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ATG Annual Survey Report

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BORN & LIVED: I was born in Tennessee and have lived the rest of my life in Alabama and Georgia. A Southern girl, through and through.

EARLY LIFE: I attended third through twelfth grade in Huntsville, Alabama, during the years of the "space race" and "integration." I met Dr. Werner von Braun, watched parades of giant missiles on flatbed trucks, and shook hands with Governor George Wallace.

FAMILY: My mother and sister still live in Huntsville. My daughter and her family live an hour away in the metro Atlanta area.

EDUCATION: B. A. degree in History from University of Alabama in Huntsville. MLS from Clark Atlanta University.

FIRST JOB: Teaching ninth grade Alabama History and Civics. Ugh!

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I joined Forsyth County Public Library in 1996 when it became an independent library system. Over the past seven years, I have widened my involvement in the community and in state library activities. Currently I serve as President of North Georgia Associated Libraries, as a board member for Forsyth Certified Literate Community Program and for a Chamber of Commerce Task Force on education. In addition to overseeing the Materials Department, I am a member of the library director's Building Team which is planning a new branch library and a new Headquarters building. Both buildings are slated for construction in the next two to five years.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Read, of course! I also have a small picture-framing workshop in my basement.

FAVORITE BOOKS: Mystery and Adventure / Suspense. I like for the good guys to win.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: The message: "Since the computer was not shut down properly..." — As though it was my fault!

PHILOSOPHY: Never stop learning new things.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Award of a \$20,000 LSTA grant for bilingual materials and programs as a result of a grant application I compiled last year.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Library consultant.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: I believe that there will be improved standards for electronic formats, cataloging and indexing processes, and data transfer between online acquisitions and vendor systems. These standards, along with advanced technical hardware and software products, will foster increased inter-operability among libraries of all types, blurring the boundaries between local library holdings and world-wide access.

Nevertheless, I think that in five years, patrons will still be checking out paperback books to take to the beach. ☀

ATG Annual Survey Report

by David Lyle (College of Charleston Intern) <aeneaslxi@yahoo.es>

It is that time of year again, to breathe in the fresh air of spring and listen to the birds singing outside your window. Before becoming completely enthralled with the temptations of spring, let's take a quick gander at the results of the *ATG Annual Survey Report*. As most of you know, *Against the Grain* administers surveys out to hundreds of willing, faithful readers, giving you the opportunity to express your opinions and to share the statistics concerning what is going on in the library world, particularly your own. The number crunching that results allows all of us to reflect upon our own position in what is happening in the mainstream library realm, and what we can be doing to either keep up or sidestep into what is more acceptable.

Out of the respondents who took our survey, 67% were academic librarians, 11% were public, 11% were technical, and one person responded as being a government librarian and another as being an administrative librarian.

Concerns

One of the first questions that we ask our survey takers is "What are the top five things that librarians should be concerned about in the twenty-first century?" This year, the theme that pervaded the results is the series of issues related to e-resources. Some are concerned about the escalating cost of e-resources, others are concerned with its insecurity and lack of standards among the e-vendors. Ownership for many millennia has always been applied to physical objects that can be touched and hidden. Now that the electronic age is reaching new heights, people are recognizing that **information is never really "owned."** The music swappers and the RIAA have repeatedly clashed in the past year over what rights they have to own a song simply made up of bits and bytes. All that a song is, really, is a glob of information. **Digital rights management** was also a commonly mentioned concern of the respondents. Should information have an "owner" associated with it? Once a library has paid the given amount of money for a subscription to an e-resource, should it not have ownership of the archived subscription to which it was subscribed? If so, what kinds of guarantees does the library have that it will always have access to this information stored remotely on another server? Regardless, over two-thirds of our respondents have cancelled paper subscriptions in favor of electronic subscriptions to journals.

Let's Outsource!

Another major concern expressed by the

respondents is the issue of outsourcing. Out of the respondents, 44% reported outsourcing their cataloging and 47% reported outsourcing their approval plan, approximately the same amount. The acquisitions department is being outsourced by only 11%, whereas last year it was about 8%. This trend towards outsourcing tasks is expected. Another 8% reported outsourcing their physical processing, databases and binding. Some only partially outsource their department. For example, in cataloging, some respondents explained that they only outsource the cataloging of their government documents.

Outsourcing to some people should be done as much as possible in order to open up more time for technical services staff to assist in public services. This way, the job enrichment program is being utilized and fulfilled because the contractors are doing most of the monotonous work, leaving the unexpected or localized tasks to the staff.

Other people feel that it is cheaper to stay away from outsourcing and to do it "in house" since they hire primarily work-study students. After all, contractors are much more expensive than hiring students, and the students take away much more experience than the contractors do. The choice to outsource is dependent on the library's ability to hire skilled laborers versus the library's ability to train and keep low overhead should the less-skilled trainees make more mistakes.

Training Library Assistants

Fortunately, 94% of the respondents said that they provide training for their library assistants. The negligent 6% either do not hire library assistants or they missed the question altogether. Two of the respondents who said they provide training said that it is not in-house, that is, the training occurs outside of the library. One of these respondents explained that the training occurs in local workshops through a federal library consortium, whereas the other one said that they depend primarily on WebEx and other online courses to train, or even through satellite transmission. It should be interesting to see in the near future if online courses or satellite transmissions become a preferred medium to provide consistent, secure training to the new librarians' assistants.

Document Delivery and ILL

Asked whether or not librarians used commercial document delivery or pay-per-view, half said that they do and 47% said that they do not use either one. This is roughly the same as last year, where the percentages were 45% and 55% respectively,

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though last year more people didn't use either, and this year more people use either than neither. This indicates a shift in preference for document deliveries or pay-per-views to other alternatives.

