The Leaders Predict

"As long as public libraries have to provide all information free, it limits them severely as to the actual information they can provide. A library with no fee-based service cannot enter into or influence or help when people have major information needs that can only be answered with money attached, e.g. business lists or credit reports." Steve Coffman, director, County of Los Angeles Public Library's FYI service, in Searcher: The Magazine for Database Professionals, September, 1996, pg. 25.

"The more we miniaturize, the more we technologize, the more we [librarians] need to provide assistance, mediation, instruction, and analysis. In my view, the primary role of the public library is, essentially, a place to provide equity of access to information and the world of knowledge. This role can be looked at from three perspectives: the library as a physical, architectural place; the library as a terminus on the information superhighway; and the library as a catalyst for converting information into knowledge." Susan Goldberg Kent, "American Public Libraries: A Long Transformative Moment," Daedalus, Fall 1996, pg. 209.

continued on page three

Serial Purchase or Document Delivery

It is cost effective to purchase a scientific journal if there are at least 11 readers per year. For fewer uses, document delivery is more affordable, according to a study by Carol Tenopir and Donald King done for the Special Libraries Association 1996 annual meeting.

$ Cost of reading library journals: the cost of the subscription plus the processing time ($68/title), plus the reshelving and photocopying time ($1.50/use), plus the user's time ($11.20 reading).

$ Cost of document delivery: vendor charge ($12) plus library processing ($7.20) plus user’s time ($9.50) plus penalty for time delay ($2.05).

The study advises librarians that the best strategy may be to negotiate a site license with a per-use amount based on an estimate of the total number of uses of the journal.

Web Site Review Criteria

Reviewers for Library Journal use the following criteria to evaluate Web sites:

Graphic Design: sense of style, color coordination, well-placed graphics, and easy-to-follow page layout.

Innovative Use of the Medium: effective use of interactivity/Internet-specific features and stretching the limits of current technology.

Content: substance, depth, uniqueness, accuracy, and currency.

Authority: institutional affiliation and developer credentials.

Organization: easily grasped, logical, and clearly divided.

Search Engine: clear instructions, Boolean capabilities, keyword searching, index updates, and speed.

The Trends...

✓ According to the ARL, three converging trends explain the increase in interlibrary loans in academic research libraries: more accessible and easy-to-use bibliographic tools; a growing universe of published items; and reduced buying power for libraries as a result of increased acquisitions costs for most research resources combined with strained budgets.

✓ The highest achieving K-12 students come from schools with good library media centers.

✓ New arenas of competence for library acquisitions managers include document delivery, copy cataloging, outsourcing, and contract negotiation.

✓ "If someday my grandchildren ask me, 'Why do you go to the library?' I still hope to reply, 'because that's where the books are.'” Donald S. Lamm, W. W. Norton & Company.
Most Commonly Held Fiction Titles

A recent study of the most commonly held adult fiction titles used the OCLC database of 1,400 participating public libraries to identify the top 400 titles. With the exception of the Wilson Fiction Catalog (listed 91% of the 400 titles), "best books" lists did not perform well in predicting the widely held titles, nor did bestseller lists. The size of marketing budgets seemed good as a predictor of purchase as did reviews.

The Book Review Index showed a weak positive correlation between the number of reviews a book received and the number of public libraries holding the title. The New York Times Book Review covered 81.5% of the titles whereas Publishers Weekly's annual lists of hardcover bestsellers included below 30% and the ALA Notable Books list had only 3.4% of the titles.

The top ten fiction titles commonly held by public libraries in the OCLC database as of August 1994 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>OCLC#</th>
<th>PUBYR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North and South</td>
<td>Jakes, John</td>
<td>1,051</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Wobegon Days</td>
<td>Keillor, Garrison</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dream of Orchids</td>
<td>Whitney, Phyllis A.</td>
<td>1,027</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last of the Breed</td>
<td>L'Amour, Louis</td>
<td>1,026</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Time of the Hunter's Moon</td>
<td>Holt, Victoria</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flaming Tree</td>
<td>Whitney, Phyllis A.</td>
<td>1,012</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Stand</td>
<td>King, Stephen</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Road to Paradise Island</td>
<td>Holt, Victoria</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Color Purple</td>
<td>Walker, Alice</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Wings, Santiago Blue</td>
<td>Dailey, Janet</td>
<td>1,001</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From "Evaluating Public Library Adult Fiction: Can We Define a Core Collection?" by Judith H. Senkevitch and James H. Sweetland, RQ, Fall 1996, pgs. 103-117.

Electronic Content Licensing Discussion List

LIBLICENSE-L is a moderated list for the discussion of issues related to the licensing of digital information by academic and research libraries. Increasingly, libraries are being inundated with information created in digital format and transmitted and accessed via computers. This list is designed to assist librarians, publishers, and others concerned with the licensing of information in digital format in dealing with some of the unique challenges faced by this new medium.

Information providers (creators, publishers, and vendors) who deal with libraries are welcomed as members of the list. The list is an outgrowth of the Electronic Content Licensing Project.

To subscribe, send e-mail to: listproc@pantheon.yale.edu

In the body of the message, type:

subscribe LIBLICENSE-L Firstname Lastname
Consortia—The New Buying Power — Part I

Most libraries are underfunded. To help minimize the impact of this situation, many have banded together in consortia to cooperate in areas such as collection development, library automation activities, preservation, and other resource sharing ventures. Historically, many consortia built themselves around the sharing of a regional integrated library system (ILS) including hardware, communications networks, and database loading activities. However, with the lowering cost of computer servers, the emergence of distributed information systems, and the ubiquitous nature of the Internet, this paradigm is changing.

