

Leadership in Troubled Times

Weathering the Storm


Changing user expectations, changing libraries

- *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources, OCLC, 2005 and 2010*
- Statistical Trends

The Library Brand

We asked the open-ended question: “What is the first thing you think of when you think of a library?” 3,785 verbatim comments from 3,163 respondents were grouped by main theme. Roughly 70 percent of respondents, across all geographic regions and U.S. age groups, associate library first and foremost with *books*. There was *no* runner-up.

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, part 3, p 31.



“Books, books, books, rows and rows of books, stacks of books, tables filled with books, people holding books, people checking out books. Libraries are all about books. That is what I think and that is what I will always think.”

41 year-old from Canada

Library vs. Google

In the 12 years that search engines have been in existence, they have achieved a familiarity rating that is slightly higher than that of physical libraries and considerably higher than that of online libraries.

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, part 1, p 7.

Library vs. Google

93% agree Google provides worthwhile information.


78% agree library web sites provide worthwhile information.

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, part 1, p 17.

Where to begin?

The survey findings indicate that 84 percent of information searches begin with a search engine. Library Web sites were selected by just 1 percent of respondents as the source used to begin an information search. Very little variability in preference exists across geographic regions or U.S. age groups. Two percent of college students start their search at a library Web site.

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2005, part 1, p



“I despise searching the library for books and other sources. It takes a long time and rarely can you find sources needed. This difficult process is the first thing I think of when I think of using the library.”

18 year old Canadian High School student

National Trends

“The most popular activities among library users continue to be borrowing books and leisure reading.”

	2005	2010
Borrow print books	53%	59%
Read/Borrow best seller	39%	43%
Leisure Reading	44%	45%

Source: *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, OCLC, 2010, p 34-35.

Statistics

NC Public Library Circulation Stats

2004-2005	37,598,673
2005-2006	37,264,335
2006-2007	39,227,759
2007-2008	41,871,100
2008-2009	44,207,381

Source: *Statistics for NC Public Libraries*

(<http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/ld/plstats/o809/o809rpt.htm>)

NC Academic Libraries

UNC (Davis Library Main Loan Desk)

