**The Charleston Survey Exhibits: What's the Story?**

It's hard to find a subject that 99% of librarians agree on, but when surveyed, they agreed on the positive value of conference exhibits. "Exhibits are a way to view products hands-on. They are a major attraction at conferences. They are essential." "I make a point of visiting the conference exhibits. I look at the listing of exhibitors in the conference booklet and make a list of whom I want to visit. I organize my route, but I also just 'happen' on other interesting products. Exhibits are a great way for me to scope out new products or materials and to see new electronic enhancements."

Which exhibits do librarians attend and how do they rank them? ALA is at the top since this meeting has the most comprehensive and sophisticated exhibits. ACRL, PLA, SLA, and MLA exhibit are next. State conference exhibits can't compare because they just are not big enough.

Do librarians buy as the result of seeing products or materials at exhibits? "Yes. It is an opportunity for me to see a product 'up close and personal,' to make suggestions on product development, and to talk to an editor. But I won't usually decide to buy right away. I want to go back and think about it. Be a little more deliberative."

Do librarians take promotional materials away that are at an exhibit? What? Why? "Occasionally, yes, I take promotional material with me if the product catches my eye, if I came specifically to view the product, or if it's just something I bumped into that fascinates me."

How do librarians rate exhibits as a marketing tool for publishers? Exhibits don't happen often enough for librarians to view them as a truly effective marketing tool, so they want to see reviews and statements by other librarians on a day-to-day basis.

What is the best way for publishers to communicate with librarians about their products? Mailing brochures and reviews are still excellent ways for publishers to communicate with librarians. And, phone calls are sometimes good if they are followed up with a brochure or other product mailing. But, a new kid on the block is the publisher's Web site. "This is a must. I can visit the site, scope out the product, and see what others are saying about it."

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**Short Takes**


The most time-consuming task in an acquisitions department of a library is the receiving of materials including opening and sorting mail and boxes, checking-in, posting expenditures, detecting and referring fund problems, resolving inconsistencies, and sorting for cataloging. About six items are received per hour in a study conducted by Iowa State University Technical Services. LRTS, "Monographs Acquisitions: Staffing Costs and the Impact of Automation," by Diyls E. Morris, Pamela Rebarcak, and Gordon Rowley, October, 1996, pgs. 301-318.

One of Library Journal's top eight stories for 1997 is that publishers credit libraries as a main support for midlist authors by purchasing their first books while the publisher waits for the breakout novel. Library Journal, "1997 Newsmakers" December 1997, pgs. 70-71.

More than 90% of the revenue earned by the $25 billion (sales) Intel Corp. during 1997 came from products that didn't exist in 1996. Forbes, 1998.

Over 15,000 different serials titles out of a total of 18,000 have been selected by UnCover Reveal users for their e-mail alerting needs. CARL Corp.
**TCR Profiles the Consortium of Consortia**

Q. What is the Consortium of Consortia (COC)?
A. The COC is a grass-roots gathering of leading consortial groups from the U.S., now expanding to include some international consortia.

Q. How did the COC form?
A. The group originated from a Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) “Birds of a Feather” round table back in late 1994/early 1995. Representatives of various consortia gathered to compare notes in informal sessions, which occurred at CNI’s meetings and also at ALA meetings.

Q. How many consortia currently participate in the COC?
A. Well over 40 consortia are current members, including all major academic consortia in the U.S. Examples of members are: OhioLINK, ILCSO (Illinois), VIVA (Virginia), the University of California and California State University systems, Texshare (Texas), FCLA (Florida), Solnet (Southeast), Palinet (Pennsylvania), TRNL (Triangle Group, NC.), Calileio (Georgia), Minitex (Minnesota), statewide consortia from Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Colorado, New England, and many others. The group is now extending to Canada and the UK, and interest from Australia has been expressed.

Q. Is the COC a buying consortium?
A. No. The group is an informal forum to allow sharing of expertise and experience. However, beginning in February 1997, the group decided to hold more formal sessions, and now meets roughly twice a year. Selected vendors are invited to these sessions to make presentations about products, services, and pricing for consortial groups.

