

## LIBRARIANS USING THE INTERNET ON THE JOB: A CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECT

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Information obtained from the Internet: Discussion lists (other people), and Internet accessible full-text, bibliographic and factual databases on the World Wide Web and other Internet distribution mechanisms, is being used by librarians in performing.

### Research Project Background

This research project idea follows on two other attempts to gather specific information about Internet use by librarians: Karen Schneider's Internet Reference Success Stories Collection - <http://www.intac.com/~kgs/success/successcover.html> and an earlier study of librarian's use of discussion lists for professional information (Kovacs, Robinson & Dixon, 1995).

Internet Reference Success Stories consist of numerous examples of librarians using the Internet to answer everyday and not-so-everyday reference questions using e-mail, gopher, ftp, telnet and Web resources on the Internet. These were collected by the Kovacs, Robinson & Dixon project was a qualitative exploration of how e-conferences in the Library and Information Science field are fulfilling information needs and whether they are also replacing or enhancing traditional information sources.

### Research Project Overview

The "Survey: How are librarians using the Internet on the job" is intended to explore the uses of the Internet by librarians beyond the library related discussion groups. The survey includes questions on the following topics:

- How long have they been using the Internet?
- Do they use the Internet on the Job?
- How often do they use the Internet on they job?
- Which Internet tools do they Use? Discussion Lists, World Wide Web, Telnet, Gopher?

- Which Web browser they use if any (Netscape, Internet Explorer, Mosaic, LYNX, etc.)?
- Which Web search engines they prefer to use?
- What kind of computer and operating system they use on the job?
- What specific activities have they used the Internet for on the job (reference questions, news about librarianship, professional development, inter-personal networking, collection development, etc.)?
- Demographic questions about their job titles and descriptions, what type of library they work in, where they went to library school and when they graduated, what country or state are they located in?
- What kind of Internet training they've had if any?
- Their opinion of censorship on the Internet?

Most questions on the survey offer the opportunity for the respondents to clarify with real examples what they are doing with the Internet on the job.

### **Research Project Methodology**

The survey was announced in Mid-January 1997 on a core group of library related discussion groups listed in the table below.

"Survey: How are Librarians Using the Internet on the Job" Discussion List Distribution List:

Libref-L@listserv.kent.edu  
 CJC-L@dekalb.dc.peachnet.edu  
 Govdoc-L@psuvm.psu.edu  
 Buslib-l@idbsu.idbsu.edu  
 LM\_NET@listserv.syr.edu  
 Publib@nysernet.org  
 Publib-Net@nysernet.org  
 PubYac@nysernet.org  
 Sololib-L@silverplatter.com  
 Pacs-L@uhupvm1.uh.edu  
 Medlib-L@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu  
 LawLib@ucdavis.edu  
 Lawlibref-L@lawlib.wuacc.edu  
 Library@miamiu.muohio.edu  
 Ifla-L@infoserv.nlc-bnc.ca  
 III-L@uvmvm.uvm.edu  
 Arlis-L@lsv.uky.edu  
 Autocat@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu  
 BI-L@bingvmb.cc.binghamton.edu

ALF-L@yorku.ca  
Call-L@unb.ca  
Canmedlib@morgan.ucs.mun.ca  
Exlibris@library.berkeley.edu  
MLA-L@iubvm.ucs.indiana.edu  
Offcamp@cms.cc.wayne.edu  
Web4Lib@library.berkeley.edu

The actual survey is a form on a Web page at <http://www.kovacs.com/weblibsurvey.html>. The announcement also offers to distribute the survey via e-mail to anyone who does not have access to a graphics capable Web browser (Netscape, Mosaic, Internet Ex).

### Benefits and Conclusions

The results from this research project will benefit the profession in general because we can learn new ways of using the Internet from each other and use the overall data to plan for future use of the Internet on the job.

We expect that the survey results will show that librarians are using all the Internet tools to obtain information. Also, we expect to find that librarians are using the Internet for reference questions as well as professional information for other li

### References

- KOVACS, Diane K., ROBINSON, Kara L. & DIXON, Jeanne. Scholarly E-Conferences on the academic networks: how library and Information Science professionals use them. **JASIS: Journal of the American Society for Information Science**, v 46, n.4, p.244-53, 1995.