Marketing Academic Library Resources and Services

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Choice White Paper: Marketing Academic Library Resources and Services

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Choice white papers are designed to provide actionable intelligence around topics of importance to the academic library community. Researched and written by industry experts and published with underwriting from academic publishers and other parties, these white papers are part of a continuing effort by Choice to extend its services to a broad cross-section of library-related professions.

This white paper is based on market research and an analysis of results of an open survey conducted in May and June of 2018, which received 679 complete responses.

About the Authors

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Marketing Academic Library Resources and Services

INTRODUCTION

Marketing and outreach are the backbone of an academic library's advocacy. In order to advocate successfully, libraries need to determine who their constituents are and how to best market their programs and services to them.

Marketing any type of library to any group has the same overall reasoning as Marie R. Kennedy and Cheryl LaGuardia share in *Marketing Your Library's Electronic Resources*. The library must market

> "...themselves and their products (services and collections) better, because (a) we're in an economic climate in which every penny needs to be justified; (b) along with justifying the need for resources to get them in the first place, there is a heightened expectation among those funding libraries that they will see a palpable return on that investment; and (c) competition with information-fulfillment systems outside libraries is increasing …" (xvi).

Libraries are continually striving to meet the ever-changing needs of their users. While a fair amount of literature exists on programming and initiatives that are low-cost, bigger picture initiatives will forever remain large expenditures. Successful marketing and outreach initiatives will greatly assist with securing funding for building and operations, new technology and services, and strong collection development and management. Further, fiscal increases generally result from strong advocacy. It is, therefore, imperative that libraries create a successful method for justifying their worth.

Statistics of library operations, usage, and support lend themselves to this endeavor, but without strong participation from the community, libraries will find it difficult to advocate for more money and resources. Knowledge of services and programs will increase the usage of the library through in-person visits as well as online. The academic library's programs and services should be tailored to users as well as the institution's strategic plan. In general, in order to align the library's goals and outcomes in accordance with the institution's, there will need to be some level of planning and organizing around an outreach strategy.

Yet, questions remain as to how well academic libraries are marketing their services and resources to secure the most significant return on investment. What are the roadblocks in libraries that are causing optimal marketing and outreach opportunities to fall by the wayside? To answer these questions, Choice, a publishing division of ACRL, conducted a survey in May and June of 2018 to determine, among other things, how well academic libraries are promoting services and resources, what tactics they use, and how libraries are structuring their staff to do so. An email invitation to participate in the online survey was sent to 25,542 Choice audience members. An invitation was also posted to the ACRL Marketing and Outreach Information Group listserv and Facebook page. There were 679 respondents who completed the full survey.

This white paper reproduces the results of that survey and provides context around academic library marketing activities by identifying and explaining the external influences that are forcing libraries to become more adept at marketing their resources and services. The authors also include an analysis of the survey results and tease out many of the top-line trends.

Supporting and Growing the Budget

While academic libraries face many challenges, the overarching issue continues to be difficulties with budgetary constraints. Libraries strive to provide adequate resources and services for their users. In order to be successful, proper funding for these areas, including personnel, is a high priority. Funding may be garnered by providing evidentiary support that these are components of the library that must be maintained. Usage statistics assist in providing information to support these initiatives. To achieve high usage of library services and resources, the library's population must have knowledge of these areas. Strong marketing and outreach plans can provide that information to the library's users as well as non-users.

The collection of statistics fuels the creation of programs and services and provides evidentiary support for the continuance of current library initiatives. Statistics contain detailed information and may be used as the basis for supporting a variety of initiatives within the academic library. For example, patron counts determine the hours of operation, circulation statistics shape the collection, and programming statistics assist with the development of program initiatives. A respondent from the survey, a library administrator working in a for-profit private institution, explained that to "justify the existence of the library—the resources and staff" need to prove that their contribution to student success is necessary, since "that success fuels the institution and is the focus of every effort in every department" in the university.

Promoting New Services

How Berkeley College Libraries rolled out a multiplatform marketing campaign across eight campuses to promote new online FAQ and LibChat services.

The Challenge

In 2015, the library launched Springshare's LibAnswers, a new engagement service that could potentially streamline information and help facilitate help and FAQ services for students and faculty. Understandably, the libraries needed to get the word out to the community that the new service was available. With eight campuses, each with its own library and staff, developing an integrated campaign with a common message was an initial hurdle. "The opportunity was the new service, but the question was how do we raise awareness of the service and how do we do it in a way that's visible across all of the campuses?" said Bonnie Lafazan, director of Berkeley's Woodbridge campus library.

The Solution

While the libraries don't have a dedicated marketing and outreach team or position, they do have a marketing committee, which, crucially, helps maintain a formal marketing and outreach strategy for the library that remains consistent across all of the campuses. The library also had a direct line into Berkeley's marketing department, which came in handy for the creative aspects of the marketing materials. Accordingly, the library's first step was to create a graphical sketch of what the promotional material would look like. Those graphic treatments—which incorporated the Berkeley College color palette—would repeat throughout a multiplatform rollout: posters, PowerPoint slides, website banners, brochures, and bookmarks. Notably, the slides were created specifically for instruction librarians who could promote the new service in the classroom—the perfect face-to-face opportunity to feature library services and resources. Aside from the classroom instruction, all of the marketing components were launched simultaneously and carried through the spring semester.

The Results

According to Lafazan and Jessica Kiebler, director of Berkeley's White Plains campus library, April and May saw a "huge uptick" in usage of the FAQ and LibChat feature immediately following the promotion. After that, engagement never fell below the numbers generated by the campaign. Lafazan and Kiebler add that the whole experience proved to them that the libraries were capable of developing and executing effective marketing campaigns on their own. "We realized we could do things ourselves," says Lafazan. "The first thing we did was meet that goal of consistency across campuses, but we have since found ways to do things ourselves and this set the tone for outreach and marketing initiatives campus-wide."

(Note: Bonnie Lafazan and Jessica Kiebler also contributed a chapter to *The Library Outreach Casebook*, edited by Ryan L. Sittler and Terra J. Rogerson and published by the ACRL.)

Strategic Alignment with the Institution

A challenge to justifying proper funding for collections is the downward trend of circulation numbers in the past ten years. This trend is causing libraries to focus on other methods of providing information to support the curriculum in academic institutions (Regazzi 2012, 467). As the need grows to provide evidence to support library budget requests or proposals for library initiatives, libraries are beginning to tie programs and events to goals and outcomes that directly correlate to the institution's strategic plan.

The justification of resources and services is a leading goal in the academic setting. "Given the importance attached to the strategic plan by senior institutional managers, it is vital that libraries are able to hook into key institutional issues when formulating their own plans" (McNicol 2005, 508). Saunders (2015, 286) expands on this notion by stating that "plans can offer a perspective on how libraries are envisioning their future, and where they are planning to concentrate efforts and resources."

Competition from the Open Web

Academic libraries must stay relevant to their users. The library's role has changed due to the internet and the evolving digitization of print resources. The advent of the internet, smartphones, tablets, and other information-gathering devices has allowed patrons to quickly find needed information without having to physically visit the library. The past ten years have seen academic libraries pare down their print collections to make room for more collaborative and technology learning spaces in the library and electronic resources. This is, in part, due to the downturn of their circulation statistics. Marketing the collection to users helps them become knowledgeable in the vast array of subjects and formats and, in theory, assists in collection usage. As important as it is to make room for collaborative spaces in the library, the promotion of the print collection is still necessary. There is a missed opportunity when browsing in the stacks falls to the wayside due to the ability to research online. Carr (2015, 831) explains that not visiting the library hampers the opportunity to stumble upon materials that enhance research, and "many scholars can become inspired by visions of wandering through vast corridors of deserted stacks and then happening on a passage in some long-dormant volume that unexpectedly reveals a special insight." Yet, according to survey results we'll examine later in this white paper, libraries already appear to be shifting their focus to digital resource promotion.

Electronic resources and digitization may have led to declining print circulation, but they have also boosted the use of electronic materials (Regazzi 2012). Posting links to direct users to electronic resources and library databases on social media, on blogs, and in emails helps librarians market the library beyond its physical space. Librarians can direct users to the library's resources from social media platforms and embed electronic resources and materials in an institution's learning management system (LMS). This offers a seamless connection between users' online class environment and online access to the library. Further information in the LMS about the library makes it possible to market the library's services and resources and reach a wider group than the traditional on-campus user group.

Further, the advent of search engines such as Google have provided students with the unrealistic notion that everything can be researched online beyond the library. Google "has gained the reputation for providing all that one needs right at one's fingertips" and "the problem is that one cannot readily discern what is reliable and what is not without some instruction" (Kibirige & DePalo 2000,12). This shift in thinking has been a significant hurdle for librarians when teaching information literacy. Just as importantly, it has created a competitive challenge that necessitates organized marketing and outreach efforts to remind the community the library should be the first stop.

SURVEY ANALYSIS

Profile of Survey Participants

As seen in Figure 1, of the 679 survey participants, 40% identify as belonging to a Doctoral university, 25% from a Master's college/university, 16% from a Baccalaureate college, 16% from an Associate's/Community college, and about 3% identify their institution as special-focused.
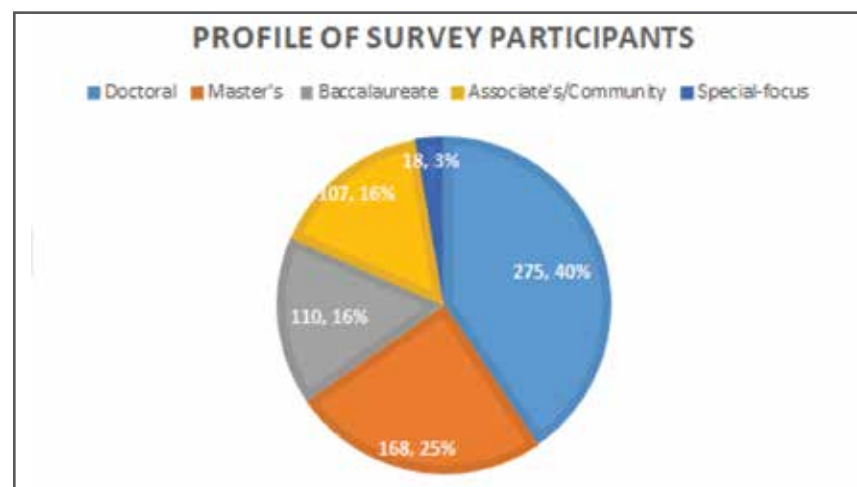

PROFILE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

■ Doctoral ■ Master's ■ Baccalaureate ■ Associate's/Community ■ Special-focus

18, 3%
107, 16%
275, 40%
110, 16%
168, 25%

Figure 1

About 55% represent public colleges or universities, 42% are from private colleges or universities, and 3% from for-profit institutions. While reference librarians make up the majority of the participants of the survey (18%), it is worth noting that the primary job functions of the respondents ranged accordingly: subject specialist librarian (12%), department heads (12%), dean of the library (12%), library administration (11%), instructors/faculty (4%), and acquisitions (2%). Other librarian positions noted in the comments section include outreach, marketing, access services, collection development, archivist, electronic resources, and cataloging.

