Academic Library Budgets

According to a survey by Library Journal (September 1, 1998, pg. 144-146), a college or university serving 10,000 or less students would spend 41% of their materials budget on books and 38% on print serials. Electronic products would represent 15% and “other” makes up the remaining 6%.

At larger institutions, the ratio is reversed. Monographs make up 39% of the materials budget and print serials use 43%. Electronic products are only 10% of the expenditures. This ratio widens with Association of Research Libraries’ members where 28% is spent on monographs, 65% on serials, and 7% on electronic products.

Overall, academic library budgets rose 7% from the year before. But, the libraries have not been able to keep up with materials’ price increases. According to the survey, over the period from 1996 to 1998, purchasing power has been reduced by 14% for monographs despite the fact that spending is up 30% for monographs.

Technology Trends

The near-term automation in the library industry will be largely shaped by three trends:

1. The Web will continue its phenomenal growth and dominance, both in the larger consumer information arena and in our more focused library and information delivery markets. Libraries will continue to seek Web-based resources rather than locally-mounted or CD-ROM-based alternatives for electronic information. Workloads will be reduced in maintaining these files while teaching faculty and students to rely increasingly on the Web as the “universal” interface.

2. End-user access will continue to rise, bringing with it the need for more “seamless” interfacing and “ease of access” validation schemes. Currently, much end-user access is institutionally sponsored; for example, state-wide networks now pay the costs for providing hundreds of databases in some states. However, end users are largely unaware of their reliance on this financial backing and will seek more and more to access information with or without institutional backing. The big question: will end users actually pay for the information they need? Current evidence says no.

3. Evaluative mechanisms will rise, since information overload is real and becomes more real as the Web is more successful. Some of this “evaluation” will be simple: libraries grouping subject files or Internet destinations under a single heading on a homepage. Others will be deeper, perhaps offering critical advice and “best of” lists for users.

Ward Shaw and Becky Lenzini, CARL Corp.

Who Makes the Purchasing Decisions in Libraries?

A recent survey by Karen Schmidt at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign of 5,300 librarians showed that, on average, directors of libraries make more selection decisions than do other individuals in libraries. When all types of libraries are considered, the director makes decisions about 31% of the time for all formats of publications. Selectors or subject specialists make selection decisions about 19% of the time.

This profile changes when one considers the type of library. Directors of medical, law, or special libraries are far more likely to be involved in selection decisions (48% medical library directors, 51.5% law library directors, and 42% special library directors). Directors of college and university libraries are responsible for selection decisions only 19% of the time, while public library directors are involved 25% of the time.

Subject specialists in college, university, and public libraries are about equally responsible for selection decisions (31% of the time). Acquisitions librarians are responsible less than 10% of the time in all types of libraries. The smaller the library in terms of both staff and budget, the more likely the director of the library will be involved in selection. Directors are more likely to be responsible for selection of electronic products than of any other kind of format.

SPARC Expands

SPARC, the Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition, made up of 98 members of the Association of Research Libraries, is seeking publisher partners. SPARC will concentrate its resources on supporting ventures in which the gain from introducing price and service competition is great. They are seeking partners that are committed to fair pricing, intellectual property management policies that emphasize broad and easy distribution and reuse of material, and the ethical use of scholarly resources. They are looking for professional societies, university presses, start-up electronic publishers, innovative for-profit publishers, and “visionary” enterprises.

SPARC is committed to soliciting and encouraging the introduction of new publications of high quality at a fair price. They will guarantee a subscription base and will market new products to potential subscribers. Start-up capital will be provided in selected cases.

The first partnership agreement was signed in June with the American Chemical Society (ACS). The agreement calls for ACS and SPARC to collaborate in the creation of at least one new ACS scientific journal each year for the next three years. The new journals will be one quarter to one third the price of competing titles.
What Are Digital Libraries?