Q. How does a vendor or publisher get invited to a meeting? How many vendors have already participated?
A. COC members decide which vendors they would like to hear from in their formal meetings. These vendors are then invited to make presentations, usually lasting 1-1 1/2 hours. To date, COC has heard from approximately 21 vendors and publishers.

Q. Does the group discuss pricing and licensing terms?
A. Absolutely. The group compares both pricing and licensing options from vendors, publishers, and others. In fact, it was Academic Press’ license and pricing options for its full text offerings which were the original impetus for the group.

Q. How can I learn more about the COC?
A. The COC is a closed group and maintains a private listserv and homepage. To learn more about the group, vendors should contact one of the members or the group’s unofficial leader, Tom Sanville at OhioLINK.

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**By the Numbers**

The unit cost to research libraries to borrow an item on interlibrary loan is $13.85, and the cost to lend an item is $9.48. Average borrowing turnaround time is 16 calendar days, the borrowing fill rate is 85% and the lending fill rate is 58%. ARL, a Bimonthly Newsletter of Research Library issues and Actions, “Measuring the Performance of Interlibrary Loans and Document Delivery Services,” by Mary E. Jackson, December 1997, pg. 1.

The percentage distribution of total operating expenditures in public libraries in 1996 was salaries at 66%, “other” expenditures at 18%, and materials at 15%. Materials expenditures per capita increased 7% from 1995 to 1996 from $2.72 to $2.93. *American Libraries*, “Public Library Circulation, Spending Continues Upswing,” by Lisa A. Wright, October 1997, pgs. 74-75.

Despite canceling hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of serials, research libraries are spending 124% more on serials in 1996 to acquire 7% fewer titles that a decade ago. Association of Research Libraries.

The Oregon Legislature has approved $1,058,632 for the state’s 130 public libraries to improve children’s reading. The program emphasizes outreach activities for preschoolers and their families to develop an early love of reading. The libraries are eligible for 75 cents per child. Oregon State Library.

The Ohio Public Library Network (OPLIN) was funded by the Ohio Legislature for 1996/97 at $12.85 million: local public libraries more than matched the state’s investment. In order to ensure equity of access to information for all Ohio citizens, OPLIN provides telecommunications access, Pentium PCs for every main library and branch, unlimited access to the commercial databases licensed by OPLIN, and full, open access to the Internet. *Library Journal*, “Ohio’s OPLIN: The Future of Library Service?,” by Meribah Mansfield, October 1, 1997, pgs. 44-47. (Ohio’s academic network, OhioLINK, was profiled in the Vol. 2 No. 3, *TCR*, p. 2).

“It is my policy to grant the discount requested by distributors (which ranges from 20% to 35%). Distributors who receive the discount they request tend to work more effectively for the publisher. The book must list for an amount which, after discounts, will enable the press to recover its expenses, but the price must not exceed libraries’ ceiling for any book of its type. Right now I am pricing my library-bound volumes at 16 cents per page which is mainstream for books on literature.” David Lee Rubin, president, Rookwood Press, in *Against the Grain*, December 1997/January 1998, pg. 28-29.

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**Future Issues Will Feature**

- Hot topics at the Public Library Assn. meeting
- Library industry growth
- Report from the library scene in Australia and New Zealand
- Summary of the Computers in Libraries conference
**ALA Hot Topics**

A large number of librarians and vendors attended the American Library Association's 1998 Midwinter Conference in New Orleans from January 9 to January 13, 1998. Although some attendees' reactions were that not much was going on, a few issues did seem to be surfacing to the top.