Library Marketing and Outreach Objectives

When asked to rank objectives of library marketing and outreach, respondents had reasonably similar orders of ranking. With "1" being the most important and "7" being the least, trends emerged across the institutions.

As seen in Figure 2, 40% of respondents indicated that "increasing participation in instruction, research, and reference services was the most important objective, while "promoting library staff specialties and changes" were the least important. This wide margin reinforces the notion that staff specialties and changes do not support marketing and outreach ROI in the same way that hard statistics from teaching information literacy sessions do. Further, Corrall (2015, 229) states that "the variety of responsibilities and activities assigned to subject liaison librarians can make it hard for them to communicate their distinctive contribution clearly and concisely and also make it difficult for others to fully understand the breadth and depth of their competence" (229). This difficulty in conveying how knowledgeable a librarian is within a specialty may cause libraries to shy away from prioritizing this objective.

Additionally, it is easier to produce buy-in from the administration when showing information such as the number of students taught in a semester rather than assessing how knowledge of a library staff's specialty increased or changed patron usage of the library. Academic libraries administer and gather library usage data via surveys and focus groups that demonstrate the value of the library. Information from these research methods guides the library's resource and collection management to support the learning goals and outcomes of the campus curriculum. In addition to providing insight into the

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Drive more foot traffic to the library itself	9.00% 61	12.39% 84	15.19% 103	14.90% 101	13.72% 93	14.90% 101	19.91% 135
Increase participation in instruction, research, and reference services	40.41% 274	26.70% 181	15.34% 104	10.62% 72	3.83% 26	2.36% 16	0.74% 5
Promote library events	6.64% 45	12.09% 82	14.01% 95	15.19% 103	18.73% 127	21.53% 146	11.80% 80
Increase use of digital subscription resources	8.85% 60	19.47% 132	20.65% 140	18.73% 127	16.37% 111	10.18% 69	5.75% 39
Promote library staff specialties and changes	1.33% 9	3.98% 27	6.05% 41	10.62% 72	15.93% 108	22.27% 151	39.82% 270
Organize and promote access points	4.13% 28	8.11% 55	12.83% 87	17.85% 121	19.62% 133	20.80% 141	16.67% 113
Demonstrate value and/or impact of library on institutional goals/priorities	29.65% 201	17.26% 117	15.93% 108	12.09% 82	11.80% 80	7.96% 54	5.31% 36

Figure 2

teaching and learning occurring on campus, the research conducted by librarians also assists in communicating the library's role in student retention and satisfaction, thereby demonstrating value to their institutional administrators. Almost 30% of librarians surveyed ranked the importance and impact of the library on institutional goals and priorities as the second most important marketing and outreach objective for their respective libraries.

Effective marketing is made possible by knowing how and where to reach your users. To determine this, libraries administer surveys to the various user populations. The results help librarians conduct highly effective marketing and, therefore, avoid wasting time and money on superfluous initiatives. However, an astonishing 40% of respondents to this survey stated they had not surveyed any population—a missed opportunity to ensure effective marketing and outreach initiatives (Figure 3).

For those respondents who have conducted surveys, the most sought-after population in determining best practices with marketing were students (36%). This trend is unsurprising since the ways in which information is received by the student population change frequently due to advances in social media and technology.
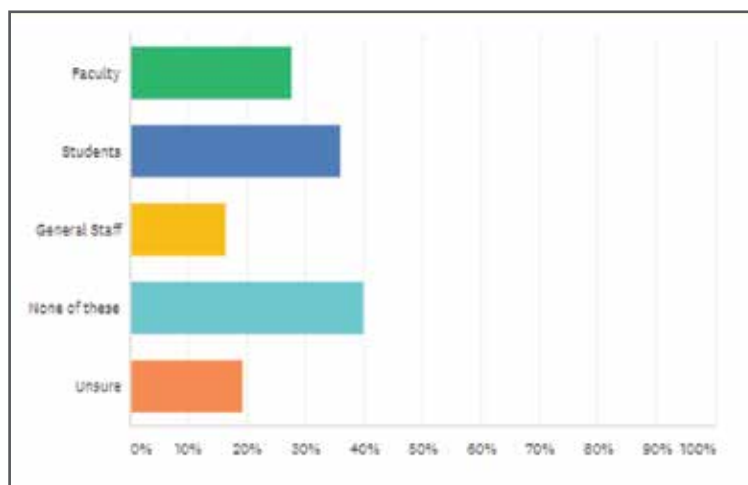
When respondents were asked to select the statement that best characterizes the outreach and marketing efforts at their library, about 10% said their library's marketing and outreach efforts are "extremely well organized, follow a specific plan, and are performed frequently." However, about 78% of respondents are generally not following an organized plan (Figure 4). Without a formal plan in place, the library may have limited ability to provide measured values to their administration.

Select the statement that best characterizes the outreach and marketing efforts at your library.	RESPONSES
The library's marketing and outreach efforts are extremely well organized, follow a specific plan, and are performed frequently.	10% (67)
The library's marketing and outreach efforts are somewhat well organized, follow a loose plan, and are somewhat frequent.	46% (313)
The library's marketing and outreach efforts may or may not be organized, may or may not be planned, and may or may not have an established frequency.	32% (217)
The library's marketing and outreach efforts are unorganized, unplanned, and infrequent.	11% (72)
The library's marketing and outreach efforts are nonexistent.	1% (10)
TOTAL	679

Figure 4

A silver lining in the responses to this question is, no matter how well organized, 99% of respondents have some sort of marketing

and outreach effort. This is encouraging since it means there is recognition in academic libraries of the necessity of having marketing and outreach integrated into the library's strategic goals.

Outreach and Marketing Tools

The rise of electronic resources in the past twenty years has altered the way in which academic libraries are marketing their entire resource mix. Marketing tools such as the library website, emails, bookmarks, posters, flyers, table tents, and social media are widely used among libraries in order to extend outreach efforts. Libraries need to be knowledgeable as to how their users receive information and must adapt to these changes. According to a Pew Research study, "68% of U.S. adults are now Facebook users" (Smith and Anderson 2018, 1). Not surprisingly, this number aligns with the results of this survey, which show Facebook as the most-used social media platform among academic libraries.

It must be noted, however, that in the same study, Smith and Anderson (2018, 1) determined that "Americans ages 18 to 24 are substantially more likely to use platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter even when compared with those in their mid- to late-20s." These differences are especially notable when it comes to Snapchat: "78% of 18- to 24-year-olds are Snapchat users, but that share falls to 54% among those ages 25 to 29."

According to the Choice survey, respondents' social media marketing mix does not align with the data put forth by Pew. In fact, as seen in Figure 5, most academic libraries do not use Snapchat. This appears to be a missed opportunity to offer information about the library in a setting where a primary user group thrives.
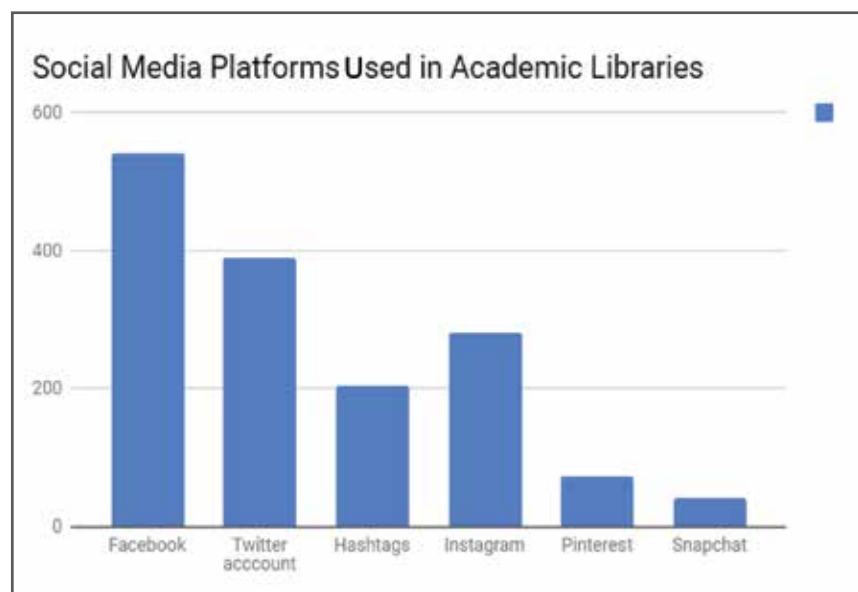

Figure 5

Even though many libraries engage with online marketing, they are also continuing to utilize a variety of print material formats to support their marketing efforts. As seen in Figure 6, flyers and posters are the most popular print tools. With a visual piece of marketing posted in well-traveled areas around the campus, libraries have the ability to tailor messaging for specific programs or initiatives.
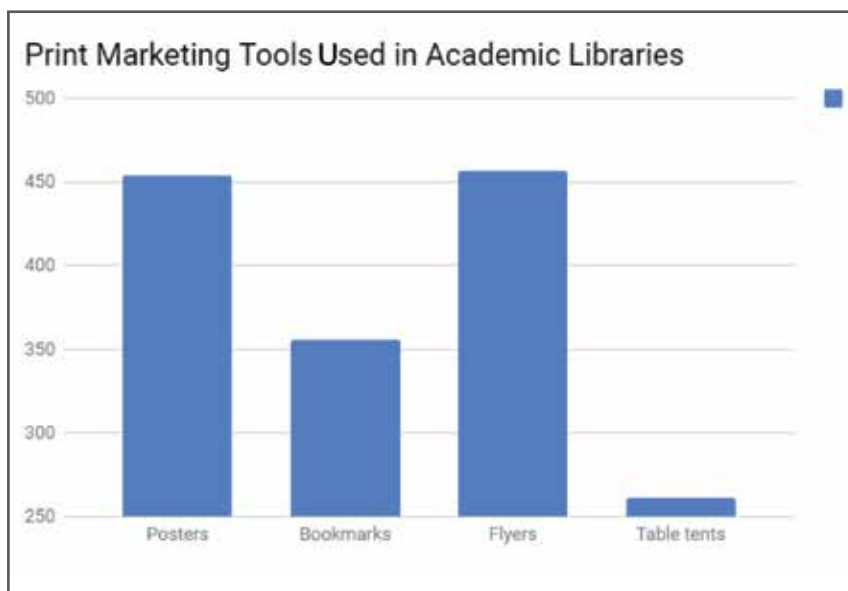

