



E-VALU-IT USER SURVEY

FIRST POST-LAUNCH REPORT

September 2011

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1. Introduction

E-valu-it was officially launched on December 7th 2010. Preceding the launch a series of 13 free workshops were conducted, run across England, Scotland and Wales. The workshops introduced users to the website and provided basic evaluation training. Over 250 delegates attended the workshops, with a further 40 attending follow-up training sessions. Workshops were predominantly attended by local authority and emergency service representatives.

E-valu-it is the interactive toolkit embedded within www.roadsafetyevaluation.com. The website provides general evaluation advice and information, whilst the toolkit offers evaluation recommendations based on users' own individual projects. In addition to the website and toolkit, tailored help is available via email, telephone, or the LinkedIn discussion group for E-valu-it users. Face-to-face evaluation training workshops are also conducted upon request.

1.1 Internal Monitoring and Evaluation

RoSPA routinely monitors the level of use of the website, toolkit, and on-line support: in addition to on-going internal formative and summative evaluation. The monitoring and evaluation assesses progress against the project's stated aims and objectives. This short report focuses on the first post-launch survey of registered E-valu-it users. The survey was conducted, by a member of the E-valu-it project team; four months after the website went 'live' on December 7th.

Methodology:

An on-line survey, consisting of both closed and open questions, was emailed to 160 registered E-valu-it users. The sample of 160 users was randomly selected from the total population of registered users (340 at the time) who fulfilled the following criteria:

- UK based
- Given permission to contact
- Registered for longer than one month

Participants were given two weeks to complete the survey, achieving a response rate of 22%.

2. Results

This section describes the key quantitative results.

2.1 Level of evaluation activity:

Just over half of respondents reported that “some” of their current ETP interventions were being evaluated. The survey instructions asked participants to exclude interventions that were only being evaluated using satisfaction surveys. The possible response options were: ‘None, Some, About Half, Most, All’.

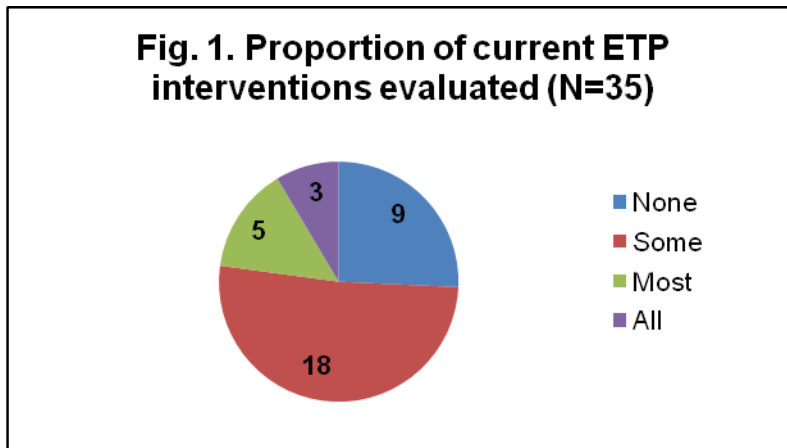


Table 1: Are the evaluations conducted in-house or by an external consultant? (N=27)

	Frequency
In-house	21
External	2
Both	4

2.2 Self-rated knowledge and skills:

Three of the intervention objectives for the website and toolkit are to increase the knowledge and skills of practitioners in relation to:

- confidence to evaluate
- ability to plan an evaluation
- ability to advise others on evaluating ETP interventions.

Survey participants were asked to rate themselves on these three skills. Results are shown in the bar charts below (N=35).

