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COLLEGE & RESEARCH LIBRARIES *news*

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Research Libraries in the Year 2030

Major university libraries can anticipate a lower growth rate, a wider variety of formats for information, and heavy use directly from homes, offices, and laboratories in the next half century, says David Weber, Stanford University Libraries director. Weber made his forecast in an address to the University of Oklahoma's School of Library Science on September 8.

Weber said the largest university library may reach 20 million to 25 million volumes by the year A.D. 2030. This compares with about 10 million at present. Huge collections of film, fiche, videodiscs, and data sets will supplement books, journals, and reports. These new formats will provide important new dimensions to library services, but most will be additions rather than replacements for printed works.

In central university research libraries, staff size will remain nearly static, and suprainstitutional organizations like the Research Libraries Group will be of growing importance. But the basic concerns of academic libraries will remain much as they are today: finances, standards, bibliographic instruction, systems, interlibrary services, and collection development. Extensive collections of published materials on specific topics will remain the heart of the academic library.

"Library budgets as a proportion of university teaching and research expenditures are likely to decrease only slightly," Weber said. In recent years, library acquisitions costs have been identified as one of the fastest-growing segments of university expense, but efforts are under way at Stanford and elsewhere to reduce the rate of increase, which now runs about 15 percent annually.

Weber predicted that many lecture courses will be routinely videotaped for subsequent library access. As many as half of the major reference

works will be available on-line, and the book forms of indexing and abstracting services and library catalogs will tend to disappear.

In many technical fields students and faculty will be able to select citations by on-line computer access outside the library—in offices, laboratories, and residence halls. Direct office delivery of photocopies of library articles and reports will be customary for faculty and research staff, and the long-distance facsimile transmission of materials will be common.

The cost of publications, Weber said, will move closer to the Consumer Price Index than was the case in the 1970s. The discovery of an economic substitute for paper will help hold down price increases for printed publications, and up to 90 percent of library acquisition purchase orders will be transmitted to North American and European vendors electronically rather than by postal service or cable.

Weber made clear that his forecast differed both from a simple extrapolation of past trends and from technological "blue sky" scenarios. Libraries could not look forward to getting a larger proportion of the gross national product or a larger share of university resources, as they had been able to do in the recent past. On the other hand, the library of the future will not be so different from the library of today as to be unrecognizable.

Despite many changes, Weber concluded, libraries today still share a great many similarities in theory, operation, and a host of particular problems with those of the 1930s. Fifty years hence libraries still are apt to have quiet reading places for students to absorb and integrate their classroom and laboratory studies with printed information in a variety of formats. ■■

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIBRARIES POLLED ON MATERIALS BUDGETS

Expenditures for books kept ahead of inflation during the past year at seventeen of twenty-seven community college libraries polled by ACRL, but expenditures for periodicals, audiovisual materials, microforms, and binding lagged behind. This picture emerges from the results of an ACRL survey on materials budgets at community college libraries.

We asked the community college libraries that are participating in the ACRL 100 Libraries Project to report their 1978 and 1979 (budgeted) expenditures for five categories of library materials: books, periodicals, audiovisual materials, microforms, and binding. Twenty-seven libraries returned the survey forms.

BOOKS

The twenty-seven libraries reported average increases of 15.9 percent in expenditures for books between 1978 and 1979. The median increase was 17 percent. We don't know how fast book prices climbed during that period, but we do know that the average price of hardcover books (costing less than \$81) rose about 4 percent during the previous year (see *Publishers Weekly*, September 3, 1979). If we assume that book prices continued to rise at an annual rate of 4 percent between 1978 and 1979, then seventeen of the twenty-seven libraries in our sample would have increased their book budgets by sufficient amounts (4 percent or more) to stay abreast or even get ahead of the rise in book prices.

PERIODICALS

The picture for periodicals is not as bright. The average increase in expenditures for periodicals among the twenty-seven libraries was 5 percent. The median increase was 4 percent. The September issue of the *Library Journal* reports that the average price for journal subscriptions rose 10.1 percent between 1978 and 1979. Only five of the twenty-seven libraries in our survey group increased their outlays for periodicals by 10 percent or more. The conclusion is that most of the twenty-seven libraries lost ground to inflation in expenditures for periodicals.

AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS

Among the community college libraries returning the survey the average outlay for audiovisual materials went up by 20.5 percent from 1978 to 1979. This average figure, however, was skewed by two very large individual increases of 200 percent and 644 percent. The median increase was zero. Only ten libraries actually managed to increase their audiovisual budgets, ten

cut their expenditures, and seven kept them the same. Overall, the audiovisual outlays of most of the sample libraries probably lost ground to inflation.

MICROFORMS

The results of the survey show an average increase in expenditures of 16.9 percent for microforms among the libraries polled, but once again, the average was pulled up by two large increases (of 95 percent and 275 percent). The median increase was zero. More than half of the sample libraries (seventeen) spent the same amount or less on microforms than they had the year before.

BINDING

Twelve libraries in the sample group spent more on binding in 1979 than in 1978, twelve spent the same, and three spent less. The average increase was 39 percent because of three very large increases (of 129 percent, 245 percent, and 525 percent). The median increase was zero. In short, a few libraries increased their expenditures for binding significantly, but most spent about what they had the year before.

Overall, the results of the survey suggest that the book budgets of the libraries surveyed made a better showing against inflation than the other categories of expenditures. Moreover, books continued to take the lion's share of the materials budgets of most institutions. On the average, the twenty-seven libraries budgeted 51.7 percent for books this year, 21.3 percent for periodicals, 20.6 percent for audiovisual materials, 5.1 percent for microforms, and 1.3 percent for binding. ■■

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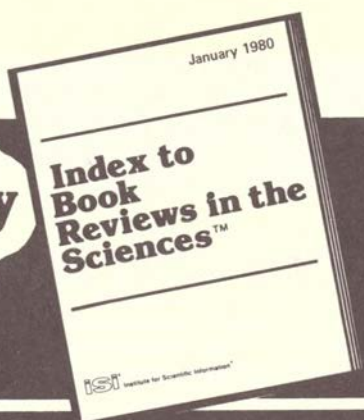
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