicators as simple and as rich in information as the GDP (gross domestic product) ;

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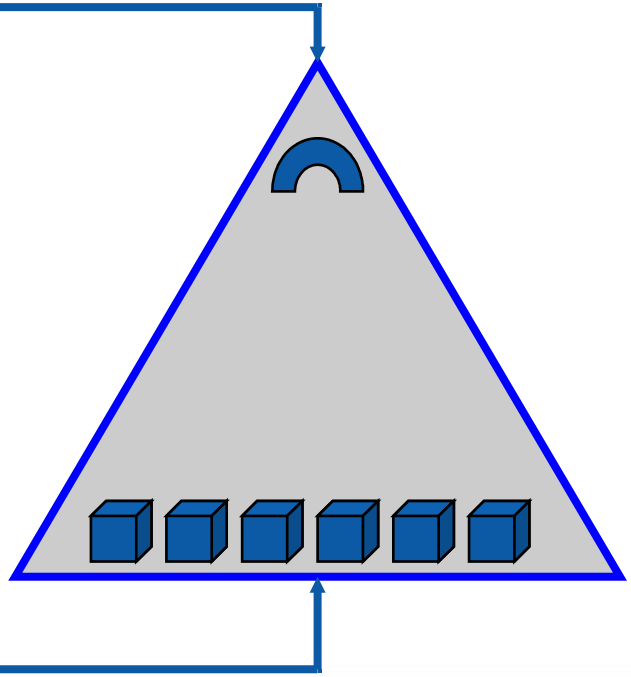

› Consider a certification process ?

Post scriptum : assessment and dishonesty

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INSEE
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ISO 2789 and ISO 11620: standards as reference documents in an assessment process

Pierre-Yves Renard
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04/07/2007

Let me introduce myself

I'm responsible for the library of the french statistical office, and before, I was working for the Ministry of Education, responsible for the academic libraries statistics. For 8 years now, I've been participating in the standardization process, in the french group, whose chairperson was P. Carbone.

Make a short presentation of the two main standards developed by ISO TC46/SC8, which means

Technical Committee 46 – Information and documentation, Sub-Committee 8 – quality, statistics and performance evaluation.

I will try to show how they could be used as reference documents and how they could be improved to be more usable

What I present today is still a work in progress, it's still a draft. So I thank you for your indulgence

Preliminary precautions, when speaking about standards and evaluation

- *An acknowledged naïvety*. Consider the difference between the reality as-seen-through-the-standards and what-really-happens-in-libraries.
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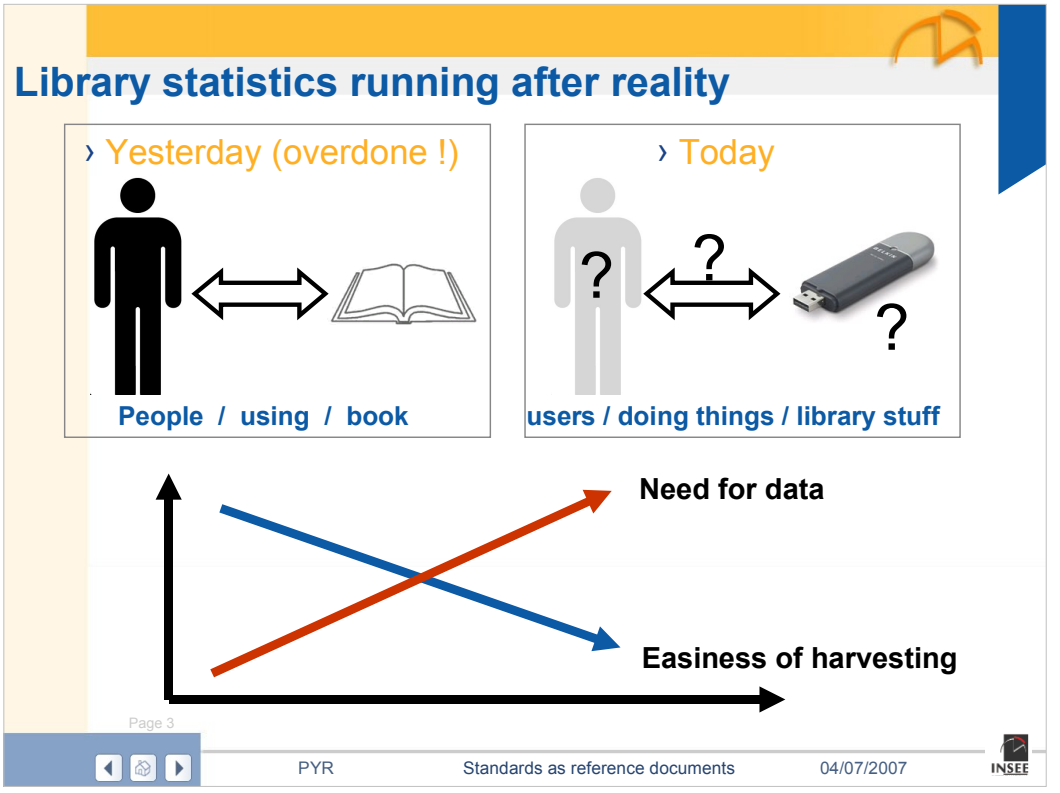

