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## On the Street-How Do You Use Book Reviews?

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# On The Street

## How Do You Use Book Reviews?

Column Editor: **Eamon Fennessy**, <EFENNESSY@worldnet.att.net>

With this issue, our lead Column Editor for "On the Street" changes over to **Eamon Fennessy**. It's thanks all around. Thanks to **Barbara Dean** and **Anne Jennings** who edited this column for the past several years and thanks again to **Eamon Fennessy** for taking it over now. And thanks to all of you for answering the questions! Send comments to **Eamon Fennessy** at Internet: <EFENNESSY@worldnet.att.net> — KS

by **Eamon T. Fennessy**  
(The Copyright Group),  
**Linda Albright**  
(Winthrop University),  
and  
**Kathern J. Miraglia**  
(Catholic University of America)

Have you ever wondered how your colleagues would handle an issue that has been bugging you? Have you thought about a part of your professional responsibilities, decided you didn't have time to address it and shoved it aside to attack something "more important?" You're not alone. This edition of "On The Street" may help in both instances. **Linda Albright** of Winthrop University, **Kathy Miraglia** of the Catholic University of America and yours truly, **Eamon Fennessy** of The Copyright Group came up with three questions about the use of Book Reviews.

(1) What are your sources for Book Reviews?

(2) Are you using Book Reviews more, or less, than in the past, and is that due to declining book budgets?

(3) Do you yourself generate Book Reviews for scholarly and trade journals?

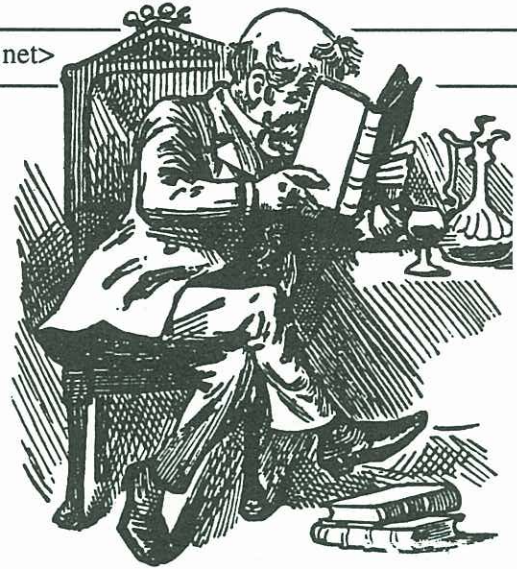
We put these queries on ACQNET, thanks to **Eleanor Cook** of Appalachian State, and quickly received almost two dozen answers. Here are the results.

The very first question (What are your sources for book reviews) presented the most interesting answers. The respondents broke down this way: individuals from one Canadian library, one independent library, eight small liberal arts colleges, four large liberal arts schools, five smaller state institutions, and three larger state universities. *Choice* was the top-cited title, with the *New York Times Book Review* second.

90% of libraries used *Choice*, with more than half of the librarians using the *New York Times Book Review*. Just under half of the libraries mentioned *Library Journal*, with *Booklist*, *Publishers Weekly*, *TLS* and the *New York Review of Books* all bunched together and used by about a third of the librarians.

Beyond these sources the most interesting aspect to me were the six Web citations: *Rettig on Reference* (2), *Amazon.com Web Pages*, *SIAM Book Review*, *Ivars Peterson's Mathland*, and the *MAA Web Site*, one each. Do more of you use the Web and just forgot to mention it? Two citations were received for each of the following: *Small Press Review*, *School Library Journal*, and *Women's Review of Books*.

Surprising to me, *Chronicle*, *Voice of Youth Advocate*, *Multicultural Review*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *London Review*, *World Literature Today*, *Appraisal*, *Hungry Mind Review*, *Bulletin of The Mathematical Society*, *Mathematics Intelligence*, the *New Yorker*, *Telecommunications Electronic Review*, *Horn Book Guide*, *Language Arts*, *English Teacher*, and one CD (*BIP Plus*) were mentioned only once by librarians. Though not widely cited, these evidently filled a need for certain institutions. (*The*



*Chronicle* ...only once?) Perhaps the mention of some of these less-cited titles may remind you to use them.

Answers to the second question (are you using book reviews more or less than in the past) were also interesting. Half of the libraries reported that they have not changed their use of reviews when budgets changed, but about a third used reviews less because of finances, and the rest have increased use of reviews. What do you make of this?

One out of every five librarians state they contribute reviews and almost all of these contributed to at least two journals. *Library Journal* and *Choice* were mentioned most. (Time seemed to be the restraint for not being more active in generating reviews.)

The following were among those participating in this survey:

**Margaret Benson**, Linfield College  
**Mia Brazill**, Smith College  
**Eric Carpenter**, Oberlin College  
**Lauren Corbett**, Queens College (Charlotte, NC)  
**Nancy Day**, Linda Hall Library  
**Rebecca Drummond**, Georgia State University  
**Peter Duchesne**, Canada  
**Jane Fitzpatrick**, SUNY Maritime  
**Steve Hardin**, Indiana State University  
**Stan Hodge**, Ball State University  
**Jill Long**, Claremont College  
**Betty Oktay**, Vassar  
**Bob Schriek**, Seton Hall University  
**Melissa Stearn**, Franklin Pierce College  
**Jey A. Wann**, Oregon State Library

P.S. Several more librarians participated but I hesitate to mention them without permission. We'll address this better in the future. Thanks to all who contributed. We will look forward to more participation in the next edition of "On The Street." Are there topics you think should be addressed? Let me know. <efennessy@worldnet.att.net>