Digital libraries are organizations that provide the resources, including the specialized staff, to select, structure, offer intellectual access to, interpret, distribute, preserve the integrity of, and ensure the persistence over time of collections of digital works so that they are readily and economically available for use by a defined community or set of communities.

DLF believes that the key strategic question is how to integrate materials in digital forms with materials in other formats. As digital libraries mature, the principle defining their collection policies will not be the "digital-ness" of the material. Rather, the defining principles will be, as in other libraries, the subject matter of the materials and the patron community interested in them.


Interesting Reading


The report presents a thorough explanation of the Internet as it works today and describes how it will likely evolve. It examines the legal issues raised by some of the features of digital technologies, such as Web posting, caching, and RAM copying. The report describes as "tomorrow's issues" such topics as non-public posting, protection of factual information on Web sites, Internet broadcasting, computer-generated works, and metered use of information.


In an effort to increase the achievement of the nation's kindergarten through twelfth grade students, the two associations have created new standards to guide school library media specialists and other K-12 educators as they cultivate and refine their students' information literacy skills in print, nonprint, and electronic format. The standards cover three major areas: information literacy, independent learning, and social responsibility.

Library Vendors Report

Substantial Growth

In a story in Publishers Weekly (Library Business 'Boom-ing' at ALA, July 13, 1998), a number of library vendors were quoted as experiencing significant growth. George Coe, vice president of Automation/Books Division at Brodart, said their business was, "up 31% over last year; half of that is in new accounts." He expected the trend to continue over the next two years.

Ingram Library Services' president and CEO, Marty Keeley, said their business to libraries is also in the 30th percentile over June of the year before. One of Ingram's growth areas is the addition in 1997 of cataloging and processing services.

Baker and Taylor also had "substantial growth," according to Jim Ulsumer, president of B & T Books. He reports growth primarily from public libraries with schools second.

A major audio/visual vendor expressed an overall 25% growth with schools increasing at a 40% rate while public libraries rose at a 19% rate.

Trade Show Graphics

Don Dozier, president of Fastsigns, a computer-aided sign company in Dallas, offers the following hints for trade show graphics (reported in Bottom Line/Business, August, 1998):

- Use big, bold graphics that are easily visible to visitors.
- Reduce the amount of written copy so that your message is action-oriented and customer-focused.
- Keep in mind your target customers.
- Choose colors that are based on the type of message you have (Black is for high-tech products; yellow and red are energetic and playful; blue indicates stability; and green is positive and relaxing.).

By The Numbers

Public libraries which serve a population of over 500,000 spend $1.28 million on adult books and purchase over 31,000 titles annually. Library Journal, February 15, 1998, pg. 107.

The number of people who access the Internet from their public library has increased 86% since January 1997. MCI LibraryLINK study, 1998.

According to a USA Today online survey in April, 58.6% of the 9,522 responding supported no filtering of the Internet in public libraries. Only 23.3% were in favor of filtering access for all patrons regardless of age and even less, 14.5%, were for the installation of blocking software only in the children's area.

Mailing Lists

Cahners, a division of Reed Elsevier, offers those marketing to libraries, as well as publishers or booksellers, a wide variety of choices for mailing lists from its Bowker Division publications. The major categories are highlighted below.

Libraries/Librarians (Total size of list: 36,564)
Source: R. R. Bowker's American Library Directory
Sorts: by state or zip; fax number or phone number; specific budget categories such as A/V; annual budget; individual name/title; library type; and more
Costs: $75/1000 names; minimum order: $200; additional costs for sorts range from $8-$30 per 1000

Library Journal Subscribers (Total size of list: 22,570)
Source: Library Journal
Sorts: geographic by state or zip and type of business/library
Costs: $95/1000; minimum order $500; additional costs for sorts range from $8-$12 per 1000

School Library Journal Subscribers (Total size of list: 38,883)
Source: School Library Journal
Sorts: geographic by state or zip and type of business/library
Costs: Same as Library Journal