Many consortia are now building their future, not around the sharing of an ILS (although many still may retain this feature), but around digital library projects, collective database licensing, document delivery, and other electronic projects. Since many publishers and database producers provide discounted products and services based on volume (e.g. concurrent users, FTE headcount, number of participating sites), modern library consortia are emerging as power players in the electronic marketplace.

Publishers and producers of electronic products want to sell as much of their product as possible. Selling to consortia offers the opportunity to maximize their sales to many sites through a single contract. Although different products are sold and marketed differently, it is clear that publishers are attempting to encourage group sales.

Library consortia are emerging as major players in the electronic marketplace. Consortia which have been around for many years (e.g. Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries, MELVLY, CICnet, OhioLINK, California State University System, Florida Center for Library Automation and many others) are pursuing group buys with great vigor. Newer consortia are also forming, for example the Northeastern Research Libraries (NERL) and GALILEO (Georgia) to take advantage of cooperative systems and purchasing.

Part II will continue in the next issue.

George Machovec, technical coordinator, Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries, and managing editor, Online Libraries and Microcomputers (for information call 602-996-2283).

Buyers Speak Out

"In the decision criteria for selecting electronic resources, platforms, access modalities, and system reliability are on a par with authority, completeness, and currency. Complicated licenses or intrusive patron validation requirements can lower a product’s value as a reference resource, and, by contrast, a vendor or database provider who makes these issues easy to deal with enhances the value of the resource. This is particularly true of resources that are acquired by a consortia for use by its members." Kathleen Kluegel, reference librarian, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in RQ, Fall 1996, pg. 10.

"Journal publishers are the only producers in America that I can think of that raise their prices when faced with declining sales." Susan Zappen, Skidmore College.

"Selection decisions are made by committee, and they rely on their circulation figures and focus on what is of current interest. Price is very important especially when buying multiple copies for branch libraries, and paper is preferred because of cost. Advance reviews in Booklist, Library Journal, and Publishers Weekly are helpful in deciding what to purchase but cannot be relied on exclusively because they wouldn't get everything their patrons want. Publishers' catalogs are useful if they are well-designed, easy to read, and clearly explain the content.

"Other factors that influence public library purchasing are..."
The Charleston Survey — Discounts

Recently The Charleston Report surveyed key librarians for their comments regarding discounts on material which they buy for their library. Here is what they said —

Discounts are becoming less important on the individual title level. It’s not worth my time to buy one book, or even a set of books, if all I save is $25 or $30. By the time I pull this order out of the normal ordering process, it’s taken up $30 worth of somebody’s time.

Discounts are important at the aggregate level. Negotiate the best discount I can with my periodicals and book vendor for the coming year or years. My boss is more impressed with this than with my getting a discount on a particular title.

Sales catalogs are a pain. My order clerk hates processing them. Sales are great, but this isn’t a consumer market the way a dress shop is. This is certainly one way that the World Wide Web might prove useful to process sales orders because I sure don’t want to have to aggregate five sales catalogs from five different departments before I process an order. My time counts for something too! And please be careful with deadlines. A patron may bring me a sales catalog on the day the sale is over and I still have to process it!

Gimmicks are cute, but we are not a supermarket. What works for Peter may not work for Paul. Making a sales gimmick dependent on buying a certain volume of material, for example, may be feasible for one library and not for another. If you narrow your possibilities, you will get fewer sales.

Time lines. We are not a consumer market, and we are not buying used cars. Be careful with imposing deadlines that look like you are pitching a product too hard.

Those are just a few of the comments. Interesting ...

Library of Congress Online

An experimental online public access catalog for the Library of Congress is now available, providing access to over 4.8 million records (out of 27 million) from the Library of Congress. Compared to LOCIS, LC’s command-driven catalog, this new format is easier to navigate, allowing users to search by keyword, author, title, ISBN, and LC class searches, as well as to limit by format, date, publisher, and language.

An exciting new feature is the ability to sort results by date, title, or LC call number, either in ascending or descending order. Individual records are displayed in hypertext format, making it possible to jump to other works on the same subject, call number, or by the same author. Links are available to online texts and images.

Access to the experimental Web catalog is through: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/catalog/.

Electronic Licensing

Librarians are negotiating licenses for databases partly to establish cost but primarily to get as much access as they can for their users. Ann Okerson, Associate University Librarian, Yale University, outlined the following negotiating issues at a recent ARL/CNI meeting:

- what users can do with the material; on what terms they can make copies and send them to colleagues in other organizations; what uses can be made for instructional purposes, e.g. coursepack-like services.
- vendor performance; upgrades; replacement for defective discs.
- technology-related issues; what the technical requirements are, whether yours and the vendor’s technologies are compatible.
- perpetual archiving and licensing; the ability to have infinite access to the electronic resource.
- dispute resolution process; what is the jurisdiction, for example, if you are negotiating with a vendor from another country.
- multiple licensing; for a single product, one might in fact be negotiating licenses for content, software, etc., separately.

Future Issues Will Feature

- ALA Midwinter Hot Topics
- Web Page Design
- Do Approval Plans Sell More Books?
- What New Services Do Librarians Want?