Different challenges :

-some are linked with the evolution of libraries ;

-Some depend on the standardization process ;

Increasing need for data , while the easiness, the facility to collect decreases.

Why is it not easy to standardize statistics for libraries

Firstly because it is not easy to make statistics for libraries. Even if statistics and libraries have a long common history.

Standardization running after the libraries reality

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- Consensus
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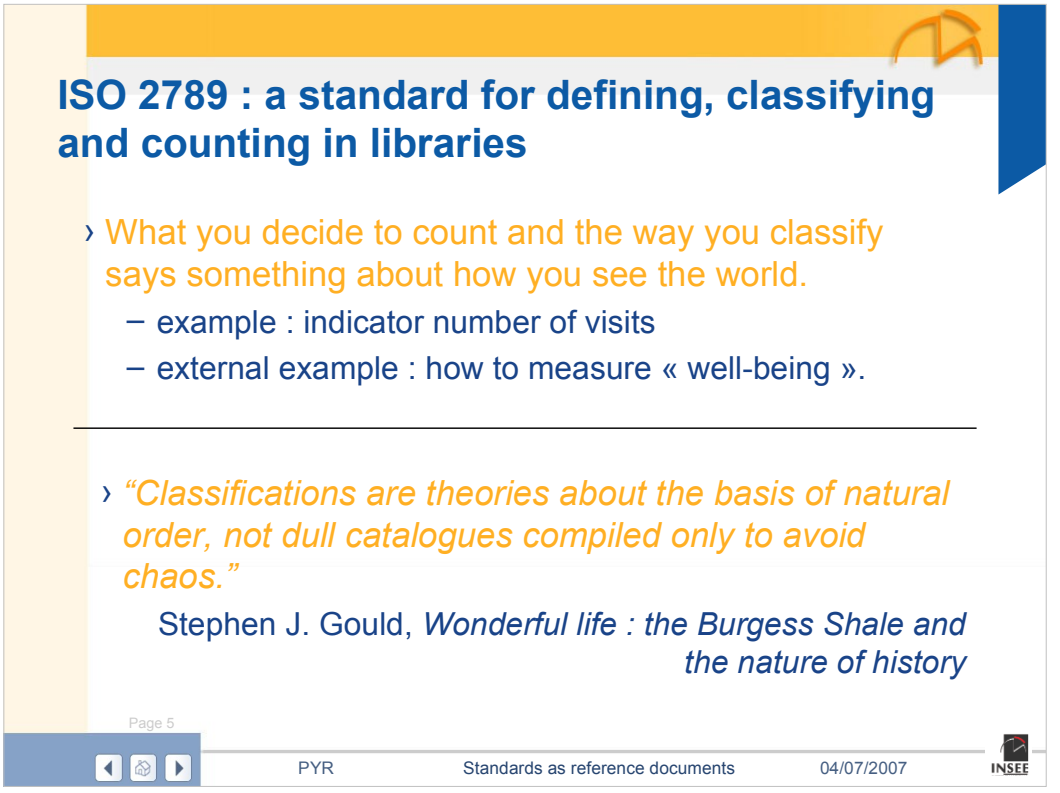

Telling that libraries are changing is one thing, writing it down precisely is another.

From a certain point of view, ISO 2789 is an official guide of what libraires are supposed to be and what they are supposed to do.

If you write into a standard that a particular service is part of the library services, you help in making this service more official, legitimate : because an international standard tells it.

What to find into ISO 2789 ?

› ISO 2789 *International library statistics*

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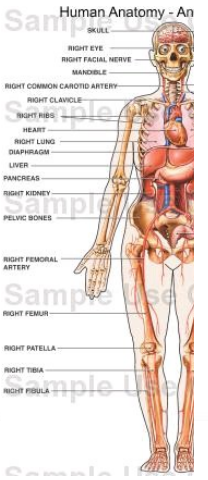


Here is the plan, the framework of ISO 2789.

