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ATG Annual Report Survey

Barry Lee

Research and Reference Services

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ATG Annual Report Survey

Compiled by **Barry Lee** and **Judy Lee** (Research & Reference Services)

The Second *ATG Annual Report* survey gathered answers by *ATG* readers and **Charleston Conference** participants on a variety of issues — budgets, organization, staffing, the future. Four-fifths (80%) of the respondents consider themselves old/new academic librarians. While half identified themselves as working in technical services on the first survey, this year it fell to ten percent. Forty percent of the respondents have been librarians between eleven and twenty years. Below is a summary of some of the results. The complete results can be accessed on the *ATG* Webpage, beginning in April, at <http://www.against-the-grain.com>.

Budgets

- The percentage of the monies devoted to books was 30% and journals 50%, making total print resources 80% of the materials budget. The twenty percent of the materials budget spent on non-print resources is spread between online resources and gateways (10%), CD-ROMs (4%), and other 2%.

- Very few respondents, approximately one-tenth (10%) report a decrease in their overall materials budgets. Half reported an increase in their book budgets.

- Three quarters (75%) of the respondents reported an increase in their journals budgets.

- Almost three-quarters (75%) reported an increase in their budget for electronic users.

Personnel and Staffing

- Almost all (98%) of the respondents provide training for their existing staff. Thirty-six percent do continuing education in-house.

- Seventy-two percent fund travel to conferences and workshops and twenty percent fund credit courses for staff.

- Ninety percent of the respondents reported being able to absorb the additional work in their current workflow.

- One quarter (25%) are starting to teach end-users to be more self-reliant and to do research on their own.

- Ninety-eight percent of the respondents use a subscription agency. Over half (52%) have switched agencies within the past five years.

- Approximately two-fifths of the libraries reported being downsized and of those, two-thirds have had to decrease their professional staff. Slightly over half (55%) reduced the paraprofessional staff. Surprisingly, only one-sixth of the libraries reported negative effects, down from last year's survey's one-fourth.

Concerns and Issues

Librarians have found a variety of ways to incorporate the Internet

into their daily lives.

- Three-quarters now have a homepage on the Net, up from last survey's two-thirds. Acquisitions services have incorporated the Net into their routines in the following ways — electronic ordering, searching publisher Web pages, email, reading listservs such as ACQNET and ACQWEB, searching for out of print materials.

- Ninety-two percent of the libraries have workstations in their work areas.

- Almost half of the institutions offer distance education. Only ten percent of the libraries have merged with a computer center.

- Only sixteen percent of the respondents have implemented paperback only approval plans. Fifty-four percent have not. Thirty percent do not have an approval plan at all.

- Forty percent of the libraries responding report canceling paper subscriptions for new media. As to the archiving issue, fifty percent say that they will keep electronic information in whatever format they can use it. Sixty-two percent also state that they are keeping paper for the present.

- Respondents read a wide variety of library-related publications. The large majority read *Against the Grain* (98%). Two thirds read *College and Research Libraries*. Half of the respondents reported reading *Publishers Weekly*, *Choice*, and *Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory*. One-third receive *Library Journal*.

The Future

The top issues for the twenty-first century in this year's survey are Funding (20%), Change (14%), New technologies (12%), and Staffing (6%). Of these four, only funding was a top issue in the first survey (33% in 1996). Respondents had a much broader range of concerns this year.

AND, as promised, we have selected two winners from this year's survey. These people were chosen at random from the group of people who took the time to fill out the survey. They will be given a complimentary subscription to *ATG* as well as free registration to the next **Charleston Conference** (November 5-7, 1998). THANKS to all of you for filling out the survey!

Winners: **Julia E. Ben-Simon**, Head of Acquisitions, King County Library System, Seattle, Washington; **Chuck Longfellow**, Delaware State University, Dover, DE.



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ably a tiny minority) of enduringly useful electronic documents.

Let me propose two simple strategies. The first is to ask the question "Would I have added this to my library if it were in print?" If the answer is yes, print it on acid-free paper. This second may seem to lack glamour but, on the other hand, what is the alternative? Does anyone seriously think that the government (for who else would have the means and the staying power?) is going to create a gigantic electronic archive and maintain it indefinitely in the face of dizzyingly frequent technological change? Again, remember that no group but librarians has the history of preserving the records of humankind and the means and the will to do it well. If not us, who? If not now, when?

Finally, what about something else in which we are uniquely expert — bibliographic control? Just contrast the experience of using a well-ordered library with the World Wide Web swamp. No matter how fancy the strategy or "search engines" (the little engine that couldn't), the fact is that in searching the Web, one is using nothing

more nor less than contextless keyword searching. The searcher lacks completely the results of careful cataloguing, authority work, and cataloguing standards.

Cataloguing is expensive. Not having cataloguing is expensive. You can either spend the money up front to the benefit of many thousands of users or you can abandon those users to thrashing around in the Web and hoping that the 40,000 results that seem to be par for the course for every search contain something of relevance—a process that costs them money and time. Before we go much further with metadata and other fancy notions, perhaps we should think about taking those electronic documents that we determine are of value and applying regular old cataloguing standards and practices to them?

Librarianship is a profession with enduring values (service, intellectual freedom, etc.) and an enduring mission — to acquire, give access to, organize, disseminate, preserve, and provide assistance and instruction in the use of recorded knowledge and information in all forms. We can and should use our values and continue our mission in incorporating electronic documents and resources into our collections, services, and programs.