Booksellers (Total size of list: 29,056)
Source: R. R. Bowker's American Book Trade Directory
Sorts: by state or zip; business location; current book inventory; gross sales; type of sales (i.e. bookstores that sell ___); type of bookstore; and more
Costs: $75/1000; minimum order $200; additional costs for sorts range from $8-$30 per 1000

Publishers Weekly Subscribers (Total size of list: 39,981)
Source: Publishers Weekly
Sorts: by state or zip and type of business
Costs: $100/1000; minimum order $500; additional costs for sorts range from $8-$12 per 1000

Options for label formats and diskettes or magnetic tapes are available and may affect the total price. For more information, readers should contact John Panza at 800-337-7184. (Fax: 212-463-6532)

Public Library
Mission Statements

The Akron-Summit County Public Library enriches our community by providing every person with effective access to the human record.

The Redwood City Public Library, CA, mission statement is: We help people understand the past, prepare for the future, and thrive in the present.

At the Columbus Metropolitan Library, our mission is to promote lifelong learning among residents of Central Ohio by ensuring access to information, providing a diverse collection, and advancing literacy by encouraging children and families to read. We are committed to providing exceptional service to all.

New Buying Patterns

OCLC's new Journal Licensing Program offers "one-stop shopping" for electronic subscriptions, access, and the ability to archive titles available through the OCLC FirstSearch Electronic Collections Online service. The new program is designed to make it easier for libraries to get started with electronic journals. OCLC will quote pricing and provide license terms for electronic journals, process subscription orders, and provide libraries with consolidated billing. www.oclc.org.

Lexis-Nexis will be available in a limited version to more than 600 university libraries in a deal worth $4 million. Twenty-three library consortia and three libraries worked out the agreement which serve 53% of U.S. college campuses and 3.7 million users. The cost is $1.52 per student per year. The cost will be subsidized by advertising. Chronicle of Higher Education, July 3, 1998.


Pricing Electronic Access to Knowledge (PEAK) is a joint project between Elsevier Science and 10 university libraries, coordinated at the University of Michigan. For an entrance fee of $25,000, the libraries gain access to all journal articles in 1,100 scholarly journals published by Elsevier three to five weeks after publication.

Short Takes

Maryland's General Assembly has granted the largest funding increase in the history of the state. Per capita funding is rising from $9.25 to $12.00 and will be phased in over a four-year period.

One of the few profitable companies on the Web is Dun & Bradstreet Corp.'s credit reports for businesses, charging up to $85 for a report or a monthly subscription fee of $25 for unlimited access. With only minimal advertising, they are selling 100,000 reports a month, and the number is growing 30% a month. Wall Street Journal, July 20, 1998 pg. A6.

In a recent survey of 5,000 book, magazine, newsletter, and electronic publishers, 31% of the respondents say they are deriving 10% of the revenue from their Web sites. They expect "huge revenue increases" in the sales of product/content in the next two years. Their concerns are constantly changing technology, insufficient return on investment, Internet instability, cannibalization of core products/services, lack of security, and inability to integrate their Web sites with their back-end accounting and fulfillment systems. Information Today, June 1998, pg. 55.

K-12 school libraries are expected to spend a total of $597.9 million on materials this year, a 4.2% increase. This breaks down to: books, $451.6 million, periodicals, $82.4 million, and audiovisuals, $61.9 million. Electronic expenditures were not reported. Source is Book Industry Trends 1998.
Public Library Usage

According to a Gallup poll conducted for the American Library Association, 66% of Americans used a public library at least once in the last year in person, by telephone, or online. What did they come for? The highest percentage, 81%, checked out a book. Fifty-one percent used reference materials, 50% read newspapers and magazines, 32% borrowed videos or CDs, and 17% connected to the Internet.

