A Current Profile of Marine Science Librarianship

Results of a survey of the membership of the International Association of Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers
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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a survey which was sent to all members of the International Association of Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers (IAMSLIC). Members of IAMSLIC form a group which represents a wide variety of library positions and facilities. What do they have in common and in what ways are they dissimilar? Comparisons are drawn on the subjects of library administration, computer applications in the information center, budgets, acquisitions policies, public services provided and additional responsibilities not generally associated with the library profession. Perhaps most interesting are the respondents' personal feelings regarding librarianship as a career choice.

SURVEY RESULTS

This questionnaire was sent to 147 individuals and libraries around the world. Eighty-four were completed and returned; a 57% response rate.

The number of returned surveys from each participating country is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BERMUDA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANADA</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENMARK</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLAND</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOREA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEXICO</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW ZEALAND</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAMA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILIPPINES</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUERTO RICO</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SOUTH AFRICA .............................................. .2
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA .......................... .60

For many questions in this survey, total percentages exceed 100 because respondents were asked to mark all answers that applied, as opposed to only one answer.

Responses to questions concerning financial issues were all converted to United States dollars before compilation.

SECTION I - ADMINISTRATION

(1) What is your position title?

LIBRARIAN .................................................. .40%
CHIEF LIBRARIAN .......................................... .5%
OTHER LIBRARIAN TITLE
[Examples: Assistant Librarian,
Research Librarian, Data Librarian] ................... .24%
HEAD OR MANAGER ....................................... .8%
DIRECTOR .................................................... .7%
INFORMATION SPECIALIST, RESEARCHER
OR SCIENTIST ............................................. .6%
OTHERS ...................................................... .10%

(2) What is the position title of your immediate boss or supervisor?

DIRECTORS, CHIEFS OR DEANS ......................... .68%
OTHER LIBRARY PERSONNEL ......................... .8%
PROFESSORS AND SCIENTISTS ......................... .5%
OTHER RESPONSES ......................................... .17%

(3) Your supervisor is at what level of your organization's administration?

41% top level  38% secondary level  14% tertiary level  7% other

(4) Your salary is equivalent to what other positions in your organization?

[Responses to this question varied so widely that they were impossible to tabulate. Some examples of your answers are: Scientists, Faculty Members, Computer Programmers, Research Assistants, Lab Technicians, Secretaries, Clerks and Janitors]

(5) You feel that the salary for your position is:

2.5% ridiculous  26% poor  64% adequate  4% high  1% very generous
2.5% no response

(6) Your library serves:

59% a unit of a larger system
41% an independent organization
(7) Your library serves approximately how many patrons?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Patrons</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-25</td>
<td>.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-50</td>
<td>.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-75</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-100</td>
<td>.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-300</td>
<td>.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-500</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>801-1000</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1300-1500</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1501-2000</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2500</td>
<td>.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000</td>
<td>.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know or No response</td>
<td>.23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(8) Your library is:
- 28% a unit of a larger library system
- 72% independent, supported by the institution served

(9) Are you responsible for any branch libraries?
- 14% yes
- 85% no
- 1% no response

(10) What are your regular working hours?
- [Responses from part-time employees were not used for this question. Schedules varied - some starting as early as 7:00 AM or as late as 9:30 AM. On surveys where the actual number of hours could be determined,
  42% worked 37 1/2 hour weeks,
  17% worked 35 hours and
  37% worked 40 hours,
  5% worked 42-43 hours.]

(11) Number of employees in your library:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(12) Do you supervise anyone?
- 80% yes
- 18% no
- 2% no response

(13) Position titles of persons supervised:
- [Titles most frequently mentioned were: Student Assistants, Library Assistant, Assistant Librarian and Clerk-Typist.]
(14) Are you responsible for hiring the person(s) you supervise?
   66% yes 9% no 5% no response

(15) Do you feel that your library is:
   1% overstaffed 38% adequately staffed
   60% understaffed 1% no response

(16) Do you work with a library committee?
   48% yes 52% no

(17) How are committee members chosen?
   90% appointed or selected 10% volunteer

(18) Does your library committee play an active role? 64% yes 36% no;
   Is the committee's role 98% advisory 2% supervisory?

