

February 1999

ATG Annual Report Issue Survey Results

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Recommended Citation

Lee, Barry and Lee, Judy (1999) "ATG Annual Report Issue Survey Results," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 15.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3721>

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ATG Annual Report Survey

by Barry and Judy Lee (Research and Reference Services)

The **Third ATG Annual Report Survey** gathered answers by participants of the **Charleston Conference** and **ATG** readers on a variety of issues: budgets, organization, staffing, and the future. Over eighty percent (84%) of the respondents consider

themselves academic librarians, while just fewer than ten percent identified themselves as working in Reference. One third of the respondents have been a librarian between eleven and twenty years. Following is a summary of some of the results.

Budgets

Two fifths (40%) of the respondents reported an increase in their materials budget. Another two fifths reported no change. One third reported an increase in their book budget. Three fifths reported increases in both their journal and electronic resource budgets.

The percentages of the monies devoted to books was 42 % and journals were 34% making total profit resources 76%, down slightly from 80% last year. The remaining budget was spent on non-print, split between online (5%), CD-ROM's (7%) and electronic serials (12%).

Very few respondents, approximately twenty percent reported a decrease in their

overall materials budgets. Two fifths of the respondents reported an increase in their journal budgets.

Almost two thirds reported an increase in their budget for electronic users.

Personnel & Staffing

One third of the respondents reported outsourcing for approval. Twenty percent have outsourced cataloging and one third does not outsource anything.

Eighty percent of the respondents provide training for their Library Technical Assistants. Over half (56%) provide this training by in-house classes by existing staff. Forty percent do continuing education in-house. Half fund travel to conferences and workshops and twenty eight percent find credit courses for staff.

Almost ninety percent of the respondents reported being able to absorb the additional workload. One fifth (20%) are now teaching end-users to be more self-reliant and do research of their own.

Approximately two fifths of the libraries reported being downsized, and of those, three-quarters have reported decreasing their professional staff. Ninety percent have reduced the paraprofessional staff. One third of the libraries reported negative effects, up from one-sixth last year.

A full hundred percent use a subscription agency. Approximately one third (30%) have switched agencies in the past five years. Half reported an increase in their book budgets.

Concerns and Issues

Librarians continue to find a variety of ways to incorporate the Internet into their daily lives.

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


Twenty percent of the respondents have implemented paperback only approval plans, eighty percent have not.

As with last year's survey, forty percent of those responding reported canceling paper for new media. As to the archiving issue, ten percent say that they will keep electronic information in whatever format they can use it in. Another ten percent believe it is some other library's problem. Forty percent are keeping paper for the present.

Respondents read a variety of library related publications. The majority read *Against the Grain*. Eighty percent read *Library Journal*. Approximately half read *C&RL*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Library Acquisitions*, and *Choice*.

The Future

The top issues for the new Millennium in this year's survey are information overload, electronic archiving, adequate training, publisher monopolies and adjusting to change (20% each).

In addition, as promised, we have selected two winners from this year's survey. These people were chosen at random from those of you that took the time to fill out the survey. **John Thomas Minor**, Director, Reeves Library at Moravian College and **Anthony Raymond**, Head, Acquisitions Department at Michel Orradre Library. 

From a Book Vendor's Perspective from page 30

must continuously promote the value of our services to publishers, just as we do to libraries. We have sophisticated Websites that are visited by thousands of library decision-makers each day. We have collection management products and services that wed libraries to us and make us an indispensable part of the library workflow. We have sales representatives in the libraries spreading the word on publisher promotions. We have a presence within the library community that a publisher would be hard pressed to duplicate. We have market reach that works to everyone's advantage—ours, the publisher's, and the librarian's.

Outsourcing has matured.

We've moved beyond "should we do it?" to "how do we get it done?" And we're seeing outsourcing moving beyond the easy and

obvious areas, to more specialized and demanding functions like shelf-ready processing for standing order titles. Nevertheless "outsourcing" as a concept continues to make some people uneasy. Outsourcing is still seen by some as a threat to the library profession. In my mind nothing could be further from fact. As long as I've been associated with the library industry, we've been debating professionalism. Embracing outsourcing as an efficient way to release library staff to attend to more intellectually complex activities seems to me to be the very hallmark of a highly evolved profession. A 1993 **Coopers and Lybrand** study found that companies that outsource generate 22% higher revenues than their non-outsourcing counterparts. What private industry recognized five years ago, we in the library industry are finally accepting: outsourcing makes an organization more productive by allowing it to do what it does best and leave the non-mission central work to others.

Increased competition for collection development dollars with electronic information continues.

Electronic resources are easier to share than books, but they are expensive. Wise purchasing by consortia and creative licensing agreements from information providers are helping libraries spread their dollars further. Eventually it is possible that the widespread digitization of scholarly materials may actually result in savings for libraries that may affect their book buying budget positively. Not all library materials are suited to electronic formats, at least not as they exist today. There is little interest as yet in moving to a strictly electronic environment, and in fact, more books are being published today than ever before in history. We've heard from more than one large academic library that university administrators, worried about the decline of library book collections, have allocated new funds earmarked for print purchases. 