Slightly more women (53%) than men used the library. The heaviest library use was by people in the 25 to 44 age group. Thirty-five percent were college graduates, 34% had some college, and 31% had a high school diploma. Two-thirds take their children to the library. More than a quarter of the library users had incomes of $60,000 or more, 20% made between $40,000 and $60,000, and 29% had incomes between $20,000 and $40,000.

A large majority, 90%, said they believe libraries will continue to be a necessary service, despite the growing availability of computers. Two out of five said they consider the library one of the most important tax-supported services.

Amazon.com Latest Results

Effective July 22, 1998, Amazon reported sales for its second quarter of $116 million, an increase of 316% over the previous year's second quarter sales of $27.9 million. Amazon listed 3.14 million customers as of June 30, 1998, up 415% from June 1997's total of 610,000. Of note, the company states that repeat customer orders made up 63% of the second quarter sales.

The number of libraries using Amazon to make purchases is rising, but no firm statistics are available. However, a recent TCR survey concerning the use of credit card purchases by libraries noted that Amazon was the most frequently-mentioned source of these purchases.

Of interest to publishers and vendors, particularly those with Web sites, is Amazon's associates program, which provides for online linking between any site and Amazon. It is up to 60,000 participants and has doubled in just the last four months. Associates earn up to 15% of sales generated.

Amazon is still posting losses, however, reporting an operating loss of $11.6 million (10% of sales) for its 2nd quarter. This is seen as an improvement over 1997's second quarter, which showed losses of $7.1 million or 25% of sales at that time.

Web Page Evaluation

According to one undergraduate librarian, students go to the Web first and then "grudgingly" consult paper. Jim Kapoun, reference and instruction librarian at Southwest State University, uses the following five criteria (reported in C&RL News, July/August 1998, pg. 523) to teach students how to select and evaluate Web sites.

Accuracy. Who wrote the page, are they qualified, and can they be contacted?

Authority. Are the author's credentials given and what institutional domain publishes the document.

Objectivity. Is the information detailed and does it meet the goals of the document. Does advertising mask objectivity.

Currency. How old is the information and how frequent is it updated.

Coverage. What is the comprehensiveness, the balance of text and images, and the links.

Outsourcing in Public Libraries

According to a recent survey by the Urban Libraries Council, 51% of urban public libraries will outsource more functions in the future while 49% will outsource the same functions as at present. None responded that they would decrease their outsourcing efforts. The most common functions outsourced are: 82% binding, 68% materials processing, 63% grounds maintenance, 63% custodial services, 61% Internet service, 57% computer training, 57% cataloging, and 56% security. Only 24% outsource materials selection, and, of those, only 11% of their total selection activity is outsourced.

Most of the outsourcing (71%) goes to commercial vendors. Other providers include governmental agencies, 15%, library consortia, 5%, other nonprofit agencies, 5%, and other libraries, 3%.

North American Serials Interest Group Draws Record Attendance

The 13th annual meeting of the North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG), held in Boulder, CO, on the campus of the University of Colorado from June 18-21, 1998, drew a record crowd of almost 700 dedicated serials librarians, publishers, and vendors.

The effect of online publishing on the scholarly serials world was clearly felt with numerous sessions focusing on the technologies of both producing and accessing electronic journals and the pricing of these journals. Other major topics included EDIFACT, serials processing, cataloging, standards, and copyright.

On the topic of copyright, Pat Schroeder, former Congresswoman from Colorado and the president and CEO of the Association of American Publishers, made clear in her keynote speech her dedication to strong copyright laws and raised concerns among some librarians in the audience about the effect of these laws on fair use and libraries.

Next year's meeting is tentatively set for June 10-13, 1999 on the campus of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. NASIG traditionally features no exhibits or vendor displays but offers those in the serials industry an unparalleled opportunity to network and interact in a casual but concentrated setting.

Future Issues Will Feature:
- Hot Topics From the Charleston Conference on Acquisitions
- Mailing Lists, Part II
- From Whom Do Libraries Buy Materials?
- Electronic Journals in Libraries