ALHA Hot Topics

Attendance at this year’s ALA Midwinter meeting in New Orleans felt low and the final numbers released by ALA on January 21, 2002, prove it:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advance Registration</td>
<td>5,175</td>
<td>5,486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onsite Registration</td>
<td>2,869</td>
<td>3,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL Registration</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,044</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,341</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitor Advance Reg.</td>
<td>2,364</td>
<td>2,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitor Onsite Reg.</td>
<td>1,247</td>
<td>2,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL Exhibitor Reg.</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,611</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,780</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>11,655</td>
<td>14,121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The low numbers caused slow traffic in the exhibit hall, by most reports. And, adding to the problem, unfortunately, ALA was also relegated to some of the furthest halls (H and J) in New Orleans’ monstrous convention center. Rumor had it that the exhibits were more than a mile’s walking distance from the closest large convention hotel (the Hilton).

Nonetheless, many sessions were well attended, even packed. And hot topics were evident. George Machovec, Managing Editor of *The Charleston Advisor*, notes the following:

- Larger vendor adoption of the OpenURL concept was very hot. ExLibris (with SFX) was the first commercialized version of the OpenURL concept but many others now offer competing products such as Endeavor (LinkFinderPLUS), Fretwell-Downing, and others. Also, more database providers are offering support of this standard.
- Growing support for metadata standards such as Dublin Core and EAD was evident. New software development tools are appearing on the market to support these metadata standards.
- Web Portal software is now available from a growing number of ILS and other vendors for the library market.

And, echoing some of the topics above, Chuck Hamaker, Senior Editorial Advisor for *TCA*, and frequent speaker at *The Charleston Conference* noted these as hot:

- The Open URL was probably the most mentioned and least understood buzz.
- Cross database search systems are gaining interest, and more competition is evident from vendors, with Fretwell Downing becoming a major new player in the field.
- Digital Rights Management is beginning to invade library consciousness. Within a year, DRM may reach the top of the topics heap.
- State supported institutions, both local and statewide, are looking at budget cuts and real reductions in existing funding levels.
- A lot of work on new product development/positioning—including from libraries—is evident. Coffee shops in academic libraries may soon be ubiquitous! Vendors, publishers, and even libraries are looking for the “killer app.”

In the News

Libraries made the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*’s Technology Journal with an article entitled “Libraries Focus More on Upgrading Technology.” Featured in the article were reports of wireless check-in of books (as they fall through the drop-off bin!) at the Cerritos Library in suburban Los Angeles, as well as e-Book readers available for check-out at the Shenendehowa Public Library in Clifton Park, N.Y. *Wall Street Journal*, January 10, 2002.
By the Numbers...

97%...of residents surveyed by the University of Louisville (Kentucky) described the Louisville Public Library as “very important.” In addition, 82% knew the name of the nearest branch and 70% supported increased funding for the library.


1...day after its official debut on Yahoo!, information database Northern Light's volume was already up 30 times higher than previously. InfoToday NewsBreaks, January 28, 2002. http://www.infotoday.com/newsbreaks/nb020128-1.htm.

$54,500...is the median salary for U.S. information professionals, according to a just-released survey of its members conducted by the Special Library Association (SLA). The highest mean salary, $78,227, was reported for the pharmaceutical sector. Library Journal, December 2001.

9%...was the overall decrease in the price of British books listed on Blackwell’s approval plan during its fiscal year (July 2000/June 2001). The decline was not true for every discipline: music titles increased 58% over the previous year. Against the Grain, December 2001 – January 2002.

27,059...is the median number of monograph titles purchased by ARL libraries in 2000, versus 32,697 purchased in 1986. The 17% decrease is attributed to shifting monograph funds to cover rising costs of serials over this 14-year period. ARL Newsletter, October 2001.

164%...is the increase in DVD rentals during 2001. VHS rentals declined 8.6% in the same period. Of note, in 2001, DVD rentals out-grossed ticket sales in movie theaters. CNN, January 8, 2002.

8.3 million...is Phoenix Public Library’s level of circulation in 2000, up from 3.7 million in 1980. The Library has recently been created as a separate department within the city; previously, it was part of the Parks and Recreation Department. Phoenix Public Library Press Release, December 18, 2001.

Check It Out!


Don’t Miss This!

