

## Public Library Issues\* -- 1998

### Top Library Issues

- 12 **Money.** Inadequate funding/financial resources (lack of hours open); Increasing demands w/ less funding; Rising cost of materials; Duplication of resources; Deregulation of electric services = loss of lib.funding.
- 10 **Technology.** Using new technology appropriately; upgrading infrastructure; Keeping up; Migration to electronic information systems
- 5 **Internet Policy** for minors, filters; Access issues including dealing with proposed legislation, control, policy, roles and responsibilities.
- 4 **Facilities development and planning;** Need for more space.
- 3 **Image** of libraries; Ignorance by public of what libraries can do. Public education of what libraries are/do vs Internet marketers that claim libraries will be obsolete; Visibility or lack of it.
- 3 **Equity of access**
- 3 **Managing change**
- 2 **Meeting community needs** with service programs.
- 2 **Staff development:** tech training for new technologies; Availability of training (release time, distance); Core reference training from State Library is disappearing.
- 2 **Relations with cities** (County libraries); "New breed" of librarians are needed that are willing to seek out other government/community agencies for collaboration.
- 1 Serving youth and families.
- 1 Growing imbalance between needs and reality.
- 1 Staff compensation.
- 1 Decision on a new main library; branch ballot initiative.

### Library Technology Issues

- 11 **Staff training** challenges; staff development for technical staff; Training trouble-shooters.
- 9 **Speed of Change;** Planning/Keeping up with technology; upgrading to web-based catalog.
- 5 **Space** for new technology in older buildings; Infrastructure; Access--not enough access points; Retooling reference desk; cabling need/electricity upgrades
- 5 **Choosing and using most effective technology** for PLs; Analog vs digital vs fiber/speed of transmission; Upgrading hardware; Standardizing software; High-speed lines everywhere, including the branches
- 4 **Money.** Adequacy/stability of funding; Cost of county WAN charges, upgrading telecom, PC software and hardware.
- 4 **Patron training.**
- 3 **Staffing.** Maintaining appropriate in-house support of telecom technologies vs workstations; Staffing requirements to support information; Recruitment and retention.
- 2 **Integrating technology** into overall service program
- 2 **Education of staff and lay public** on technology and its impact on local institutions.
- 1 E-Content selection: how to work with patrons to meet interests and needs.
- 1 Electronic notification service/crossing LATA lines for equal access for overdue notices.
- 1 E-Rate question: Will there be enough funds? This represents a significant savings for libraries.
- 1 Time. How long do I wait on screen; How long to wait for answer from a vendor; Time from PubLibrary announcement to the public and actual delivery.
- 1 Year 2000 considerations for any and all programs
- 1 Cost savings of using county telecom services vs private outside vendor.
- 1 E-mail to all branches; linkages with other library catalogs (Z39.50 software)
- 1 Reliable network
- 1 Utilizing information for measuring branches, not just main library. (Ex. measuring electricity use)

\* In May-June 1998, City and County library directors of California's largest public libraries were interviewed by telephone to identify key issues and technology issues currently facing California public libraries. The above findings represent interviews with 15 library leaders (and in three instances, their library automation directors), where each were asked to list their top 3 issues in each category. This read out should provide a starting point for discussion. - J.Siminitus, Pacific Bell.