Figure 6

Beyond print marketing tools, libraries are using digital and face-to-face opportunities to promote resources and services, most commonly through the library website (90%), educational services (87%), liaison work (71%), special events (67%), and during presentations (62%).
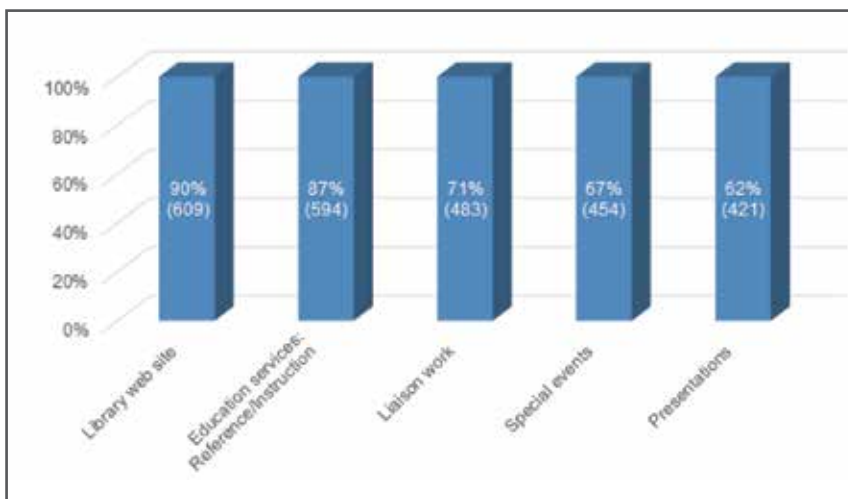

Figure 7

Commandeering the Email List

City College of San Francisco uses the student and faculty email lists for targeted communications to great effect.

The Challenge

City College of San Francisco is a decidedly large institution. It serves about 70,000 students at its main campus, eight centers, and a variety of other instructional sites. Many of the sites have distinct academic characteristics, and the community college as a whole has an incredibly diverse student population. "With all that diversity, a one-shot does not serve everybody well," says Donna Reed, dean of CCSF library. Accordingly, marketing and outreach initiatives tend to be centered within a variety of groups, such as the library's Exhibitions and Programs group. Occasionally, however, a targeted marketing strategy is needed to promote certain aspects of library services to all of the students and faculty, and Reed's careful use of the email lists has been a boon for the library's broader messaging needs.

The Solution

Reed assured the institution that she'd limit her use of the email lists—keeping herself to about five messages per semester for students and slightly fewer for faculty. Those messages tend to vary from pre-semester welcome emails that remind students of all of the available services to targeted promotions. "Usually what I'll do is, right before school starts, send a welcome message—'5-7 things you need to know'—full of links to our website. Sometimes it's challenging because this semester I did it the Friday before school started, but spent my weekend responding. But it's always good to respond because they know there's a live person there," says Reed.

Reed also managed to fill up an underenrolled library instruction class with a well-timed email. She has embedded notifications, such as one for a new mobile-enabled printing service and another that listed instructions for how to receive a student ID. The latter was strategic in the sense that it headed off the inevitable barrage of questions the library tends to receive from new students each year.

Reed also has access to the faculty email list, which she has used to provide messaging about new instruction services. Emails listing course reserves for textbooks have been a helpful reminder to faculty—particularly since CCSF employs a high number of part-time faculty.

The Results

The email strategy has helped to keep the library top of mind among students and faculty—especially since Reed is careful to respond to the many replies she gets. It has also proven to be an effective stopgap measure, as in the case of the underenrolled course. The promotional email not only filled it up, but resulted in a waiting list.

Other tools that respondents reported using are emails, campus news sources, bookmarks, in-class announcements, campus apps, e-newsletters, outdoor digital media, physical library displays, pop-up librarian tables around campus and community spaces, and representation at campus events (e.g., graduating class celebrations). Further, respondents used library links embedded in course management software. Other unique methods of outreach were also reported, such as free t-shirt giveaways during an annual library open-house. As seen from the responses to this question, there are a number of avenues in which libraries can market their services and programs. The issue lies in determining the best method specific to the institutions and users, respectively.

The Importance of Outreach

The significance of marketing and outreach is crucial in increasing the use of library collections and electronic resources. In regard to marketing and outreach in library programs and services, respondents overwhelmingly (79%) chose "Educational services (reference and instruction sessions)" as the most important area in which to conduct marketing and outreach. This closely aligns with an important marketing and outreach objective that was asked about earlier in the survey: increasing participation in instruction, research, and reference services. Presenting the library in the classroom allows librarians to promote programs and services to a diverse group of students. Gaining access to class time is an integral part of a library's success. It allows librarians to assist students with their research, gain insight into the curriculum being taught (which facilitates collection development), and also provides librarians with the opportunity to strengthen relationships with the students and faculty.

Other areas that garnered high responses with respect to the importance of conducting marketing and outreach are e-resources (61%), library services such as ILL, data management, etc., (50%), and special events (44%). These are typically the areas in which information is captured for statistics. Strong numbers in these areas enhance the library's ability to provide evidentiary support to continue funding these initiatives.

Eleven percent of respondents, however, said print resources are an "unimportant" resource to promote. Print also scored the lowest response rate for the "very important" designation—lower even than library facilities. This result may indicate that libraries are not fighting the downward trends in circulation, but rather embracing this shift and focusing their marketing and outreach efforts on areas that are on the rise, such as e-resources (Regazzi 2012).

Another interesting trend in the survey data is the lack of focus on marketing the access points of the library. This may relate to the push for librarians to provide tours of the library during a student's first semester, after which librarians tend to rely on students making one-on-one appointments rather than approaching a desk.

It's worth noting that reference interactions may occur at service points. While reference service emerged as the highest objective of marketing/outreach in this survey, the place in which reference service is produced (i.e., the access point) is not considered. It's possible that the library is focusing on the services rather than the building itself. Knowledge about reference is imparted from professional staff members, but any student, faculty, or staff member is knowledgeable about the main access point of the library.

Dedicated Marketing and Outreach Responsibilities and Plans

With the many ways libraries can market their services and programs, it is imperative that a plan be in place in order to determine the optimal course of action to align with their particular users. The organizational makeup of libraries differs from one institution to the next. While each library has the traditional positions of collection development, reference, etc., survey results indicate that outreach responsibilities can be performed in a variety of ways and across many positions. When asked whether there is a dedicated communications/marketing/outreach faculty or staff member, the response was split. Forty-one percent of respondents said they do have dedicated staff, while 55% said they don't. Further, of those who said they don't have dedicated staff, 83% said these duties are shared among other staff who have other primary responsibilities.

The lack of a dedicated outreach position may be the reason why only about 10% of libraries have well organized marketing plans. Further, the authors found that schools with FTEs greater than 2,500 were more likely to maintain a dedicated librarian for outreach and marketing.

Respondents believe that first-year orientations (48%), the library website (47%), partnerships with departments (44%), information literacy workshops and seminars (37%) are very important outreach tactics in promoting the e-resources and their library. Carter and Seasman (2011) suggest that academic libraries are overwhelmingly using their liaison areas such as distance learning, collection development, and library instruction to market the library to their users. This trend allows academic libraries to forego marketing collections to the entire collegiate population and, instead, focus on making items available to those who would most likely make use of a particular area in the collection.

Unfortunately, liaison librarians are rarely cross-trained in effective marketing and outreach strategies. In fact, 75% of respondents stated that there are no formal training initiatives or cross-training of faculty and staff on marketing and outreach best practices (Figure 8).

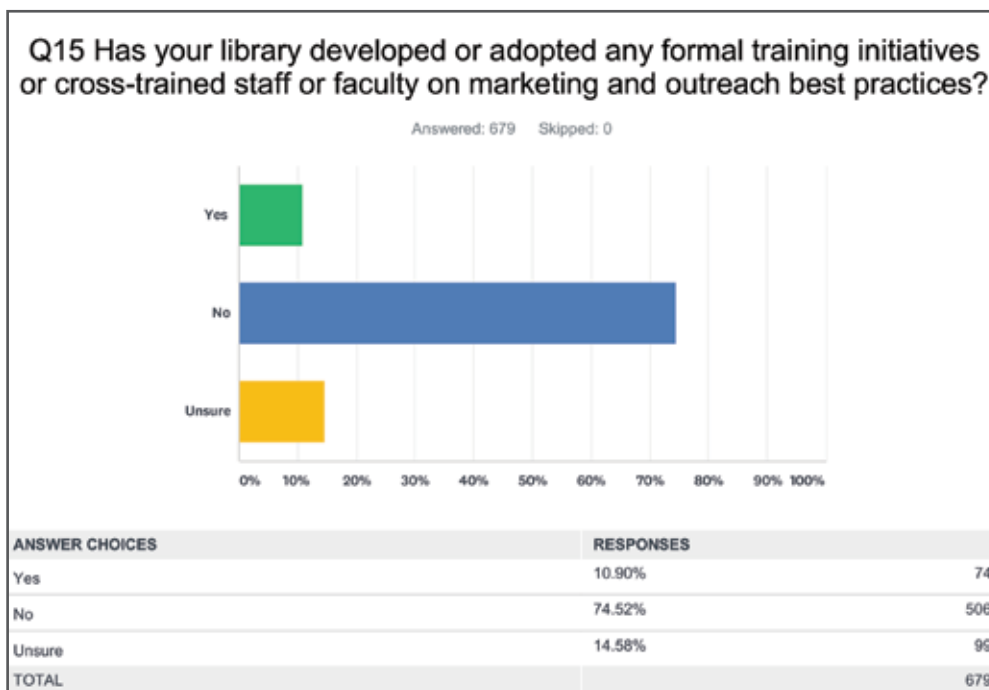This further supports a general survey trend of an underwhelming

Q15 Has your library developed or adopted any formal training initiatives or cross-trained staff or faculty on marketing and outreach best practices?