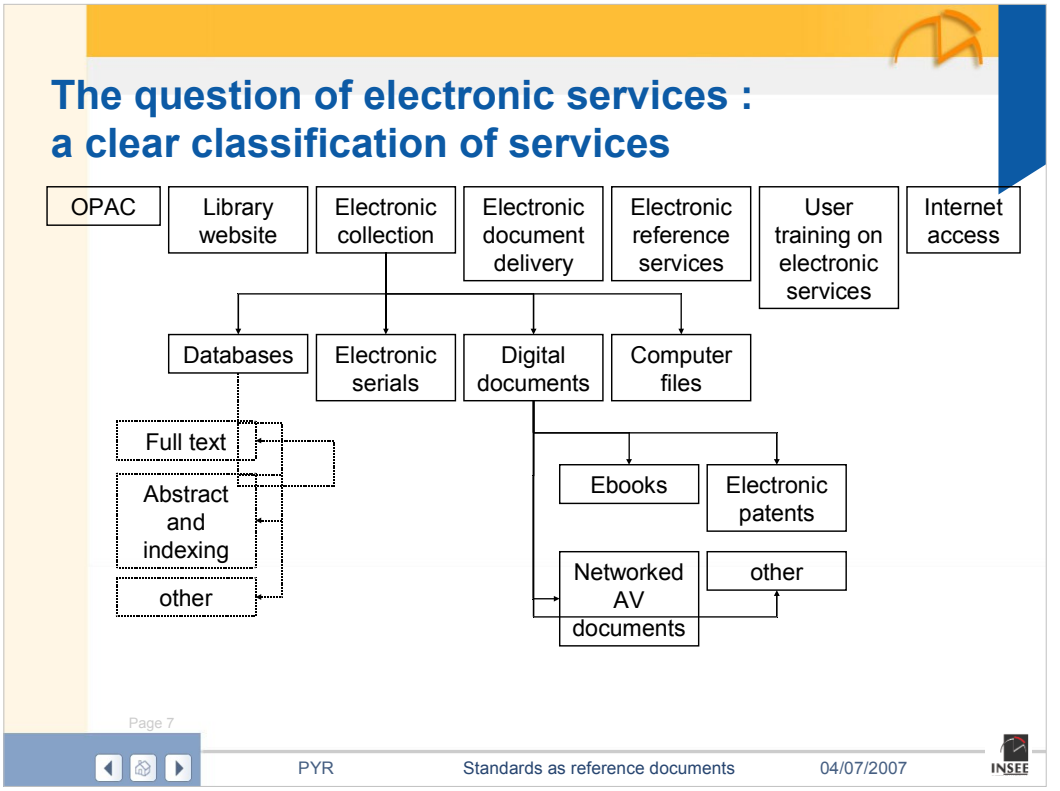
First published in 1974. Last edition last september, the 4th one. 4 pages for the first ed., and now more than 70.

Anatomic picture, because this is really a good image of what this standard is supposed to show : the different services of the library, the different parts of the collection, and so on.

To my mind, the two most important parts are the definitions part and the annex A.

Why the definitions ? Because you can count correctly only what you have precisely defined. The set of definitions is now very consistent.

It's almost a taxonomy, because you need to define precisely every element if you want to avoid double counts and ambiguousness



Why Annex A ? Because of its very subject

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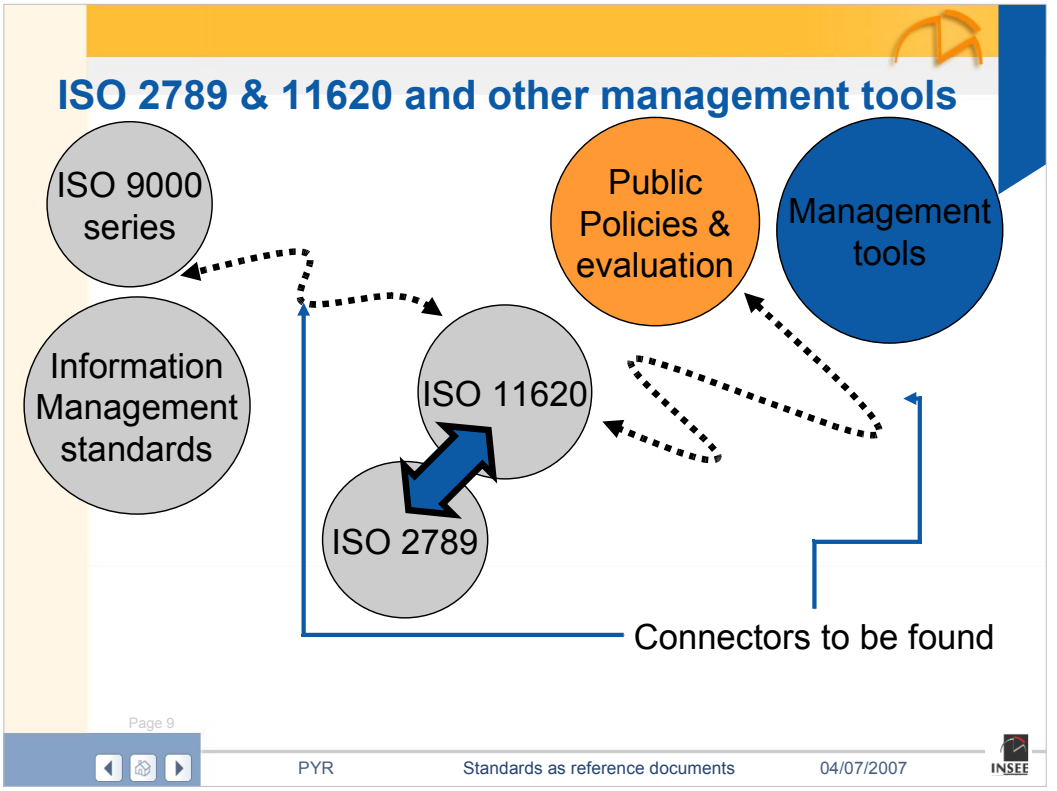