(19) Are you included in institutional staff meetings regularly?
   54% yes 44% no 2% no response

(20) If you are the head of your library, how would you describe your
   administration's knowledge of what your job entails?
   15% administration very knowledgeable
   43% administration somewhat knowledgeable
   24% administration has a vague idea of your job responsibilities
   11% administration doesn't have the foggiest notion of how your days are spent
   7% no response

SECTION II - BUDGET

(1) Who recommends the budget? LIBRARIAN - 53%; and if not you, are you included in
   the budgeting process?
   68% yes 32% no

(2) Who approves the budget?
   – [Most of the budgets are approved by the respondent's immediate supervisor. Others giving
     approval included the Comptroller, Finance Director or Business Manager.]

(3) What percentage of your organization's total budget does the library budget comprise?
   1% or less ........................................ 18%
   2% ................................................... 11%
   4% ................................................... .3%
   5% ................................................... .6%
   6% ................................................... 2%
(4) How much is your total budget?

AMOUNTS LISTED ARE IN THOUSANDS OF US DOLLARS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 or less</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-150</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151-200</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-300</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-400</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401-500</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-600</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know or no response</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LOWEST BUDGET .  $  3,000.00
HIGHEST BUDGET .  $ 600,000.00
AVERAGE BUDGET .  $ 102,000.00

(5) The library's budget includes:

87% books  85% technical reports  82% journals  65% interlibrary loans
64% cataloging and processing  60% binding  56% travel & meetings
70% equipment and supplies  54% photoduplication  54% salaries
54% online searching  18% electronic mail  37% employee benefits
31% maintenance contracts  33% telephone  35% postage  14% utilities
61% maps and charts  27% videotapes

(6) Is your current budget higher or lower than last year's?

51% higher    28% lower    11% same    10% no response

(7) Are you funded regularly for travel to professional meetings?

72% yes    28% no
SECTION III - ACQUISITIONS

(1) Do you have a written selection policy?
   38% yes  58% no  4% no response

(2) Does a library committee or other administrator review your selections before they are ordered?
   33% yes  63% no  4% no response

(3) Who has input in the selection process?
   93% librarian  27% library committee
   93% library users  15% others

(4) Do you use a book jobber for book acquisitions?
   31% yes  35% no  28% sometimes  7% no response

(5) Do you use a subscription agent for serial acquisitions?
   62% yes  21% no  13% sometimes  4% no response

(6) If you use jobbers and/or subscription agents, are you satisfied with the service they provide?
   55% yes  3% no  42% sometimes

(7) Do you use exchange lists to fill in gaps in the library's collection?
   43% yes  20% no  31% sometimes  6% no response

SECTION IV - TECHNICAL SERVICES

(1) Check all of the following that apply to your library:
   - Do 61% all  10% most  15% some of your cataloging
   - 26% Another library provides cataloging for all or most of your books
   - 14% Use a vendor for catalog cards
   - 14% Catalog cards are supplied by another library
   - Type catalog cards for 20% all  3% most  15% some of your collection
   - 51% Have computer access to cataloging information (e.g. OCLC)
   - Do 63% all  7% most  7% some of your own book processing
   - 17% Another library processes your books
   - 86% Process journal issues
   - 68% Prepare journals for binding and maintain bindery records
   - 74% Do minor book repairs
   - 73% Maintain a reprint collection
   - 77% Maintain a collection of maps and charts
   - 32% Maintain a collection of videotapes
   - 45% Maintain a collection of photographs and/or slides
(2) How are current journals shelved?
10% by call number  88% by title or main entry  2% other

(3) How are bound journals shelved?
12% by call number  76% by title or main entry  12% other

(4) Are new books shelved separately for a period of time?
77% yes  23% no

(5) How do you catalog gray literature?
26% the same as books or monographs
11% by series
5% by corporate author or issuing body
7% online catalog or in-house database
51% other answers
[Includes such responses as RELUCTANTLY, CREATIVELY, or VERY SLOWLY].