2004-2005 567,288

2005-2006 517,684

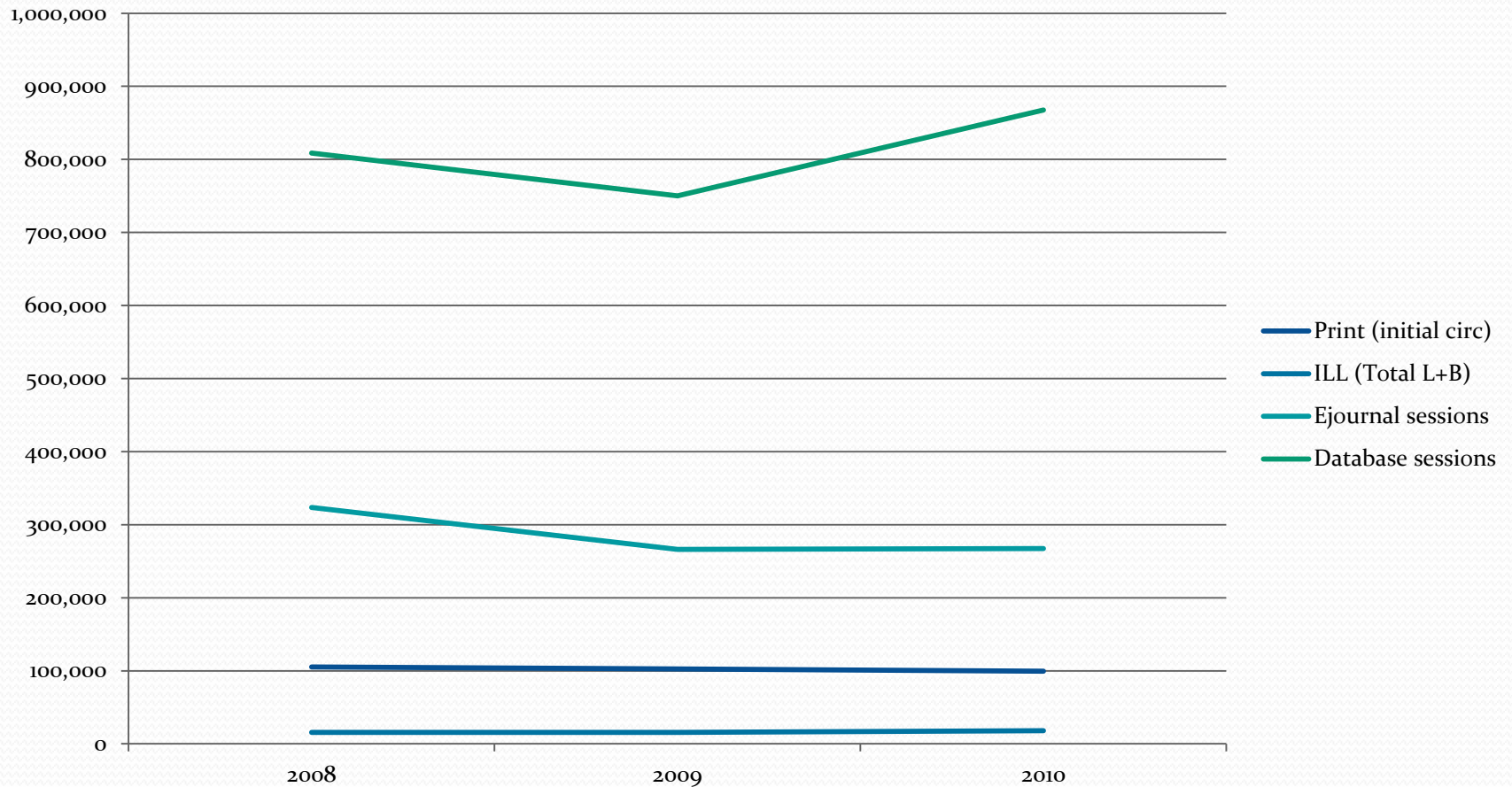
2006-2007 529,335

2007-2008 534,593

2008-2009 544,009

Source: Selected Library Statistics (<http://www.lib.unc.edu/aoffice/statistics/>)

Usage of Published Materials



Budget pressures

- \$2.4 billion budget gap
- Chancellor Bowles suggested that it might make sense to close a UNC campus
- Local sales tax referendums defeated
- New Republican leadership in Raleigh unlikely to raise state taxes
- Recent national elections point towards likely decreases in federal spending

Google Books

Currently over 12,000,000 books scanned

Settlement establishes 3 categories

1. In-copyright and in-print books – available for purchase
2. In-copyright, but out-of-print books – available for purchase via Google, or for free via a single station in a library (libraries can choose to subscribe to additional stations)
3. Out-of-copyright books (mostly pre 1923) – freely available to all

Do people really want ebooks?

- E-book sales have been doubling for the past two years. Print sales growing at about 2.5% per year.
- The most recent generation of readers – Kindle, Nook, iPad, etc have been getting strong consumer reviews
- Christmas 2010, for the first time ever, Amazon sold more e-books than print books
- Anecdotal
- Younger generation more accepting of on-screen reading, What happens when they get older?



A Perfect Storm?

Death of Libraries?

The Extinction Timeline

(http://www.rossdawsonblog.com/weblog/archives/2007/10/extinction_time.html) predicts the following will have only “insignificant existence” by 2020 – sit down breakfasts, post offices, direct marketing, butchers, free parking, WW1 survivors, size 0, libraries, unfenced beaches, and static ads.

Likely to Grow

- Digital Projects (Usability, web design, db development)
- Digitization Projects
- Metadata and description for unique items
- Cooperation (Web Scale, NC LIVE/CC)
- Discovery Tools
- Patron Driven Collection Development
- Print on demand
- Digital content

Likely to Play a Smaller Role in the Future

- Traditional print collections
- Copy cataloging
- Acquisitions
- Collection development
- Duplication
- Local ILS's
- OPAC's and other single-purpose interfaces



Weathering the Storm

Strategic planning

- Help others understand the imperative for *appropriate* change
- One eye on the present, and one eye on the future. Don't spend a lot of time looking backwards.
- Envision a positive future of what you'd LIKE to do. Then figure out how to get there.
- Resource reallocation will be the norm.

It is all about risk management

- Avoid absolute value judgments. New ideas in libraries are very rarely “right” or “wrong”, but they do have pros and cons.
- Avoid starting sentences with “We can’t...” Instead, we should be saying, “We can, but that means...”
- Be willing to take risks. The larger the reward, the greater the acceptable risk.

Data driven decision making

- Listen to users and staff
- Data triangulation – anecdotal, usage stats (quantitative), perceptual (surveys, focus groups), qualitative (usability tests)
- Give appropriate weight to a “population of one”
- Realize that even the public services staff meet only a very small percentage of their service population

Libraries will be in perpetual beta

- Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good
- Figure out what you think will be a significant improvement over what you have now and go with it.
- You are unlikely to set things up absolutely perfectly on day one. So it makes sense to review and tweak as needed.

Post implementation assessment

- When you start something new, agree to review it in X amount of time
- Be willing to stop something that isn't working
- Develop a culture of assessment.

Assemble a Team


- The team should bring different skills to the table
- You should have different perspectives at the table, too, but sometimes that is misapplied. You don't have to include obstructionists in a meaningful way. Give them an opportunity to say what they need to say, but don't allow them to have veto power.
- Team can be national or local.

Business terms that should (and will) be more widely used in librarianship

- Cost/Benefit ratio
- Return on Investment (ROI)
- Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)
- Entrepreneurship

Any leaders out there?

- In order for the profession to flourish, we'll all need to become leaders
- Envision the future, then figure out a way to make it happen



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