- The second generation of interlibrary loan systems have arrived, based on the virtual union catalog.
- Remote user authentication is a big issue, especially given the rising number of online catalogs linking to licensed proprietary databases and Web sites.
- All Integrated Library System vendors are developing their next generation systems, and some project significant architectural changes. This led to fewer sales of ILS systems in 1997 and a growing worry that present systems will not transition easily into the next generation. ILS vendors are promising client server-based open system design, but only one at ALA, Endeavor, had all the functional components operational.
- OCLC, the world's largest library information provider (see TCR, Volume 2, No. 2, pg. 2), is changing its pricing and bundling services. Librarians are concerned that they may be required to pay for some services in the bundle that they do not want.
- Outsourcing of library services, and, in the case of the Riverside County, CA, Public Library, of the whole library, remains a hot topic. The potential savings and increased flexibility of staff usage cannot be ignored.
- Public librarians were preoccupied with a number of topics including filtering on the Internet, telecommunications costs, discounts, and configurations, the Washington scene, and expanding local support for libraries. The woe of budget cutbacks seems the exception rather than the rule.

**Gates Library Foundation Donations**

The Gates Library Foundation was established in June 1997 by Bill and Melinda Gates to partner with public libraries to bring access to computers and digital information to patrons in low-income communities in the U.S. and Canada. Their commitment is for $200 million to be distributed in the form of grants, technical training, and assistance. In addition, Microsoft Corp. will donate software for each grant recipient.

There are three categories of grants. Statewide Library Partnerships. Statewide library partnerships will provide broad funding, technical assistance, and training to libraries throughout three states in 1998. Alabama has received the first award. Urban Library Leadership Grants. The second category is grants to large urban libraries serving very low-income communities. Twenty systems will receive awards in 1998. Opportunity Grants. The third funding will go to libraries in low-income communities to expand public access to computers and the Internet. At least 20 opportunity grants will be awarded in 1998.

**Language and Literature Titles in Academic Libraries**

In a 1995 survey of Wisconsin academic libraries by James H. Sweetland and Peter G. Christensen (reported in The Journal of Academic Librarianship, March 1997, pg. 119-124), the reasons for selecting a monograph in languages and literature were ranked as follows: the relevance to the curriculum, a request by faculty, the subject of the book, the lack of other titles on the subject, and a request by academic administrators or staff. The presence of a review was in the middle of the 27 reasons for selection, followed closely by price. (In TCR Volume 2, No. 3, pg. 1, reviews ranked as the top marketing tool for a number of librarians.) The bottom of the list included style of writing and availability on interlibrary loan.

Librarians select materials to support teaching over research and are more interested in purchasing current imprints. Most selections are for English language titles, despite the contemporary emphasis on cultural diversity.

The median expenditure for monographs in language and literature was 5% of the total materials budget. In comparison, total output of 1993 publishing for language and literature was about 18.6% of all North American academic titles.

**Approval Plans in Academic Libraries**

Sue Flood, approval plan librarian at Auburn University, recently surveyed Association of Research Libraries' members and found that the level of spending for approval plans is increasing. In 1996, $39.5 million was spent on approval plans, up from $26.3 in 1988 ($33.3 million adjusted for inflation). Spending per institution is also higher with the 1996 average at $565,000, up from $310,000 in 1988 ($407,000 adjusted for inflation).

A greater percentage of ARL libraries are committed to approval plans in 1996 than there were in 1988. Also, an increased amount of the library's materials are purchased through the plans.

The advantages of using a plan, according to the librarians surveyed, are: greater discounts, staff time savings, selection with the book-in-hand, quicker receipt of current imprints, and consolidated ordering. The disadvantages include: insufficient and imprecise profiling, marginal material delivered, time-consuming follow ups, and inadequate coverage of small presses.

The three top reasons for discontinuing an approval plan were: vendor is unsatisfactory; lack of funds; and profile causes too high a return rate.
Libraries on the Move

The Queens Borough Public Library will be expanding in 1998 from their current 450 public use computers to over 650, all of which have access to the Internet. Their biggest concern is not over filtering but rather not having enough access to meet demand. A cyber resource center is to open soon in their Central Library, and every table will be wired for laptops in an upcoming new branch.