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	10.90%	74
No	74.52%	506
Unsure	14.58%	99
TOTAL		679

Figure 8

approach to marketing and outreach. Compounding this, according to the survey, is a decidedly mixed response to the importance of marketing and outreach assessment. Just over a third of respondents say they generate reports on the results of marketing efforts. Forty percent do not create reports, and almost a quarter of respondents are "unsure" whether they do or don't.

Prioritization is vital in determining which areas in the library need marketing and outreach. Passive programming is gaining popularity as a means to market services or conduct outreach without needing to dedicate staff time to one area. In this regard, the advent of the web-scale discovery tool enables libraries to provide sources to users through a one-stop-shop means of searching. A discovery layer, which allows users to search the entire collection within just one search box, is seemingly the best method of assisting users online. However, 77% of survey respondents indicated that even though their libraries have a discovery layer, 35% of them feel that the discovery layer does not meet patrons' needs well.

CONCLUSION

Compared to traditional services in the library, such as reference, collection development, and resource sharing, outreach is fairly new and is still being explored. This may lead to the continuous report-generating in order to advocate for support, but there are few go-to resources that outline best practices in marketing and outreach for academic libraries. Further, each campus has its own culture which may limit the relevance of current marketing and outreach support. It is, therefore, up to each academic library to determine the best method of reaching their users.

Additionally, this survey points to a shift in the prioritization of marketing library staff, services, and programs. To ensure statistical evidence of the necessity of libraries and librarians, marketing endeavors now focus in the areas of electronic resources and instruction rather than print collections.

Short staffed, libraries are, as always, finding ways in which to work within these constraints. One survey respondent stated that although the library does not participate in social media, they are "frequently featured on college social media channels...and other campus-related social media sites." Passive initiatives such as this allow some visibility, but not to the library's highest potential. Further, a marketing plan would assist in determining which outlets are worth pursuing and, therefore, save time.

Even so, according to survey results there are several points of concern: a significant percentage of libraries do not have a staff person dedicated to marketing and outreach, there doesn't seem to be much cross-training in marketing and outreach, and the practice of analyzing the results of marketing efforts are decidedly in the minority. Is having a group of librarians share marketing and outreach responsibilities as effective as having one librarian dedicated to it? It's difficult to determine this, especially since most of the respondents indicate their marketing and outreach efforts are, at best, only somewhat organized.

ACRL Developing Best-Practice Resources

Results from this survey provide insight into the current trends and issues plaguing academic libraries and ways in which they have either succumbed to these areas or are combating them. Libraries are continuously advocating for further funding while providing evidence of the need for funds. Libraries may increase their perceived value through outreach and marketing activities to gain support for

budgetary considerations. Unfortunately, survey results have indicated that there is still a need for dedicated personnel, formal strategies, cross-training, and post-campaign analyses. Further, findings suggest that academic libraries perceive all areas of the library to be in need of attention by way of outreach and marketing. With the information provided, it is clear that academic libraries would benefit from a roadmap for developing strategies for effective marketing and outreach while working within their own limitations.

Fortunately, the Association of College and Research Libraries has recognized this need and has formed a task force to create a plan to assist library administration and librarians with marketing and outreach. A toolkit is currently being created for this purpose. According to the ACRL, "The impetus for this toolkit arose out of the needs expressed during the committee's assessment of marketing and outreach activities. Surveys and discussions with various stakeholders revealed a need to have access to easy to use outreach best practices and materials in a way that allows for flexibility and adaptability."

Further information about the toolkit may be found at the LibGuide supporting this effort: https://acrl.libguides.com/transform. Additional information about resources and tools is available at the LibGuide as well. It is the hope that information gained from this survey, in conjunction with support and assistance from professional organizations such as ACRL, will assist libraries in the creation and implementation of strong, successful marketing and outreach plans.

Analyzing and Supporting Your Next Strategic Move

*University of North Georgia's Barbara Petersohn reveals 4 pro tips
for conducting an environmental scan.*

Libraries don't operate in a vacuum, and trends, whether in the broader market or more locally at the institutional level, can impact how strategic decisions should be made. Planning a major budget overhaul? Deciding what digital resources to invest in or which new tech you should buy to service your community? Maybe you're thinking of hiring a dedicated marketing and outreach librarian. Any of these cases could benefit from an environmental scan. "It's a process that is often iterative and ongoing, where an academic unit or an institution as a whole is looking for information about trends and future projections that are going to have the greatest impact on that unit or institution," says Barbara Petersohn, librarian and associate professor at the University of North Georgia's Library Technology Center.

The methods for conducting environmental scans can be as varied as the reasons for doing one, but most involve a process of information gathering, whether through interviews or literature reviews. The results of the scan usually help to point a department or group in a particular direction. Here, Ms. Petersohn lays out four things you need to keep in mind when implementing an environmental scan at the library level.

1. **Identify What You're Trying to Do**: For example, are you trying to figure out new opportunities to serve students better? Or are you trying to determine what services you need to eliminate because they're not profitable or providing a good ROI?

2. **Identify the Process for Gathering Data**: Typically this involves interviewing key stakeholders (students and/or faculty) and gathering published data. Sometimes gathering the published materials can help inform your interview approach and the kinds of questions you'll want to ask. Either way, define the process—how long you want it to take, who will do the information gathering, who you need to interview, and so on. It helps to have a project manager who can keep the group moving, and then bring everything back together once the collection is complete.

3. **Work as a Group**: There are many different processes for this, says Petersohn, but at a minimum, participation is democratic, often involving representatives from as many functional groups as possible. "Identify the trends you see. Tease out those threads and see how they relate to the things you are trying to figure out. Working within a group you can have a process where people vote on things they see as either emerging or not emerging. Whittle them down by voting."

4. **Make Sure Your Final Document or Report Has a Purpose:** Sometimes a scan is done for an institutional effectiveness report. They can also be suggestions sent to administration, but almost always there is some kind of upshot that comes out of them, which gets built into a strategic plan.

(Note: Barbara Petersohn also contributed a chapter to *The Library Outreach Casebook*, edited by Ryan L. Sittler and Terra J. Rogerson and published by ACRL.)

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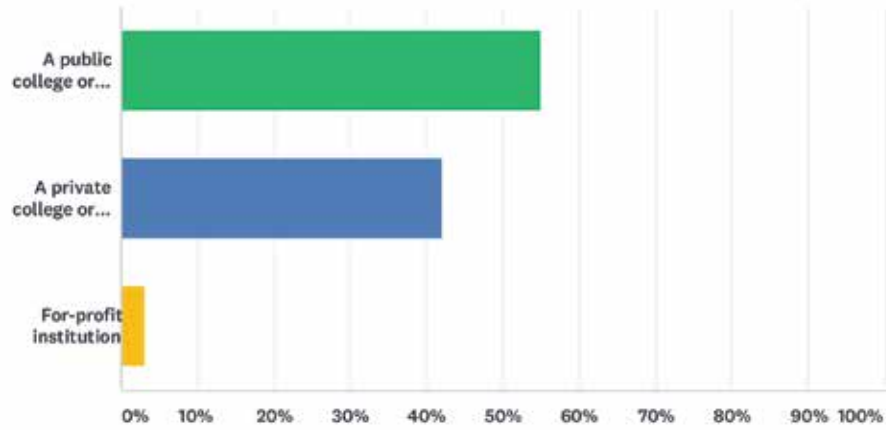
Q1 My institution is a(n)

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
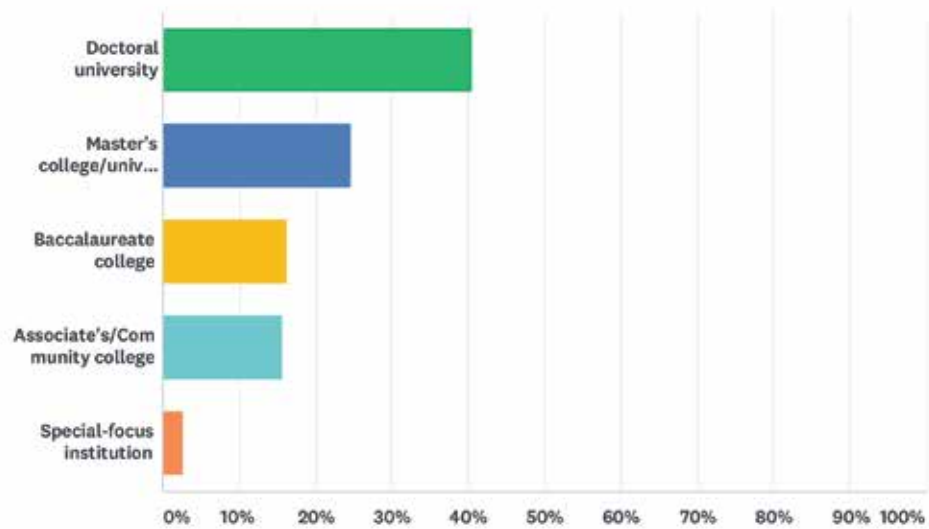
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Doctoral university	40.50%	275
Master's college/university	24.74%	168
Baccalaureate college	16.35%	111
Associate's/Community college	15.76%	107
Special-focus institution	2.65%	18
TOTAL		679

Q2 My institution is

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A public college or university	54.93%	373
A private college or university	41.97%	285
For-profit institution	3.09%	21
TOTAL		679