ALA’s Guide to Best Reading in 2001 contains recommended books compiled by its various agencies, including the Association of Library Service to Children (ALSC), Booklist, Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), and the Young Adult Services Association (YALSA). Lists in the guide include “Notable Children’s Books,” “Notable Books,” “Editors’ Choice,” and “Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults.” Available online through the ALA Online Book Store at http://alastore.ala.org/. PowerPoints from the 2001 Charleston Conference, “The Trends They Are A’Changing,” are now available at http://www.coic.edu/library/conference. Full conference proceedings will be published again this year by Against the Grain Press, with support from EBSCO and Eastern Book Company.

How Teenagers Are Using the Internet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant messaging</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online games</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolwork</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat rooms</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Product research 47%
Educational activities 37%
Youth portals 32%
Research on college or jobs 19%
Shopping 17%

Public libraries across the nation are facing severe budget cuts, many of which are the culmination of long standing tax cut initiatives, the depressed economy, and the immediate impact of September 11.

Public libraries receive their primary funding locally through city or county general funds based on sales taxes, special library levies, and property taxes. Limited dollars are received from the federal level. Some public libraries receive state support, the most significant of which is in the State of Ohio. Fundraising and donations are a small percentage of the library budget, but a majority of the larger public libraries have a mechanism, such as a foundation, to receive this revenue.

Tax cut initiatives are also having an impact. California led with Proposition 13 in the 1980's which limited the growth in overall property tax to 2% per year. In the northeast, other states have followed. The latest initiative is in the State of Washington which is limiting property tax growth to 1% per year. The State Library of Virginia had a 17% reduction in state aid to libraries, and many local libraries have received cuts as well.

The economy has impacted local government budgets through less sales tax and more layoffs. Library budgets suffer as a result. In Detroit, for example, the library’s materials budget is completely frozen until July 2002, and then it will only be increased a small amount. September 11 has had a significant impact on the tourist industry affecting libraries in states dependent on attractions such as Disneyland or in destination cities such as Phoenix.

In addition, cities’ priorities have changed quickly toward a focus on security and away from libraries and education. In New York, the New York Public Library has had its materials budget reduced by 35%; worse, this cut has to be absorbed in the last six months of their fiscal year, i.e., from January to June 2002. Queens Borough Public Library has reduced its branch hours to five days a week and must lay off, through attrition they hope, 20% of their staff.

At the January 2002 ALA Midwinter meeting, attendance was down with many libraries choosing to reduce or eliminate their travel budgets. The Public Library Association meeting in March in Phoenix will be off its early estimates as probably will ALA in Atlanta in June 2002.

Perhaps the bright news is that libraries are continuing to build new branch and central libraries, many of which were funded under capital projects in a time when more budget monies were available. These libraries will require one-time large purchases of collections and equipment.

---

**How About It?**


---

**Did You Know?**

Katina Strauch, the founder of The Charleston Conference and Editor of Against the Grain, is running for the ALA Presidency. TCR readers who are ALA members please note: ballots will be mailed in March and must be returned by April 26 to be counted. Be sure to cast your vote for one of your own. Vendor members are also eligible to vote, so don’t miss this unique opportunity!

**TCR Quotes:**

"...the 'newest' reality is that single library online public access catalogs are being overshadowed by search systems that query multiple catalogs," Chuck Hamaker, Associate University Librarian for Collections and Technical Services, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, in The Charleston Advisor Opinion Editorial, January 2002. Fulltext available online at [http://www.charlestoncon.com/features.cfm?id=81&type=ed](http://www.charlestoncon.com/features.cfm?id=81&type=ed).

"Students are more likely to USE GOOGLE FIRST." Rick Lugg and Ruth Fischer, R2 Consulting, in Against the Grain, December 2001-January 2002. (capitals supplied by authors)

---

**TCR Mini Profile: Toledo-Lucas County Public Library**

The Toledo-Lucas County (Ohio) Public Library’s recent $45.1 million grand rededication of its Main Library and renovation of four branch libraries brought some record results for the system for the year 2001.

