

# Methods for Measuring Return on Investment in Online Digital Collections

Ken Wise and Gayle Baker





















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## two “bottom line” measures of worth

- Financial or related measures of value
- Impact on research (and ultimately on research reputation) and, to a lesser extent, teaching and learning

reflects developing trends in library assessment

the quest for

- impact
- value measures

“If everything is digitized, then perhaps the relevant measure of distinction is whether we, in our university library, capture, maintain, and contribute digitized copies of unique materials”

John Lombardi 2006

use value

versus

option value

use value: the value of collections to patrons who actually make use of the collections

measured as an individual's maximum willingness to pay for access to the collections

option price: the right to access these collections in the event he or she requires them

measured as the value under uncertainty

option value: the difference between  
option price and use value

a measure that estimates the value to non-  
users

how do we measure option value?

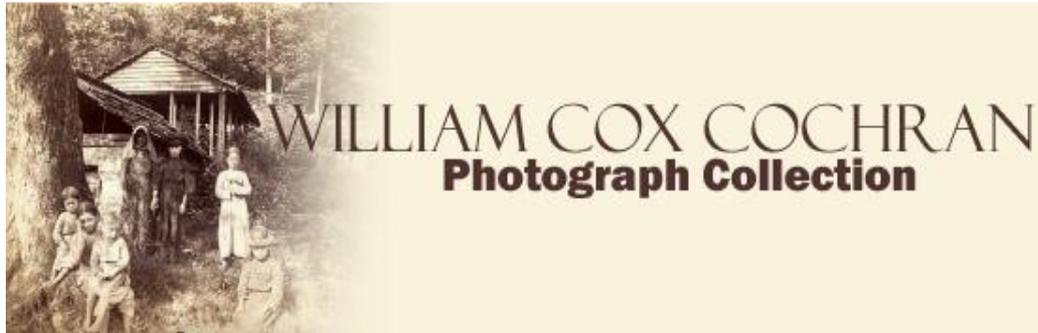
# contingent valuation method

elicits individuals' preferences for quasi-private and public goods by finding out their willingness to pay in dollar amounts for suitable alternatives

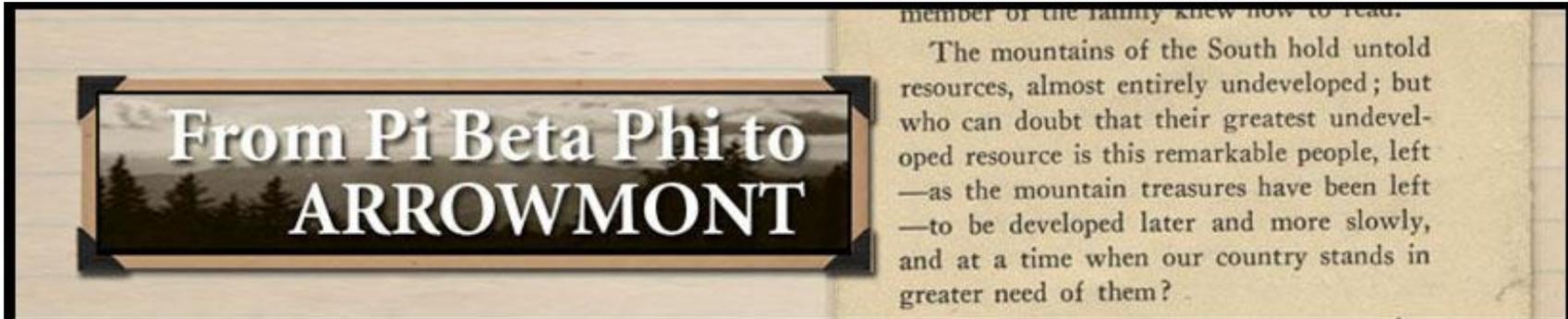
“Contingent valuation represents the most promising approach yet developed for determining the public’s willingness to pay for public goods.”

Robert C. Mitchell and Richard T. Carson  
*Using Surveys to Value Public Goods: The  
Contingent Valuation Method*

# Collections Used in Valuation Assessment



# Collections Used in Valuation Assessment





<http://www.lib.utk.edu/digitalcollections/gsm.html>

# Contingent Valuation Questionnaire

Q1. Did you know that the Albert “Dutch” Roth Digital Photograph Collection is hosted online by the University of Tennessee Library Digital Special Collections?

Q2. In a typical month, how often do you visit the online collection?

- A. More than 10 times
- B. 6-10 times
- C. 2-5 times
- D. 1 time

Q3. How satisfied were you with the content of the online collection?

- A. Very satisfied
- B. Satisfied
- C. Dissatisfied
- D. Very dissatisfied

Q4. How satisfied were you with access to the online collection?