Q3 Enrollment (FTEs) at my institution is

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
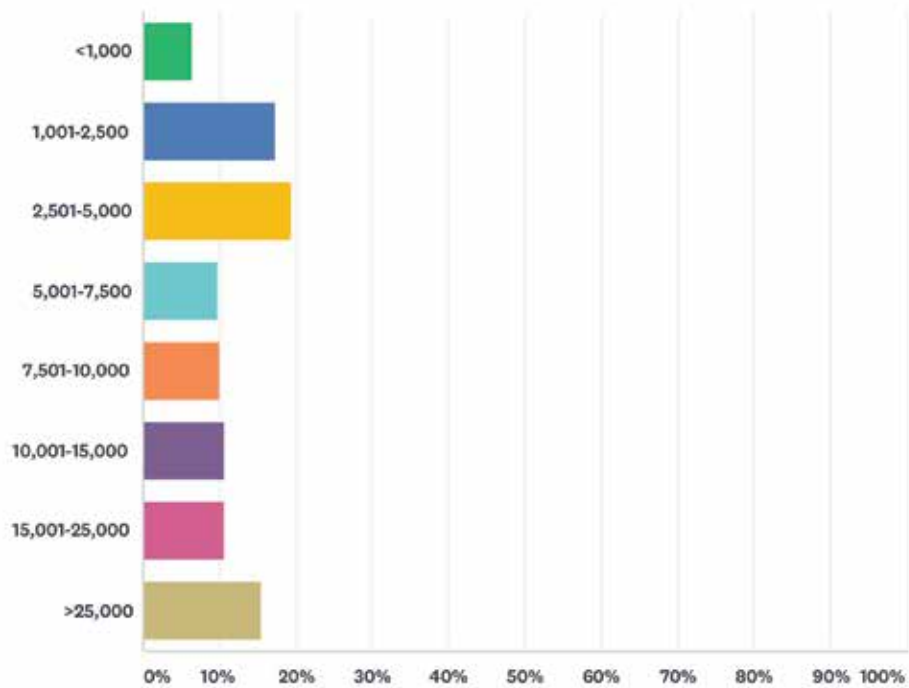
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
<1,000	6.48%	44
1,001-2,500	17.38%	118
2,501-5,000	19.44%	132
5,001-7,500	9.87%	67
7,501-10,000	10.01%	68
10,001-15,000	10.75%	73
15,001-25,000	10.60%	72
>25,000	15.46%	105
TOTAL		679

Q4 My primary job function is:

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
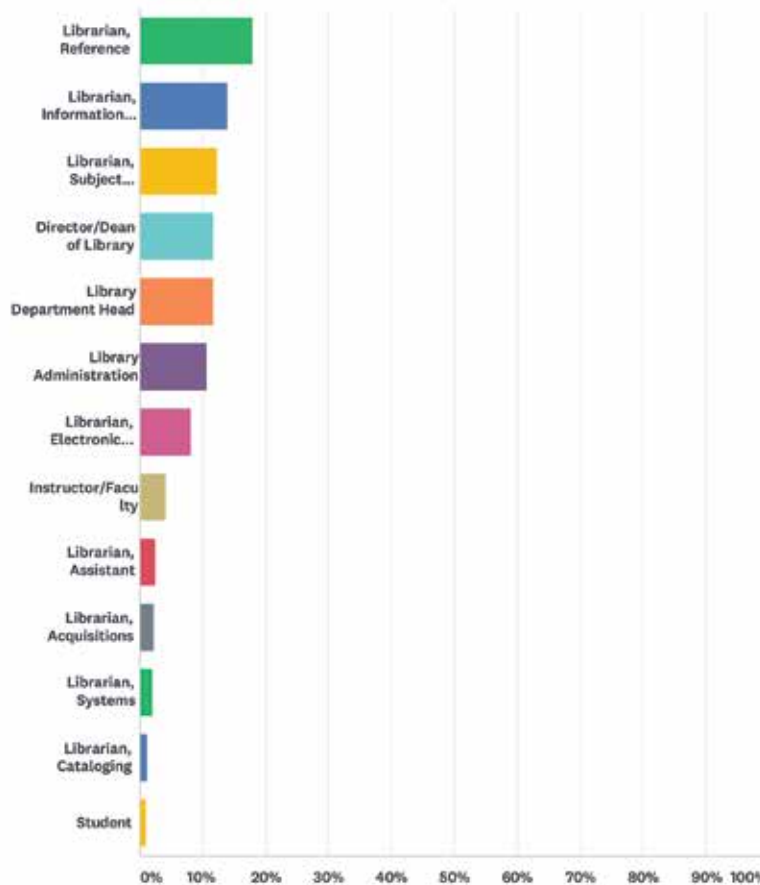
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Librarian, Reference	17.97%	122
Librarian, Information Literacy	13.99%	95
Librarian, Subject Specialist	12.37%	84
Director/Dean of Library	11.78%	80
Library Department Head	11.63%	79
Library Administration	10.75%	73
Librarian, Electronic Resources	8.25%	56
Instructor/Faculty	4.27%	29
Librarian, Assistant	2.50%	17
Librarian, Acquisitions	2.21%	15
Librarian, Systems	2.06%	14
Librarian, Cataloging	1.18%	8
Student	1.03%	7
TOTAL		679

Q5 Please rank the following library marketing and outreach objectives in order of importance. (With 1 being most important.)

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
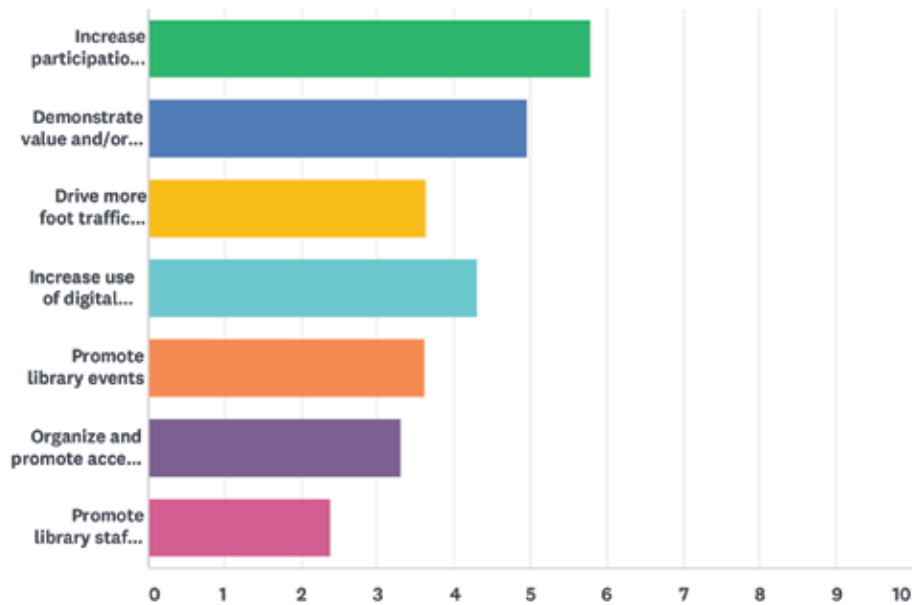
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	SCORE
Increase participation in instruction, research, and reference services	40.50% 275	26.66% 181	15.32% 104	10.60% 72	3.83% 26	2.36% 16	0.74% 5	679	5.79
Demonstrate value and/or impact of library on institutional goals/priorities	29.60% 201	17.38% 118	15.91% 108	12.08% 82	11.78% 80	7.95% 54	5.30% 36	679	4.96
Drive more foot traffic to the library itself	8.98% 61	12.37% 84	15.17% 103	14.87% 101	13.70% 93	14.87% 101	20.03% 136	679	3.63
Increase use of digital subscription resources	8.84% 60	19.44% 132	20.77% 141	18.70% 127	16.35% 111	10.16% 69	5.74% 39	679	4.32
Promote library events	6.63% 45	12.08% 82	13.99% 95	15.17% 103	18.70% 127	21.65% 147	11.78% 80	679	3.61
Organize and promote access points	4.12% 28	8.10% 55	12.81% 87	17.82% 121	19.73% 134	20.77% 141	16.64% 113	679	3.30
Promote library staff specialties and changes	1.33% 9	3.98% 27	6.04% 41	10.75% 73	15.91% 108	22.24% 151	39.76% 270	679	2.38

Q6 Select the statement that best characterizes the outreach and marketing efforts at your library.

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
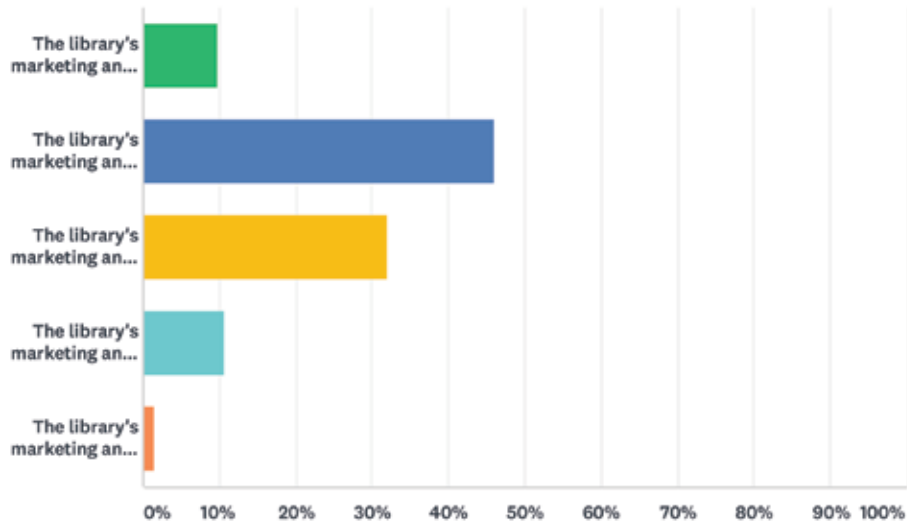
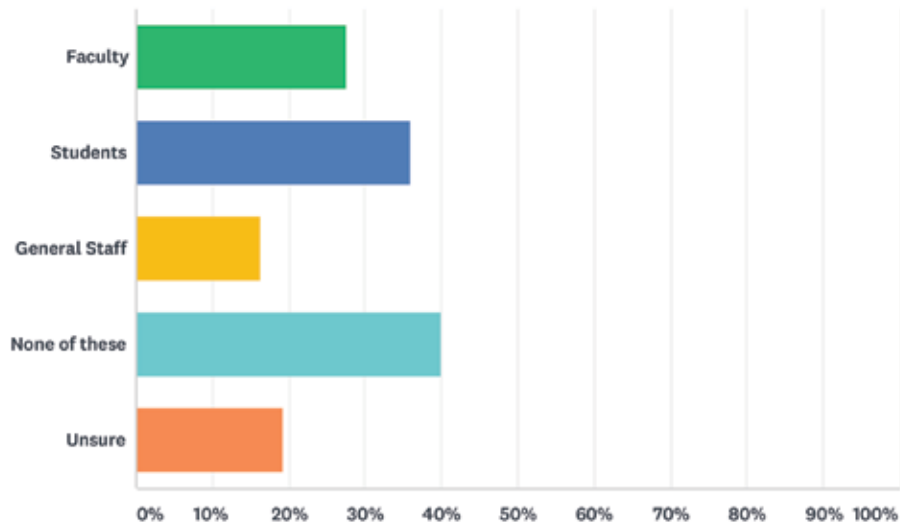| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The library's marketing and outreach efforts are extremely well organized, follow a specific plan, and are performed frequently.	9.87%	67
The library's marketing and outreach efforts are somewhat well organized, follow a loose plan, and are somewhat frequent.	46.10%	313
The library's marketing and outreach efforts may or may not be organized, may or may not be planned, and may or may not have an established frequency.	31.96%	217
The library's marketing and outreach efforts are unorganized, unplanned, and infrequent.	10.60%	72
The library's marketing and outreach efforts are nonexistent.	1.47%	10
TOTAL		679

Q7 Please select whether your library has surveyed faculty, students and/or general staff to determine how best to conduct effective marketing and outreach.

