

**Making the Case for ISE Media:  
*Examining existing media evaluations posted to InformalScience.org***

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The web site, InformalScience.org, hosts an archive evaluation reports, most of them from NSF-funded projects. Although NSF ISE strongly suggests that projects upload their summative evaluation reports, not all projects comply. Of the 300+ evaluation reports uploaded by users to the site, 72 report on NSF-funded ISE media projects. To what extent can the ongoing evaluation of ISE projects help to build a more general case for ISE Media?

1. Thousands of data points are being collected with ISE Media Audiences. Many (55%) studies had a sample-size above 100, and 10% had sample sizes above 500. Audiences evaluated in reports are general public (35%), professionals (31%) adults (19%), children (19%), youth (7%), and families (1%). Media evaluations are more likely to focus on adults than evaluations from other ISE projects.
2. Data collection techniques are similar across studies. Media evaluations primarily use survey methodology (87%). Use of more than one method is common, with other reported methods including interviews (40%), focus groups (28%), and observations (22%). No other method is reported in greater than 10% of reports.
3. Compared to other ISE sectors, media has a relatively small evaluation community, which could make it easier to get people on the same page with respect to a general case. Four groups (Goodman, Rockman, Knight-Williams, Multimedia Solutions) contributed 72% of the reports on the site. Only nine groups authored the rest of the contributed reports.
4. There is little to no opportunity for meta-analysis or secondary analysis among the existing reports. Few studies use common scales or validated instruments. Most instruments are crafted specifically for the project at hand. Only some reports (38%) include the actual instruments. Most reports include simple statistical comparisons (85%) and selected means (79%). It is not common practice to report comprehensive findings.
5. Reports are generally stand-alone, focusing on the project at hand and making little reference to literature, prior work in the field or suggest broader media issues. Evaluation questions focus most often on specific aspects of projects, which are difficult to generalize to bigger, shared issues in the field.