- **Total circulation** 6,501,528 +6%
- **Main Library circulation** 1,078,438 +29%
- **Total patron count** 3,478,319 +4%
- **Main library patrons** 679,183 +23%

Other facts:
- 11 of 18 branch libraries showed an increase in circulation in 2001
- the average library user checked out 14 books during the year (the national average is 6.4)
- Mondays are the busiest days at both the Main Library and branch libraries
- Thursdays are the slowest days
- 3,614 questions are answered each week at the Main Library
- 7,222 questions are answered each week at the 18 branch libraries

Source: News from the Toledo-Lucas County (Ohio) Public Library, January 24, 2002
Did you know that the December 2001/January 2002 issue of Against the Grain is devoted to e-Books? This terrific issue is guest edited by Miriam Gilbert, formerly of netLibrary, and features articles and updates on topics including publishing impacts of e-Books (from Kelly Franklin of John Wiley), Nylink’s joint acquisition of e-Books (from Mary-Alice Lynch, Executive Director of Nylink), the e-Book and the national Library (from Mark Bide and Kim Richardson of Rightscom), health science e-Content distribution (from Sherry Thompson of Majors Scientific Books), a run-down of e-Book hosts (from Rick Lugg and Ruth Fischer, e-Book consultants), and an overview of the state of the industry (from the guest editor).

Real World Report

In addition, Nancy Gibbs, formerly of North Carolina State University and now at Duke, offers a real-world update on the actual use of e-Books over a two-year period at NC State. Using five hand-held readers from SoftBook and seven Rocket eBook readers, purchased from two separate vendors, the library uploaded titles purchased from two vendors and circulated these devices from the Libraries’ Reserve Room facilities. Positive comments from readers included:

- the ability to read in less than ideal lighting
- the ability to control and increase type font and size
- having 10-15 titles available on a single device

The most common complaint was:

- the inability to choose the titles loaded on the reader

(of note, NC State, for copyright reasons, could not place the same title on more than one device)

Readers wanted a “gas pump model,” according to Gibbs, in which a blank hand-held device could be attached to a database and the user could download those titles of interest to him or her.

NC State also proceeded to license 1,600 titles from netLibrary during this same time (which equaled 85% of netLibrary’s collection in that period) and added these titles to their e-Book collection. By 2001, the Library was offering 3,743 titles in total and usage was actively tracked. In addition, the Library participated, through Solinet and NC Live, the statewide cooperative, in accessing a netLibrary collection of 14,485 titles.

Usage data appears as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># Titles Licensed</th>
<th># Titles Accessed</th>
<th># Titles Used*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCSU netLibrary collection</td>
<td>3,743</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>3,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCLive/Solinet collection</td>
<td>14,482</td>
<td>1,099</td>
<td>3,648</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Defined as either browsing or checking out a title

The usage statistics are a testament to the value of selection and also reflect the fact that the Library had entered bibliographic records into its OPAC for the initial collection licensed.

e-Book Usage Patterns

Of interest, the North Carolina State Library has also monitored patterns of usage by time of year and subject. They note that, during the first month of the school year, usage occurs over a wide variety of subjects. Most popular:

- computer science
- economics/business
- technology/engineering
- medicine/health/wellness
- literature
- philosophy

During the second and third months of the semester, circulation shifts to those titles which meet the needs of students writing 3-5 page term papers, usually on current events for an introductory survey class. Most popular subjects in this period include:

- criminal justice
- abortion
- death penalty issues
- childcare
- alcoholism

At the end of the semester, usage returns to general interest titles, but, as you might expect, by the end of the school year, students turn their attention to practical works, including “How to Write a Resume,” etc.

What’s Needed?

What would NC State like to see added to e-Books? Suggestions include:

- persistent title collections (i.e., minimizing changes in collections caused by copyright restrictions or changes in ownership)
- simultaneous access models
- bits and parts of books accessible for use in reserve collections and coursepacks
- consistent standardized formatting
- offline and online access, plus perpetual access


Mark Your Calendars!

The Charleston Conference will be held from October 31 – November 2, 2002. Preconference sessions and The Charleston Advisor Vendor Showcase are set for October 30. Registration packets for the Vendor Showcase will be mailed in the spring to all previous exhibitors. If you have never exhibited and are interested, send an email with your name, address and email to <rlenzini@charlestonco.com>.

Coming in Future Issues

- Full-Text Article Linking; Reports of Real-World Experiences
- Privatization of Public Libraries
- The Coming Shortage of Librarians — What It Means for Publishers and Vendors
- More News on Library Budgets