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Faculty	27.69%	188
Students	35.94%	244
General Staff	16.35%	111
None of these	39.91%	271
Unsure	19.29%	131
Total Respondents: 679		

Q8 Select any outreach and marketing tools your library uses.

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Library website	94.85%	644
Facebook page	79.82%	542
Emails	75.41%	512
Campus news source: print, digital, radio, and/or television	67.45%	458
Flyers	67.30%	457
Posters	66.86%	454
Twitter account	57.29%	389
Bookmarks	52.43%	356
Instagram page	41.38%	281
Table tents	38.44%	261
In-class announcements	34.17%	232
Hashtags	30.19%	205
Other (please specify)	16.20%	110
Pinterest page	10.75%	73
Snapchat account	6.04%	41
Mobile alerts	2.36%	16
LinkedIn page	1.77%	12
Total Respondents: 679		

Q9 Which programs does your library use as opportunities to promote or market its resources and services?

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
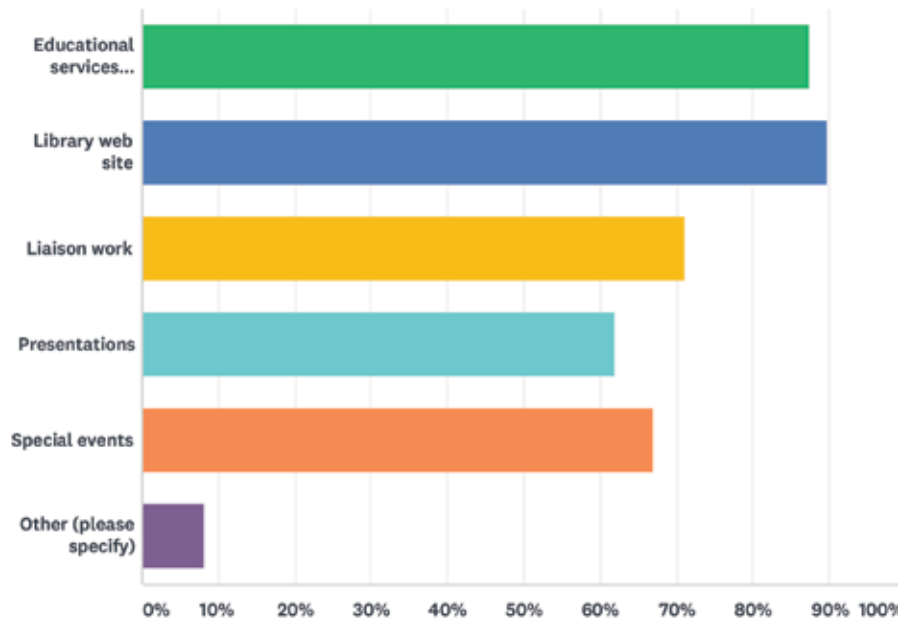
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Educational services (reference/instructional sessions)	87.48%	594
Library web site	89.69%	609
Liaison work	71.13%	483
Presentations	62.00%	421
Special events	66.86%	454
Other (please specify)	8.25%	56
Total Respondents: 679		

Q10 Please indicate how important it is to conduct marketing/outreach with respect to the following library programs/services.

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
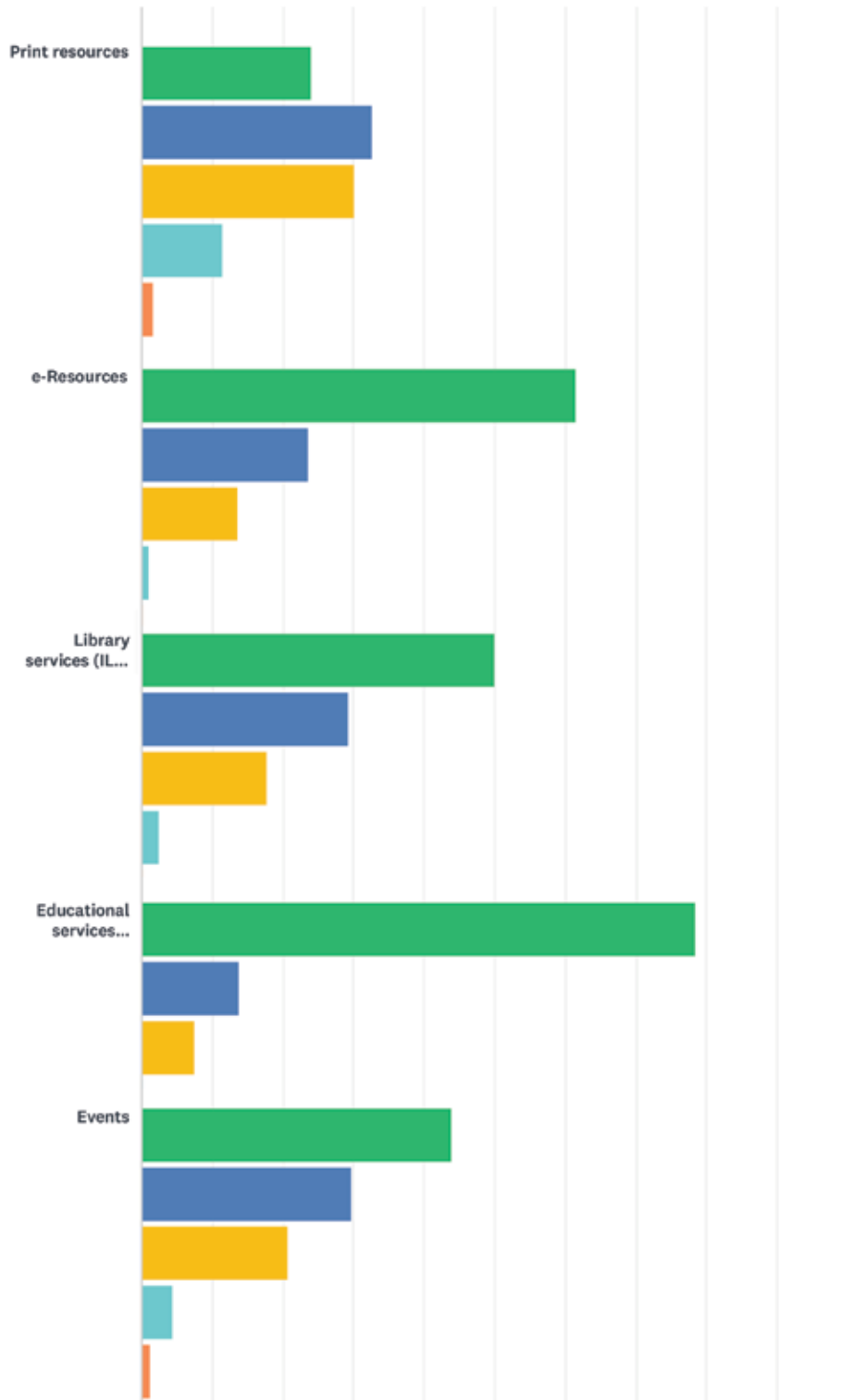
APPENDIX: SURVEY RESULTS
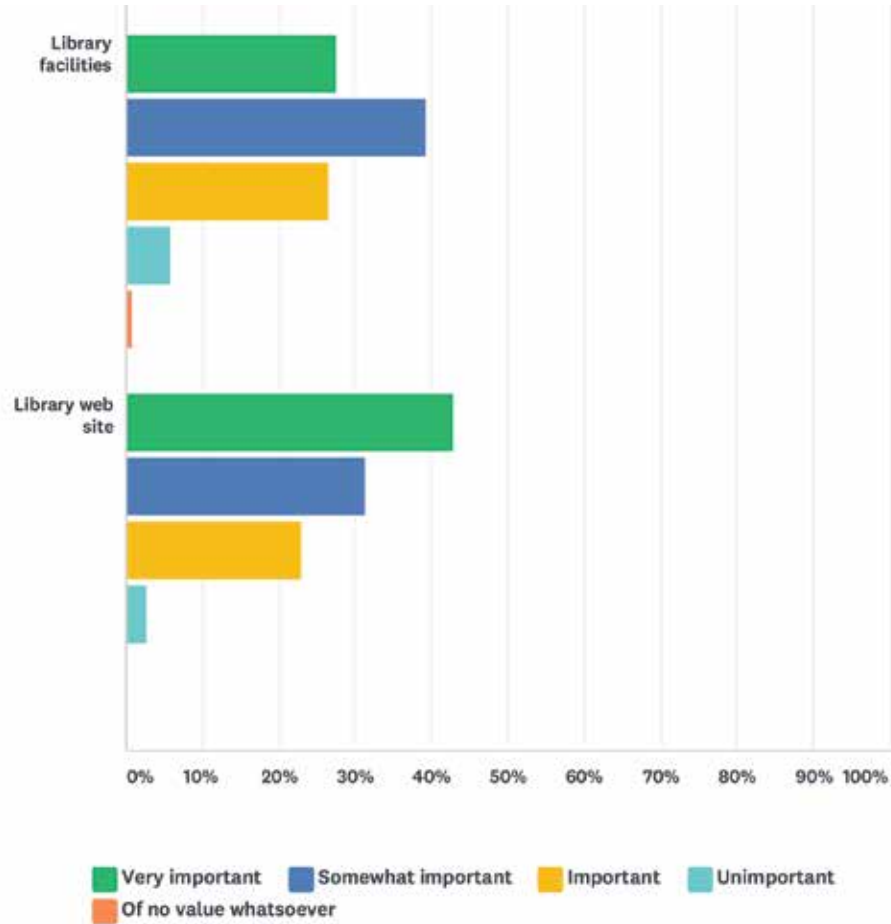
	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	UNIMPORTANT	OF NO VALUE WHATSOEVER	TOTAL
Print resources	24.01% 163	32.70% 222	30.04% 204	11.49% 78	1.77% 12	679
e-Resources	61.41% 417	23.71% 161	13.55% 92	1.03% 7	0.29% 2	679
Library services (ILL, data management, etc.)	50.07% 340	29.31% 199	17.82% 121	2.50% 17	0.29% 2	679
Educational services (reference, instruction, etc.)	78.50% 533	13.84% 94	7.51% 51	0.15% 1	0.00% 0	679
Events	44.04% 299	29.75% 202	20.62% 140	4.42% 30	1.18% 8	679
Library facilities	27.54% 187	39.32% 267	26.51% 180	5.89% 40	0.74% 5	679
Library web site	42.86% 291	31.37% 213	22.97% 156	2.80% 19	0.00% 0	679

Q11 Please select the types of content your library creates to promote services and resources.

