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ATG Interviews Albert Majors McClendon and John Albert Majors, III

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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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<<http://www.against-the-grain.com>>

Albert Majors McClendon (Al) and John Albert Majors, III (Jam)

J. A. Majors Company
1401 Lakeway Drive
Lewisville, TX 75057

BORN AND LIVED: Both are third generation Dallasites and third generation managers of Majors Scientific Books.

FAMILY: Al and Jam both say that children (some grown) are first priority and greatest joy in life.

EDUCATION: Coincidentally, both attended Trinity University of San Antonio in different years with Al reluctantly admitting to attending there several years earlier than Jam.

FIRST JOB: Jam went into the military before joining Majors in 1978 and Al, who also joined Majors in 1978, first attended St. Mary's Law School in San Antonio and worked several years in the trust department of a large Dallas bank.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE: Both answered: Family activities, volunteer work, traveling, hunting, fishing, and hiking.

PHILOSOPHY: The Golden Rule has indubitably been the focus of our philosophy and mission since Granddad founded the company.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Having employees retire from Majors with the belief that their life has been enriched by their time at Majors.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: To be an important part of the information revolution and have significant sales of electronic content.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: We see professional information delivered to students, clinicians, and researchers by people committed to customer service. There will be continued distribution of important print product for all medical specialties. Electronic information will be delivered using the latest technology advances, with some information only accessible through publishers, but most publishers will continue to benefit by serving the distributor network as aggregators. The quick access to a wide range of information and services will continue to make close bonds between distributors and their customers.

Interview — McClendon and Majors from page 44

duplicate a distribution service and why do/would they want to? Are your services that expensive for publishers?

AM & JM: The distributor's sale is the cheapest sale a publisher can make. They have no sales or customer service expense, minimal billing expense, no collection problems and they ship mostly bulk quantities to distributors. Most publishers understand what a good deal the arrangement is and are very supportive and appreciative of distributor services. Many publishers have not properly allocated expenses to their own warehouse activities. Any publisher that outsources quickly learns the good value of accurate pick, pack and ship services along with call center services and accounts receivable services.

ATG: What's the future of the middleman/jobber? Can they compete with the Elseviers of this world?

AM & JM: Elsevier, despite any complaints they may get, is a forward-thinking company helping to push the scientific market into the electronic world of the future. However, sometimes they may alienate customers unnecessarily by not being true partners that acknowledge the expense savings librarians have by dealing with agents and distributors who consolidate the information of multiple publishers and give librarians consolidated billing and one source for customer service and reporting. There are also many benefits for publishers who deal with distributors, and most publishers will not pass up these efficiencies.

ATG: I notice that you all have just done some "partnering" with Elsevier. And Elsevier is also partnering with OCLC/netlibrary. Why? What are the advantages? What has the reaction been to Majors' partnership with Elsevier?

AM & JM: Remember that Elsevier Health Sciences Book Division operates under different management than the Elsevier Journal Services. The book division is primarily made up of staff from Mosby and Saunders. Since they don't have a sales force dedicated to the health science libraries at universities and hospitals across the country, they have relied on the distributor network. The partnering with distributors in this market is not new although they have stepped up the marketing initiatives. This has caught the attention of many libraries and helped us both increase sales of im-

portant new books in an environment where dollars are often diverted to sexy electronic products before they are proven more useful than the new print product.

ATG: What's your secret to your rapport with your employees? It belongs in a management text.

AM & JM: Having an exciting vision and clear mission statement is the primary ingredient, but there is no secret. **Bruce Nordstrom, Steve Covey**, and many more authors have stated repeatedly that customers will only be treated as well as are the employees. What probably helps the most is to have fun along the way (also the title of **Majors'** history).

ATG: Tell us about your network in the US and how you cover the country. You don't do business internationally, do you?

AM & JM: The library market for **Majors** is the domestic market. We have reps that call on both bookstores and libraries on behalf of our STM publisher partners. We present front lists and publishers' special promotions, and we provide access to more than 100,000 STM titles on **majors.com** by title or subject area and access to another 700,000 trade titles through a strategic alliance with **Ingram**. We have a virtual standing order program allowing online editing in advance of the weekly shipment. The program includes cover images, sample chapters, and tables of content. These electronic services sell themselves once a rep gets a customer to try them.

Our sales in the US include sales to international distributors such as **Ingram, EBSCO**, and **Baker & Taylor**, so our books end up in many different countries.

ATG: When you sold your journals business in favor of your book business, some thought you were going "against the grain." Are you happy with that decision looking back a few years?

AM & JM: Our journal division was a valuable complement to our book services for many years. In the early '90s, when electronic delivery of journal content was an experiment, we saw potential expenses with no end. **EBSCO's** acquisition of the division in 1993 coincided with the advent of Web pages, followed in 1995 with **Amazon's** electronic shopping innovations. In short, the timing was perfect for our concentration of resources on new electronic services, which allowed us to continue to be a leader in book services for the STM market.

Future Charleston Conference Dates

	Preconferences and Vendor Showcase	Main Conference
2004	3 November	4-6 November
2005	2 November	3-5 November
2006	8 November	9-11 November
2007	7 November	8-10 November
2008	5 November	6-8 November
2009	4 November	5-7 November
2010	3 November	4-6 November