Fig. 2. Ability to plan an evaluation

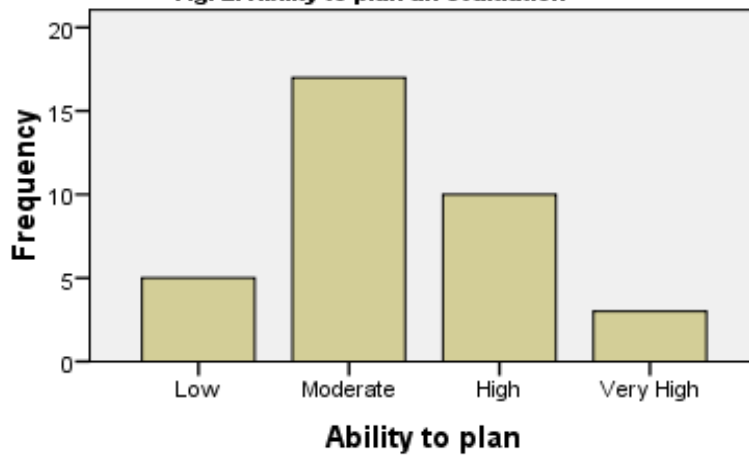
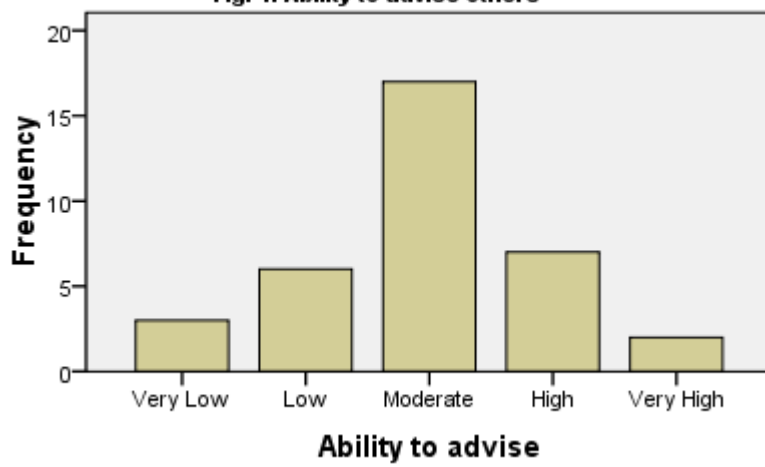


Fig. 3. Willingness to evaluate



Fig. 4. Ability to advise others



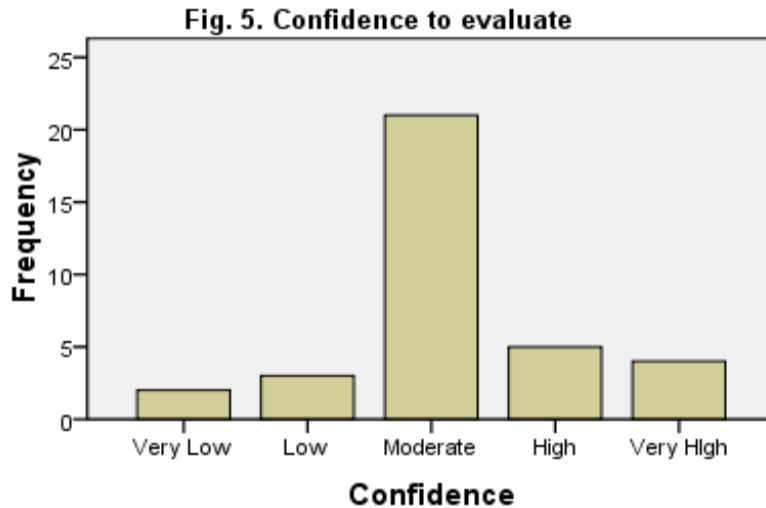


Table 2: Mean scores for the four knowledge/skill areas

	Ability to plan evaluation	Willingness to evaluate	Confidence to evaluate	Ability to advise others
Mean Score	3.31	3.89	3.17	2.97

Responses were scored from 1 (Very Low) to 5 (Very 5) so the higher the mean score, the more positive the rating.

These results show a lack of perceived confidence and ability amongst practitioners in evaluating ETP interventions. However the scores for willingness to evaluate are clustered around the high end of the scale, so participants feel ready to evaluate – just unsure about how.