Even if references are made to general performance models, ISO 11620 is, to my mind, still an extension of ISO 2789. It doesn't tell you how to evaluate, how to assess performance, but how to make calculation when you're in a performance assessment process.

Make explicit what is implicit, unspoken / make concrete, measured what is subjective.

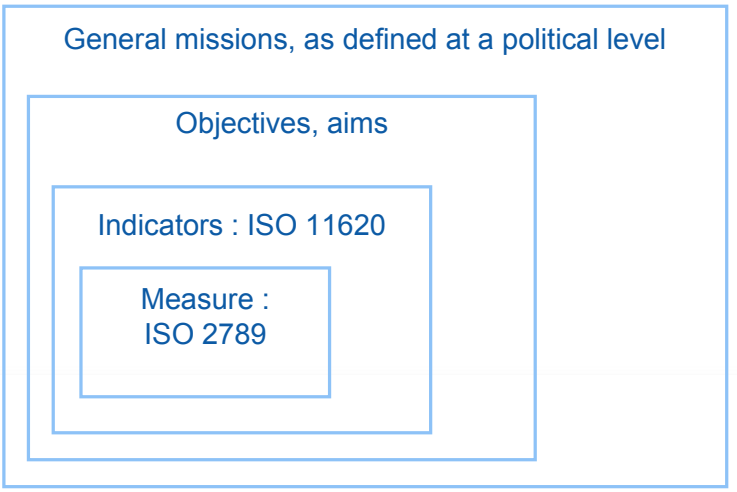
No direct link with others series of standards, or tools. It's not a weakness, it's a degree of liberty

If you're centered on quality of processes, on users' satisfaction : use them on the left

If you need to rendre des comptes, right

Historically, the committee developing the standard is a statistical committee

The delimited area of action of ISO 2789 and ISO 11620



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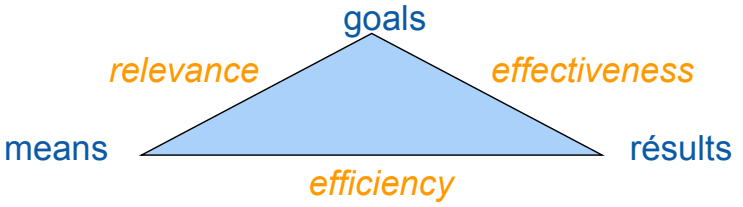

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(what is beyond is not solid enough to be standardized).

(or they should be used like that).

(especially for international comparisons, and in benchmarking projects)

Path for the future : toward a family of standards

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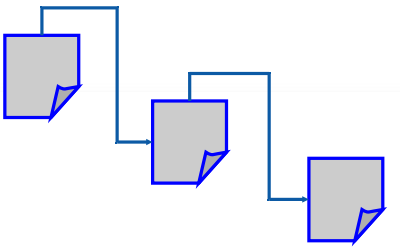

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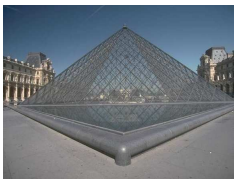

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Coming from new accounting standards

appearance

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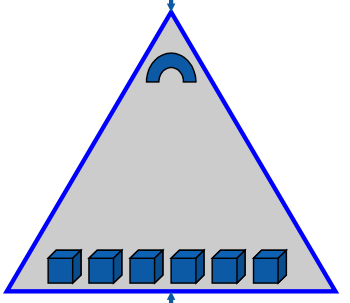

› Consider a certification process ?

Post scriptum : assessment and dishonesty

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Evaluation : un jeu qui se joue à deux

La question également de la maturité du système