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
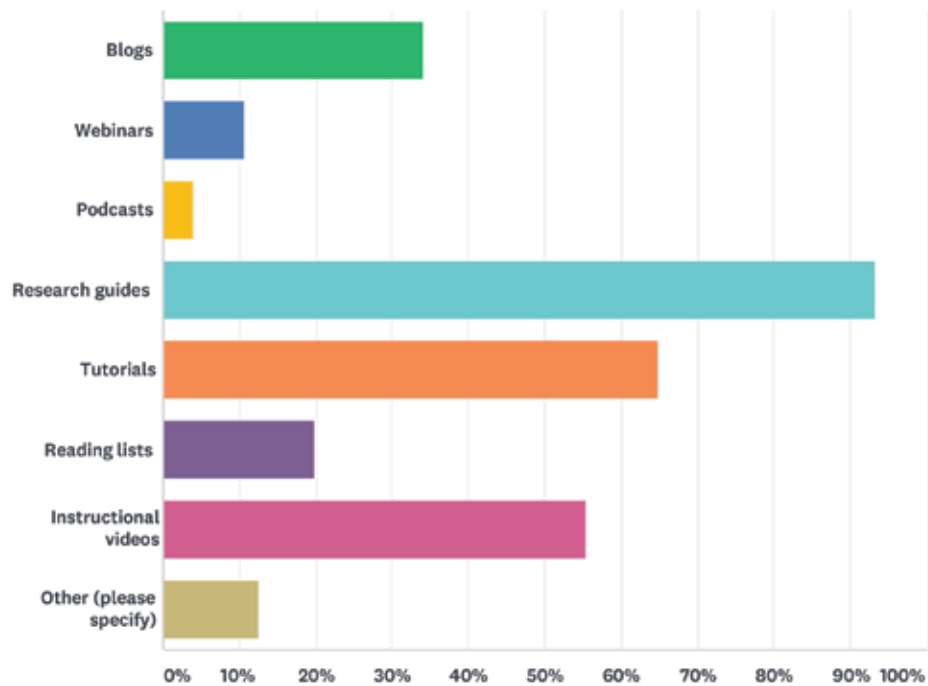
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Blogs	34.17%	232
Webinars	10.75%	73
Podcasts	3.98%	27
Research guides	93.23%	633
Tutorials	64.95%	441
Reading lists	19.88%	135
Instructional videos	55.38%	376
Other (please specify)	12.52%	85
Total Respondents: 679		

Q12 Does your library have dedicated communications/marketing/outreach faculty or staff who promote services and resources?

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
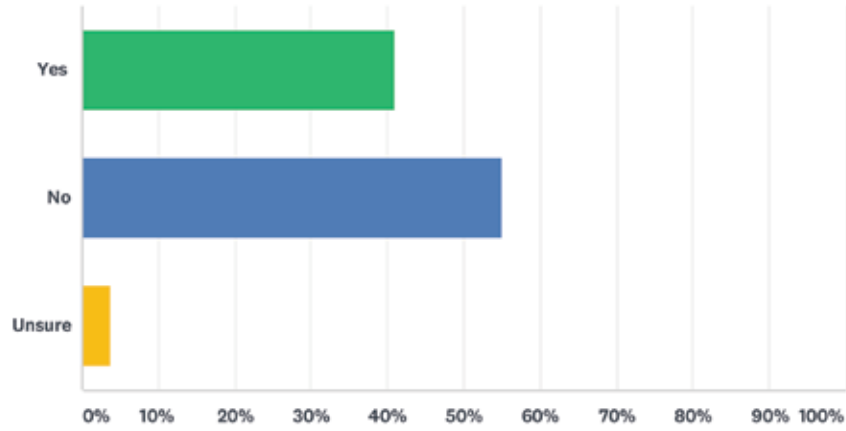
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	41.09%	279
No	55.08%	374
Unsure	3.83%	26
TOTAL		679

Q13 If no, are these kinds of duties shared among faculty or staff who have other primary responsibilities?
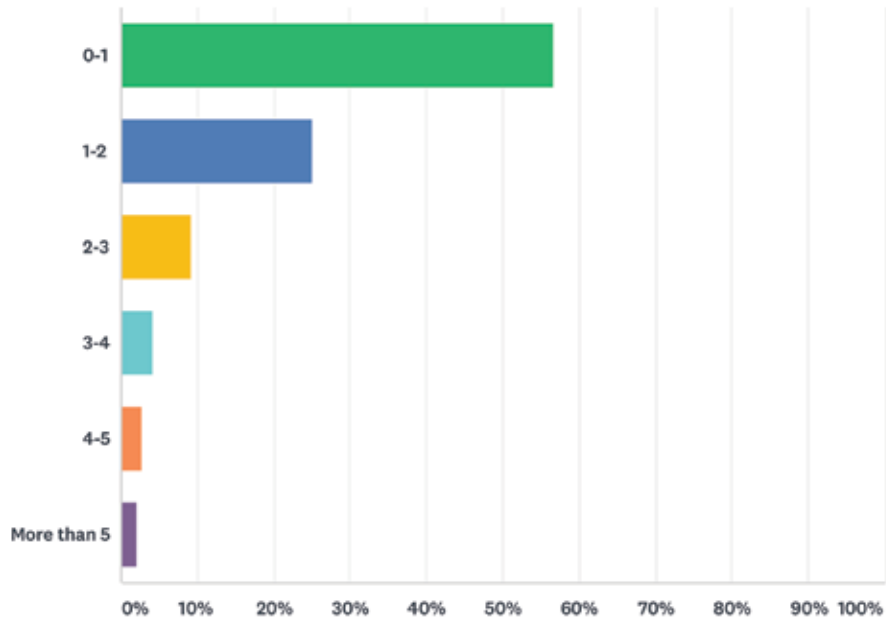
Answered: 455   Skipped: 224
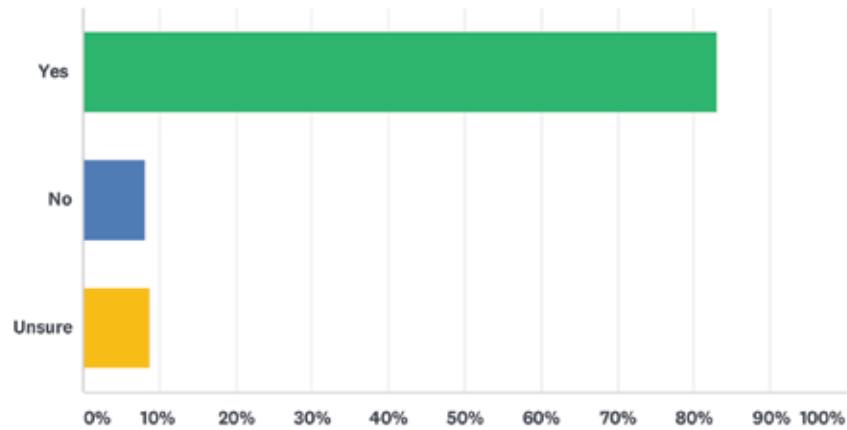
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	83.08%	378
No	8.13%	37
Unsure	8.79%	40
TOTAL		455

Q14 What is the equivalent of full-time faculty or staff dedicated to managing your library's marketing/outreach initiatives?
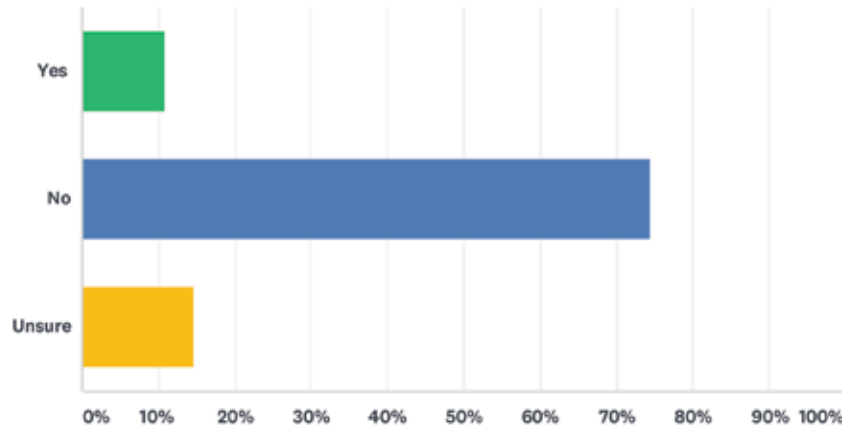
Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-1	56.70%	385
1-2	25.04%	170
2-3	9.13%	62
3-4	4.27%	29
4-5	2.80%	19
More than 5	2.06%	14
TOTAL		679

Q15 Has your library developed or adopted any formal training initiatives or cross-trained staff or faculty on marketing and outreach best practices?