SECTION V - PUBLIC SERVICES

(1) Do you have a written circulation policy?
55% yes  42% no  3% no response

(2) Is your library open to the general public?
73% yes  6% no
18% on a case by case basis  10% by appointment only

(3) Are local people not connected with your institution allowed to borrow items directly from you, or must they borrow through interlibrary loan?
46% borrow directly  33% I.L. only  49% on-site use only

(4) Circulation:
48% limited loan period on books for in-house users
52% limited loan period on books for others
43% no loan period for in-house users
19% no loan period for others
79% reference collection does not circulate
58% abstracting journals do not circulate
32% journals / serials do not circulate
46% different circulation policy for interlibrary loans

(5) If you have a loan period, how is it enforced?
71% reminder notes
60% phone calls
31% personal visit
12% fine imposed
23% patron billed for replacement of borrowed items
17% student's degrees or employee's paychecks withheld
[Other answers to this question were: NAGGING, BEGGING, BROW BEATING, REWARD RETURN WITH CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES.]

(6) How many interlibrary loan requests do you send out per year (includes both loan and photocopy requests)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 or less</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-200</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-400</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>500-700</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>800-1000</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>1200-1500</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3000</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5000</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know or no response</td>
<td>33%</td>
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</table>

AVERAGE NUMBER OF INTERLIBRARY LOANS - 746

(7) What is the average cost per ILL?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1.00 or less</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6.00</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$9.00</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know or no response</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AVERAGE COST PER INTERLIBRARY LOAN - $3.47

(8) Do you have an in-house ILL form for your patrons to use?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50% yes</td>
<td>48% no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(9) If so, do you insist on their use of it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30% yes</td>
<td>32% no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(10) Do you use an information broker to fill difficult ILL requests?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6% yes</td>
<td>73% no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(11) How many reference questions do you receive per week?

**Quick reference questions:**
- 2-5 ............... 5%
- 6-15 ............. 21%
- 16-20 ........... 11%
- 21-30 ........... 11%
- 31-50 ........... 7%
- 51-75 ........... 5%
- 100-200 .......... 12%

**Involved reference questions**
- 1-5 .............. 32%
- 6-25 ............ 25%
- 25-50 ........... 11%
- 50-80 ........... 2%
- No response or don't know 30%

(12) Do you conduct computerized database searches?
- 80% yes
- 20% no

(13) If so, for how many years?
- 1 year or less ..... 10%
- 2 years .......... 7%
- 3 years .......... 10%
- 4 years .......... 7%
- 5 years .......... 11%
- 6 years .......... 6%
- 8-9 years ......... 5%
- 10 or more ....... 15%
- No response ...... 30%

(14) What vendors do you use?
- DIALOG .......... 81%
- BRS ............ 12%
- CAN/OLE ....... 7%
- SDC/ORBIT ....... 7%

(15) What databases do you use primarily?
- ASFA .......... 60%
- BIOSIS ....... 58%
- OCEANIC ABSTRACTS .30%
- NTIS .......... 24%
- CA SEARCH ...... 21%
(16) Must patrons fill out an in-house form when making a search request?
   42% yes  57% no  1% no response

(17) Is funding provided for you to attend classes to gain searching expertise?
   72% yes  22% no  6% no response

SECTION VI - AUTOMATION

(1) In-house computers:
   18% not available for your library
   57% microcomputers used; Names: IBM-PC, IBM-AT/XT
   18% minicomputers used; Names: PRIME, VAX
   23% mainframe used; Names: VAX, IBM

(2) Computer uses in your library:
   55% online catalog
   19% serials control
   25% acquisitions
   20% circulation
   68% word processing

(3) If you use a microcomputer do you  17% write and/or  98% purchase software.

(4) If you have purchased software, have you found it satisfactory?
   85% yes  15% no

(5) Do you belong to an electronic mail network?
   36% yes  45% no  19% no response

SECTION VII - OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

(1) Do you maintain files of staff reprints?  65% yes  32% no
   If so, for what purpose?
   - [Most frequent responses: ARCHIVES, DISTRIBUTION, COMPILING COLLECTED
     REPRINTS.]