2.3 Use of the Website

Participants were asked: 'If you visited the website looking for some particular help or information, how often did you find what you needed?'

Table 2: Frequency of finding desired information (N=31)

	Frequency
Never	1
Rarely	4
Sometimes	11
Most of the time	14
Always	1

The participants were then asked an open question about which areas of the website they had found to be the most helpful. The two most common responses were: the Report Template, and the E-valu-it Toolkit.

“The toolkit, although a little long winded does make you think about what you are doing.”

While the toolkit was reported to be one of the most helpful areas of the website, one participant’s comment indicates that for some users the experience of using the toolkit may be a negative one:

“Tried to evaluate a project I did and found it really complicated.”

This report of over complication may explain the low number of participants who rated the website as “very” user friendly:

Table 3: How user friendly did you find the website (N=32)

	Frequency
Not at all	0
Somewhat/Quite	27
Very	5

2.4. Use of the E-valu-it Toolkit

Table 4: Have you created one or more projects within the Toolkit? (N=34)

	Frequency
Yes	21
No	13

Most users had created at least one project within the E-valu-it toolkit. Participants who replied that they hadn’t created a project were asked a follow-on question to discover the reasons why. The overwhelming response was that users felt they had not had enough time to use the Toolkit, and that they did not yet have a suitable project to evaluate.

Table 5: Have you read your E-valu-it recommendations? (N=31)

	Frequency
Yes	20
No	11

Table 6: How helpful did you find the recommendations (N=20)

	Frequency
Not at all	2
Somewhat/Quite	16
Very	2

Table 7: Have you used the E-valu-it report template to write up a report? (N=34)

	Frequency
Yes	10
No	24

Table 8: How useful did you find the report template (N=10)

	Frequency
Somewhat/Quite	7
Very	3

Reasons given for not having used the report template echoed the reasons given for not having created a project. Namely, that they were still setting up the interventions to be evaluated, or that they had only recently started an evaluation project and were not at the report stage yet. Other responses pointed to lack of funding for evaluation, including redundancies, and one participant suggested the Toolkit was over-complicated.

2.5. How to improve

The survey asked users to suggest ways we could improve the website. While there were a few comments saying the website was good as it is, *“It’s already excellent”*, there were three main suggestions made. These were:

- Add more reports
- Give the option to turn off ‘reality checks’, and make some ‘reality checks’ more relevant to the information supplied by the user
- Provide more guidance on writing questionnaires

What evaluation help do you feel you/your team needs most?

Users were asked what evaluation help they most needed. Again, guidance in questionnaire design was raised, along with more help with methodology in general. A couple of responses spoke about needing to persuade managers and colleagues of the importance of evaluation although this finding conflicts with the quantitative ‘willingness scores’ seen earlier.

The key response by far related to difficulty setting aside both time and finance for staff to do evaluation:

“The biggest barriers are capacity, in terms of finance and staff time. Pressure is to deliver the same amount of service with less staff/budget so if we want to continue our programme of work there is less staff time available to perform our own evaluations and less financial resource to bring in external consultants.”

3. Recommendations

This was the first post-launch E-valu-it user survey conducted as part of our ongoing monitoring and evaluation of www.roadsafetyevaluation.com. Future surveys may have to be conducted by telephone to increase the response rate.

Although the response rate was regrettably low the responses we did gain are encouraging. Based on these responses, along with feedback from the evaluation workshops, the E-valu-it steering group make the following recommendations for improving the website and encouraging evaluation practice:

- Provide the option for users to switch off reality checks
- Edit the content of some of the reality check boxes
- Add further guidance on designing questionnaires
- Offer further workshops tailored to need: for example research methods
- Promote the sharing of reports through greater contact with users
- Encourage the sharing of 'lessons learned' from evaluation, highlighting doing evaluation on a budget
- Publicise the support available from the E-valu-it team

3.1. Any Comments?

If you have any comments on this report please contact us via the 'contact us' facility on the website, the LinkedIn group for roadsafetyevaluation.com, or by direct email: evaluitsupport@rospa.com