- A. Very satisfied
- B. Satisfied
- C. Dissatisfied
- D. Very dissatisfied

Q5. Have you used the Special Collections at the University of Tennessee?

Q2. In a typical month, how often do you visit the online collection?

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Q4. How satisfied were you with access to the online collection?

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Q5. Have you used the Special Collections at the University of Tennessee?

Q6. If the Albert “Dutch” Roth Photograph collection were not freely available online, how much would you be willing to pay to for online access?

A. \$\_\_\_\_\_ (enter dollar amount)

B. Zero or nothing GO TO X1

C. Don't know GO TO Y1

D. Refused GO TO Y1

X1. People have different reasons for saying zero dollars or nothing. For some, that is how much the Albert “Dutch” Roth online collection is worth to them. Other people give different reason for saying this. I’m going to read you some reasons. Please tell me whether they accurately describe your reasons for answering as you do.

A. Did you say zero dollars or nothing because you thought we were asking you to begin paying for access to the collection? IF YES, GO TO X2

B. Did you give this answer because you think the University of Tennessee should be able to provide access with the money it has, or because you think UT spends too much money on online collections? IF YES, GO TO X3

C. Did you say zero dollars or nothing because that is what the Albert “Dutch” Roth Photograph online collection is really worth to you? IF YES, GO TO Q8

D. Can you specify to me the reason for saying zero dollars or nothing?

(SPECIFY

REASON:) \_\_\_\_\_ GO TO Q8

E. Refused. GO TO Q8

F. Don’t know. GO TO Q8

X2. The Library's online special collections are supported by student tuition and funding from the state of Tennessee. It is important for us to learn what value you place on access to these collections when you are given the chance to make the choice yourself. Would you be willing to answer these questions later if I give you a chance to make changes in your answers if you wish?

- A. Yes. GO BACK TO Q6
- B. No. GO TO Q8
- C. Refused. GO TO Q8
- D. Don't know. GO TO Q8

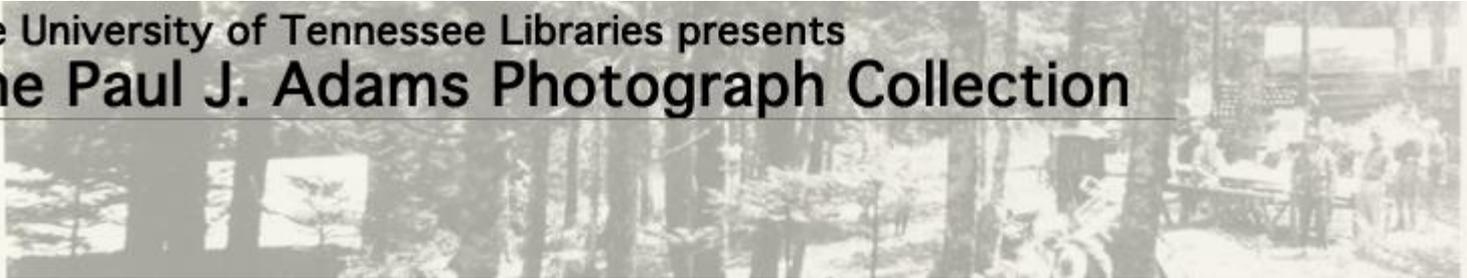
Y1. People have different reasons for saying they don't know or can't answer this question. I'm going to read you some reason. Please tell me whether they accurately describe your reasons for answering as you do.

A. Did you give this answer because you thought we were asking you to begin paying for access to the collection? IF YES, GO TO Y2

B. Did you give this answer because you think the University of Tennessee should be able to provide the access with the money it has, or because you think UT spends too much money on online collections? IF YES, GO TO Y3

C. Did you give this answer because you find it too hard to place a value on the benefit to you of online access to the Albert "Dutch" Roth Photograph collection without knowing what it costs to maintain? IF YES, GO TO Y4

The University of Tennessee Libraries presents  
**The Paul J. Adams Photograph Collection**



<http://kiva.lib.utk.edu/adams/>

# What are the Values?

## **User**

What is the value to a user in terms of time and money spent?

## **Prestige**

What is the prestige to the institution for high visibility digital special collection?

## **Development**

What value accrues to the development effort of the institution?

# What are the Values?

## **Environmental**

What is the value of the environmental savings from limited physical access to unique and often fragile material?

## **Scholars**

What value accrues from the role of special collections in attracting graduate students?

## **Collections**

What is the value of digital collection in attracting additional special collections?

# Questions?



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[kwise@utk.edu](mailto:kwise@utk.edu) & [gsbaker@utk.edu](mailto:gsbaker@utk.edu)



# Happy Halloween

