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Sandra K. Paul
SKP Associates

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Chaos

What Electronic Products Do Librarians Want? Results of an AAP Survey by Sandra K. Paul (President, SKP Associates)

In April, 1994, a representative sample of 2,000 academic, public, and high school librarians were sent a questionnaire developed by the Professional and Scholarly Publishing (PSP) Division of the Association of American Publishers (AAP) in order to better understand the capabilities for use, criteria for selection, and interest libraries have in electronic products. SKP Associates tabulated the 326 responses and prepared a report entitled "The Impact of Electronic Products on Collection Development and Access in General Reference," copies of which will soon be available from the AAP. For more information on this publication, please contact Lorna Peterson, AAP, 71 Fifth Ave., N.Y., NY 10003, phone 212/255-0200, extension 224. Katina thought you'd like to know what these librarians said. High-

lights from the Executive Summary, printed with permission of the AAP, appear below.

Although electronic media cannot yet be said to pervade the library community, 74% of the respondents to the survey were capable of describing the specific electronic hardware capabilities now in place in their libraries and a number of the others indicated some capability with check marks. As expected, IBM-compatible hardware dominates the public and academic libraries. Surprisingly, Apple/Macintosh did NOT dominate in the responding school libraries.

Fifty percent of the academic and 51% of the school librarians are spending increased amounts for electronic products, while the majority (71%) of the public librarians expect those products (along with all others) to stay the same. All types of libraries anticipated increases in the number of both portable databases and online services this year.

Thirty-two percent of the respondents

currently have access to the Internet, which is the dominant online "service" now (except in academic libraries, where slightly more have access to Dialog) and is anticipated to be so in the future for all types of libraries. Most current Internet use is for reference. Over half of the academic (78%) and school (56%) librarians anticipate patron access to the Internet within the next two years. Only 36% of the public librarians were willing to guess; 48% were unsure.

The five criteria that influence acquisition decisions were consistent across types of libraries, although number 1 and 3 changed places in the hierarchy for academic librarians. They are, in sequence for the other types of libraries: ease of use; cost; user demand; print-out capability; and user-defined search criteria. The two least influential for all types were photographs and line drawings.

The most important factor in the decision to cancel a print product in favor of an electronic product varies by type of library — ease of use being most important for academic and school libraries, whereas price dominated public library response to this and other questions. When asked for the features of importance in an electronic product, there were again differences. Academic and public libraries are most concerned with search capability, whereas school libraries are seeking ease of use.

Recommendations from colleagues/word of mouth was the one marketing approach responded to by the vast majority of librarians as THE most influential. Although reviews and demonstrations ranked high, there was again a diversity between the respondents by type of library.

The respondents were forthcoming with the names of particular products that received the most usage, those which they purchased in electronic format that they previously owned in print and those purchased only in electronic format. Although InfoTrac and SIRS dominate all three types of libraries, the differences and unique titles in academic libraries will be of interest to many publishers.

The Report of findings presents separate analyses for Academic, Public, and High School libraries, including listings of specific electronic products purchased in lieu of and in addition to print products. ☛

Listservs — FYI

From Your Editor

Okay. I confess. I went on vacation this summer. Before I left for vacation, I had a nasty message from these newly ordained "Internet Police." You have too many email messages. They are taking up space. Delete, delete, delete or else we will take away your account! So what else is new? When I came back from vacation, after two and a half weeks, what do I have, first off, but another message saying, Delete, delete, delete. You still have too many email messages! Hrmph . . . I said. I wonder what these people did before the Internet was born?

Since people are always asking me how to sign onto various lists and since I have usually deleted the message that tells a person how to sign on in the first place, I thought I'd write out the way to subscribe to some of my favorite lists. As I understand it, upper or lower case does NOT make a difference. There are a TON of lists out there. If anyone wants to add to this list, feel free! Thanks.

(1) **ACQNET** — a discussion of acquisitions topics

Send the message <Subscribe acqnet-l> and <your name> to:
acqnet-l@lester.appstate.edu

(2) **COLLDV-L** — a discussion of collection development topics

Send the message <Subscribe colldv-l> <first name last name> to
LISTSERV@USCVM.bitnet

(3) **COPYRIGHT** — a discussion of copyright topics

Send the message <Subscribe cni-copyright> <your name> to
listproc@cni.org

(4) **Newsletter on Serials Pricing Issues**

Send the message <Subscribe Prices> <your name> to
listserv@gibbs.oit.unc.edu

(5) **SERIALST** — a discussion forum for serials topics

Send the message <SUBSCRIBE SERIALST> <your name> to:
LISTSERV@UVMVM.UVM.EDU or LISTSERV@UVMVM.BITNET ☛