At the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library, circulation of materials has increased 5% over the previous year, renewal of materials through the library’s telephone and Web-based renewal services has increased 57%, reference inquiries are up 8%, and the number of visits to library facilities grew by 17%. Patrons accessed the library’s Web site 800,000 times in its first year of operation.

The University of Texas-Austin has received a $1 million appropriation for fiscal year 1998 by the University of Texas System Board of Regents to strengthen its library collections and information resources and, through expedited interlibrary services and electronic delivery, to enrich the resources of all UT libraries. A Knowledge Management Center has been established to complement traditional collections, to expand existing services, and to create new options for access to scholarly information for the UT community and for distance learners.

Interesting Coalitions

The following three organizations are all studying buying patterns and the changing needs of libraries. Web addresses for each site are listed after each profile.

- The Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), formed in late 1997 by the Association of Research Libraries, plans to be a catalyst for change through the creation of a more competitive marketplace for research information. It will promote academic values of access to information for research and teaching and encourage innovative uses of technology to improve scholarly communication. (www.arl.org)

- The Coalition For Networked Information (CNI) was founded in March 1990 as an “incubator of ideas, a venue for bringing parties together, a forum for discussion, and a disseminator of ideas and information about the latest networked information technologies.” At its October 1997 meeting, director Clifford Lynch announced his three program themes:
  - developing networked information content;
  - transforming organizations, professions, and individuals; and
  - building technology, standards, and infrastructure. (www.cni.org)

- In collaboration with many associations, networks, and scholarly societies, the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) serves as a forum for change. Its goals are to identify the critical issues that affect the welfare and prospects of libraries and archives and the constituencies they serve; to convene individuals and organizations in the best position to engage these issues and respond to them; and to encourage institutions to work collaboratively to achieve and manage change. Their four program areas are to support the Commission on Preservation and Access, to initiate pilot projects and experiments for digital resources, to understand better the economics of information, and to develop leadership. (www.clir.org)

Favorite Children’s Books

The children of the Detroit Public Library voted for their 10 favorite books during National Children’s Book Week in November 1997. Children in grades preschool through eighth voted in three branches and the Central Children’s Library. Last year’s winner, the Goosebumps series by R. L. Stine, slipped to number two.

1. Green Eggs and Ham, by Dr. Seuss
2. Goosebumps books by R. L. Stine
3. Arthur books by Marc Brown
4. Golem by David Wisniewski
5. Tailypo by Joanna Galdone
6. Three Little Pigs
7. Spot Looks at Color by Eric Hill
8. A Light in the Attic by Shel Silverstein
9. Cat in the Hat by Dr. Seuss
10. Babysitter’s Club books by Anne Martin

Subject Searches in Public Libraries

According to a Library Journal and UMI study, reported in an LJ November 15, 1997 article by Norman Oder (pg. 54-56), searchers with information needs used public libraries overall about as often as books and magazines they had purchased, and about twice as often as online resources and experts such as doctors and lawyers. The hottest topics in public libraries are: personal health, computers and technology, travel, business and economics, and personal finance. At the bottom of the scale of interest are foreign language materials, social sciences, and performing arts. The top reasons for unsuccessful searches were that patrons found sources, but could not find information in the source (43%), that not enough information was found (38%), and that more in depth information was needed (38%).

Selling Online Products

Flexibility is the key to offering a new online product to the library market. Melanie Vandermark, marketing and sales manager for online products at the Johns Hopkins University Press, offers the following advice based on experience with their current 500 library subscribers. Be ready for a more complex buying, selling, and support environment. All libraries are not the same, and the primary contact person may be in a different position depending on the library’s organization.

Multiple packages need to be offered to meet the current market needs. Some examples are: an academic package with full IP domain access (highest price); a public package with limited IP domain access (lower price); individual titles (for special groups); title groupings; tiered pricing; special discounts for community colleges, special libraries, etc.; and consortia and network packages.

A single brochure is inadequate because it cannot contain enough information. Use the Web and frequently asked questions (FAQs) to help present the product, but plan on plenty of personal contact. Follow-up with the customer and an understanding of how the customer is using the product will help at renewal time.