(2) Are you responsible for assigning contribution numbers for staff publications?
   26% yes  61% no  13% no response

(3) Who do you feel should be responsible for this task?
   - [Responses were equally divided between those who felt it should remain a library func-
     tion and those who felt it should be the job of the publications or communications office.]
(4) If your institution distributes collected reprints, contributions or other publications, who maintains the distribution list(s) and does the mailing?

   LIBRARIAN ........................................... 39%
   PUBLICATIONS, INFORMATION OR COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE . 17%
   SECRETARIES ........................................... 21%
   OTHERS ................................................ 23%

(5) Are you responsible for producing:

   57% serials lists
   50% publications lists
   75% acquisitions lists
   [Others: NEWSLETTERS, BULLETINS, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, READING LISTS]

(6) Are you required to publish in professional journals?

   11% yes  83% no  6% no response

(7) Are you responsible for storage and check out of audio-visual equipment, such as slide projectors, overhead projectors, etc.?

   20% yes  69% no  11% no response

SECTION VIII - MISCELLANEOUS

(1) If you had your life to live over, would you be a librarian again?

   58% yes  25% no  17% no response or other responses such as:
   WHO KNOWS? and IT ALL DEPENDS.

(2) If not, what would you be?

   [Sample answers: RICH, VERY WEALTHY, INDEPENDENTLY WEALTHY,
   RETIRED MILLIONAIRE, DOCTOR, WRITER, COMPUTER PROGRAMMER,
   MARINE BIOLOGIST, ARCHITECT, OPERA SINGER, JOURNALIST,
   PSYCHOLOGIST, MUSICIAN, DOLPHIN, GOD ONLY KNOWS.]

(3) Do you feel that the "librarian stereotype" is deserved?

   8% yes  32% no  54% sometimes  6% no response
   [This appeared to be a rather touchy subject. Comments included:
   I DISLIKE THIS QUESTION, WHAT STEREOTYPE? and THIS IS IRRELEVANT!]

(4) How do you think others at your institution rate your performance?

   75% favorably
   4% unfavorably
   23% mixed reactions
   10% indifferently
(5) Do you find marine science a fascinating subject?

70% yes 1% no 25% sometimes 4% no response

(6) If you were to become a librarian devoted to a subject other than marine science, what would it be?

[The subjects mentioned most frequently were:
MEDICINE, HISTORY and ART/ARCHITECTURE.]

(7) What is the most positive aspect of librarianship for you?

[Overwhelmingly, respondents derived the most satisfaction from providing service - interacting with people, finding the information that people need and feeling that their work was useful.]
Sample comments:
INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION
CONTRIBUTING TO RESEARCH EFFORTS
THE VARIETY OF TASKS
SUPPLYING THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION
TAKING CHAOS AND MAKING ORDER
FULFILLING THE URGE TO COLLECT
BEING MY OWN BOSS
PUBLIC CONTACT
LEARNING ABOUT COMPUTERS
I WAS ABLE TO GET A JOB

(8) What is the most negative aspect of librarianship for you?

[Low esteem and lack of recognition appears to be a universal problem among marine librarians. Respondents cited again and again the feeling that they are not appreciated and that their position is seen as one requiring little or no expertise; or as one person put it "The crap associated with the book stamper image".]
Sample comments:
THE "PUT DOWNS"
THE "GIRL IN THE LIBRARY" SYNDROME
DIRECTOR DOESN'T REALIZE THE VALUE OF THE LIBRARY
JUSTIFYING YOUR EXISTENCE
LACK OF FUNDS
TOO MUCH RESPONSIBILITY AND NO AUTHORITY
BEING TREATED AS THEIR SLAVE OR AS A CLEVER SECRETARY
THE SALARY
HARE-BRAINED SUGGESTIONS ABOUT HOW TO RUN THE LIBRARY
LOOKING FOR A JOURNAL ARTICLE AND FINDING THAT THE ISSUE IS MISSING.