Fifty-three percent of the respondents reported that they use ILLs or pay-per-views as a concrete factor in choosing what books and journals to purchase.

An Aging Profession?

One of the major concerns in the overall economy right now is the aging population. Without an equal or greater number of "youngsters" coming in to replenish the older workers retiring from the workforce, there are less people to support social security/retirement benefits for the elderly, which eventually leads to less productivity.

Last year, the average number of years' experience that a librarian had was 19.4 years. This year it is nearly 21 years. Normally a one-year difference would be expected, but this is actually a 1.6 year difference. This suggests that more experienced workers are entering the market, or that the younger workers are entering the market at a slower rate than the elders are leaving.

It seems like a good thing that the number of years' experience is increasing, because this is an indication of a low turnover rate in the library science world. Sadly, it is also an indication that the number of new librarians entering the work force is decreasing. A 1.6-year difference is not an alarming amount, but it definitely deserves attention if we notice this trend in the next few years.

Changing Subscription Types

Sometimes implementing a paperback-only approval plan is done in order to save money. Seventeen percent of our respondents have resorted to ordering paperbacks on approval plans instead of hardcover. At the same time, 28% of the respondents have implemented paperback only for firm orders. This suggests a tendency to use paperbacks for firm orders over approval plans. This tendency may arise from the fact that the librarians do not know exactly what books they are receiving from the vendor-selected package of books, so they want to play it safe and order paperbacks only.

Budget This

Another major concern expressed by the respondents was the fact that the cost of serials and serial databases were simply not keeping pace with library budgets. Many of the respondents indicate a general increase in their budgets, but these were also complemented by an almost equal decrease of budget by other respondents. The general materials budget has increased by an average of 8.2% by 36% of the respondents, whereas 11% expressed a decrease in their budget by an average of 6.5%. Another 36% said that their materials budget has remained stagnant.

The materials budget for books has remained stagnant for most of the participants. Forty-

two percent said their budget has remained relatively unchanged. Seventeen percent have experienced an average of a 15.3% increase whereas 19% experienced a 22% decrease. This means that nearly two-thirds of the respondents have not increased their budgets for books.

For the journal materials budget, 33% indicated that their budget has not changed. 28% said they had an 8.3 increase, whereas 22% said there was an 8.5 decrease.

The budget for electronic resources seems to have experienced the most amount of budget increases. Only 6% of the participants indicated a decrease in their e-resource budgets, which averaged 8.8%. Forty-two percent indicated an average of a 9.6% increase and 28% say their budget has remained constant.

What do these figures indicate? It seems that many libraries are lowering their budgets for non-electronic databases in favor of increasing their electronic resources budget. A good majority of the libraries in the past have already been forced to lower their budgets in all areas to account for the falling economy. Once our economy hits bull market status again as the economic analysts are predicting in the near future, will libraries be more likely to reinstate their non-electronic budgets to original or even higher size? It may be too soon to say that electronic databases have driven libraries away from their dependence on hard copy journals and other texts. Nonetheless it may be a good possibility that as our economy picks up libraries will significantly increase their e-budget costs in favor of electronic materials.

Webpage

Last year, 88% of our respondents reported having a homepage. This year the number is now only 81%. Ironically this difference coincides with the fact that much of the continent was without power for several days last year—perhaps most of respondents are from California or the Northeast and have lost their Webpage entirely. This difference is otherwise negligible.

Drumroll Please

It was a pleasure to read through each and every survey, and it has also been a very educational experience. The most that *Against the Grain* has to offer as a prize for your participation is a one-year subscription to the journal and a paid registration to the **2004 Charleston Conference**. If you would like to be considered for these prizes next year, please take ten minutes to fill out the survey which can be obtained from the **Charleston Conference** and then sent in via fax, snail mail or email.

After randomly shuffling the surveys into a large stack and using only a coin to eliminate half of the stack, I repeated this process until I came across the two names of our lucky winners. And the winners selected to receive the two aforementioned prizes are... **Thomas Leonhardt of St. Edwards's University** and **Trisha Davis of Ohio State!**

Thanks again for your participation and remember to keep filling out those surveys! Your input is greatly appreciated and the information provided helps us all understand the trends that are happening financially, electronically and even globally. 🍌

ATG Interviews Albert Majors McClendon and John Albert Majors, III

by Bruce Strauch (Publisher, *Against the Grain*) <strauchb@citadel.edu>

ATG: *Your historical artifacts — visible for all to see as they enter the J.A. Majors Company offices — are wonderful. Give us some history of Majors. Majors' history is parallel to the history of medical publishing. Give us some of the high points.*

AM & JM: See, *Majors: A Centennial Retrospective*, p. 48.

ATG: *What's the secret of keeping a company in the family for three generations?*

AM & JM: A customer focus, not an owner focus.

ATG: *Why do you have two presidents or co-presidents? Isn't this awkward? Who has the final say?*

AM & JM: Many businesses are partnerships and we work similarly. Sometimes there are different views on topics and the one

of us more passionate about the topic will win the argument.

ATG: *Are publishers moving toward selling direct? Is there a role for the jobber?*

AM & JM: Definitely! Elsevier has been moving direct with electronic products, but selling direct does not seem to be as important a goal for other publishers even though some of them have some electronic product being sold direct. Most that offer electronic products direct also offer it through all their channels. In addition to having warehouses filled with many publishers' print and electronic products, distributors have become aggregators of the publisher title information along with offering consolidated billing and being a single source for customer service.

ATG: *Why do publishers think they can*

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