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	10.90%	74
No	74.52%	506
Unsure	14.58%	99
TOTAL		679

Q16 Please rate the importance of each of the following tactics for marketing or promoting the e-resources at your library.
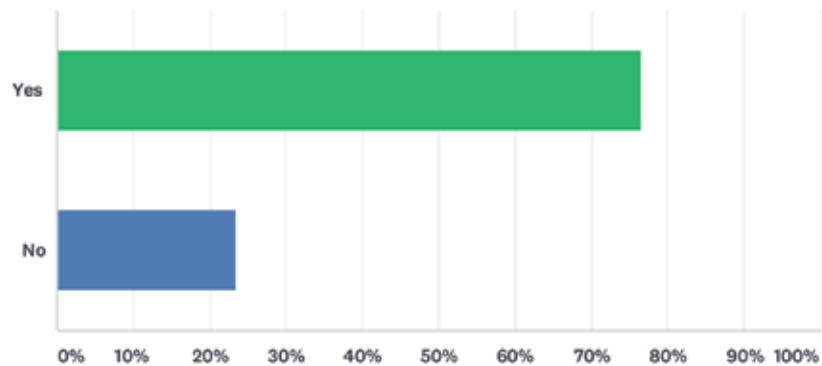
Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
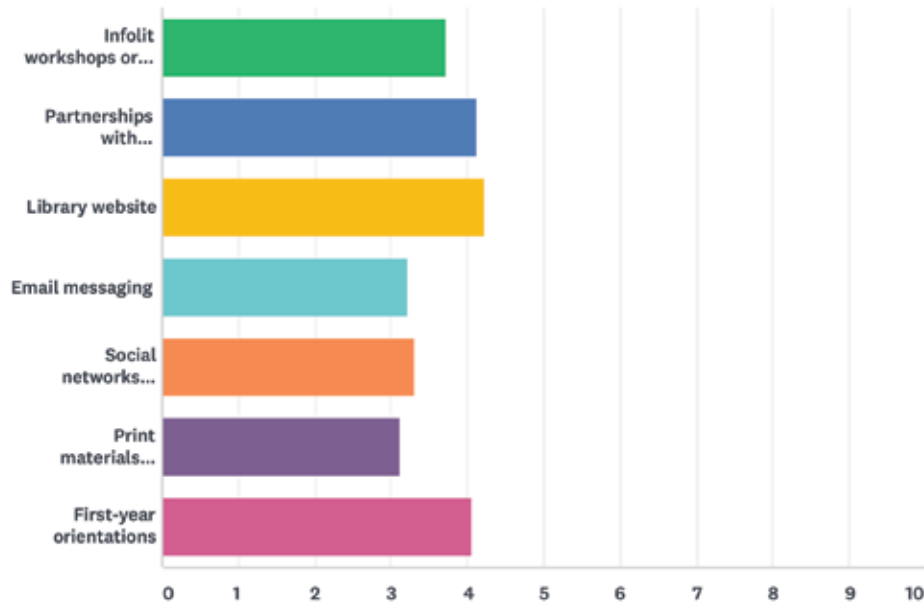
	1 -- UNIMPORTANT	2	3	4	5 -- VERY IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Infolit workshops or seminars	8.66% 58	9.85% 66	19.70% 132	24.63% 165	37.16% 249	670	3.72
Partnerships with departments outside the library	1.78% 12	5.49% 37	14.84% 100	33.68% 227	44.21% 298	674	4.13
Library website	1.03% 7	2.66% 18	17.13% 116	32.05% 217	47.12% 319	677	4.22
Email messaging	9.72% 65	16.74% 112	31.24% 209	26.91% 180	15.40% 103	669	3.22
Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)	8.88% 60	15.09% 102	29.44% 199	30.62% 207	15.98% 108	676	3.30
Print materials (booklets, brochures, posters, bookmarks, etc.)	9.02% 61	17.60% 119	35.80% 242	28.70% 194	8.88% 60	676	3.11
First-year orientations	4.89% 33	6.52% 44	14.67% 99	25.93% 175	48.00% 324	675	4.06

Q17 Has your library purchased and/or implemented a web-scale discovery tool?
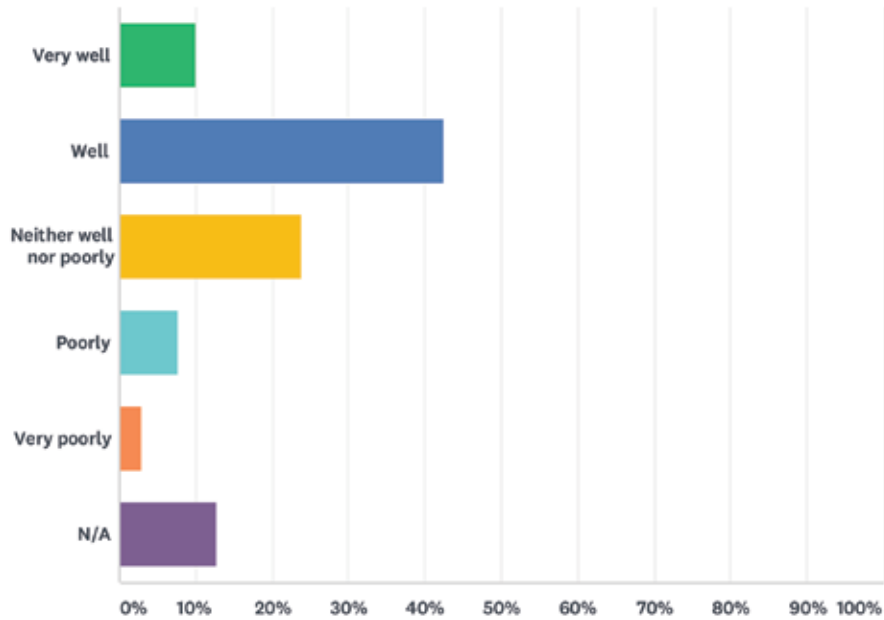
Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	76.58%	520
No	23.42%	159
TOTAL		679

Q18 How do you feel the discovery layer at your library serves patrons' needs?
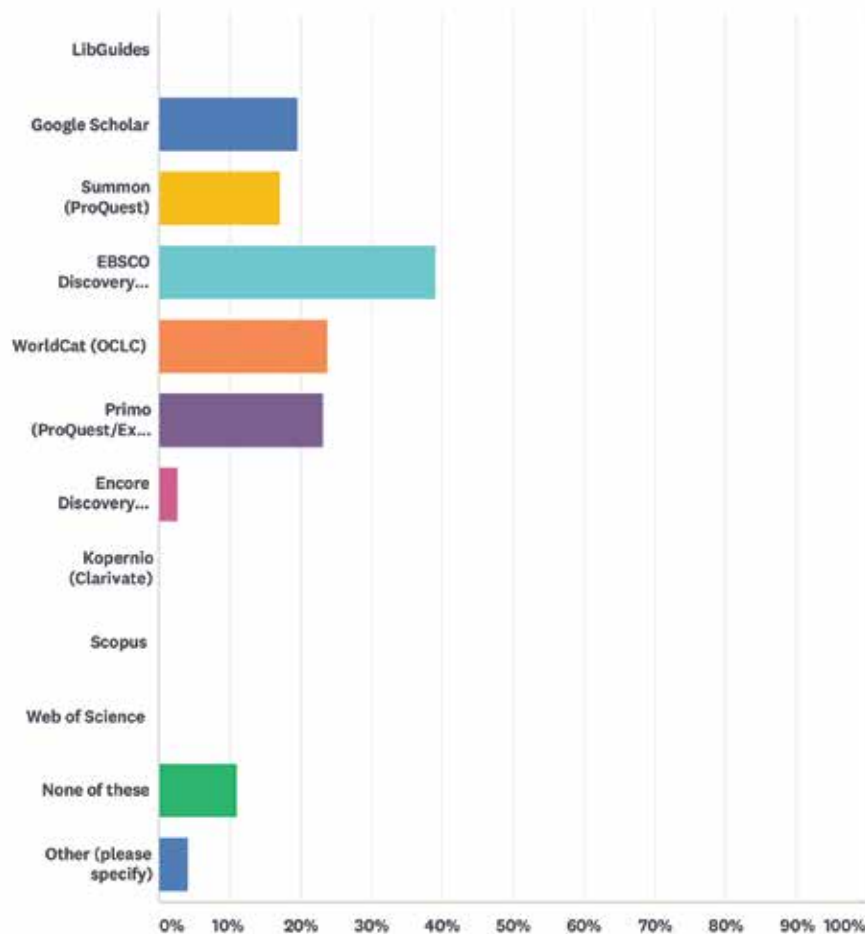
Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very well	10.01%	68
Well	42.56%	289
Neither well nor poorly	23.86%	162
Poorly	7.81%	53
Very poorly	2.95%	20
N/A	12.81%	87
TOTAL		679

Q19 Please select the discovery tool(s) your library uses.

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
LibGuides	0.00%	0
Google Scholar	19.59%	133
Summon (ProQuest)	17.23%	117
EBSCO Discovery Service	39.18%	266
WorldCat (OCLC)	23.86%	162
Primo (ProQuest/Ex Libris)	23.12%	157
Encore Discovery (Innovative Interfaces)	2.65%	18
Kopernio (Clarivate)	0.00%	0
Scopus	0.00%	0
Web of Science	0.00%	0
None of these	11.05%	75
Other (please specify)	4.12%	28
Total Respondents: 679		

Q20 How does your library provide faculty and students access to its e-resources?

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
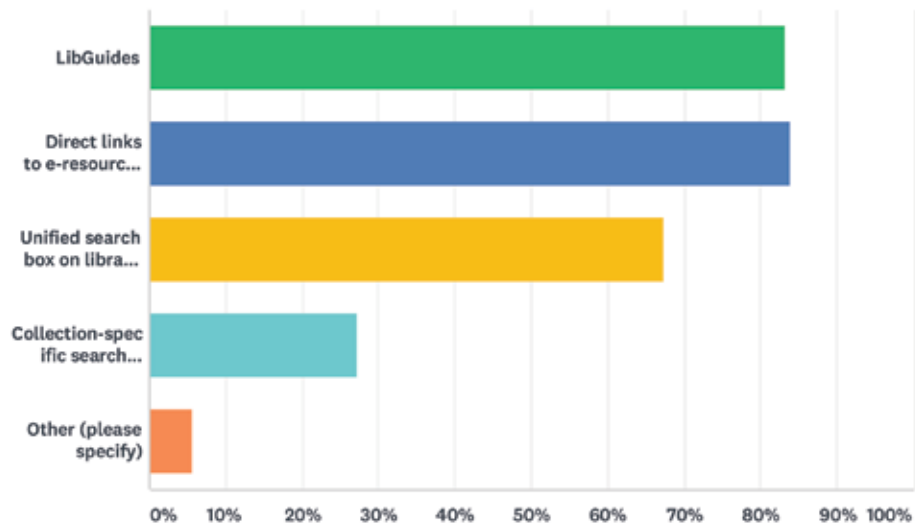
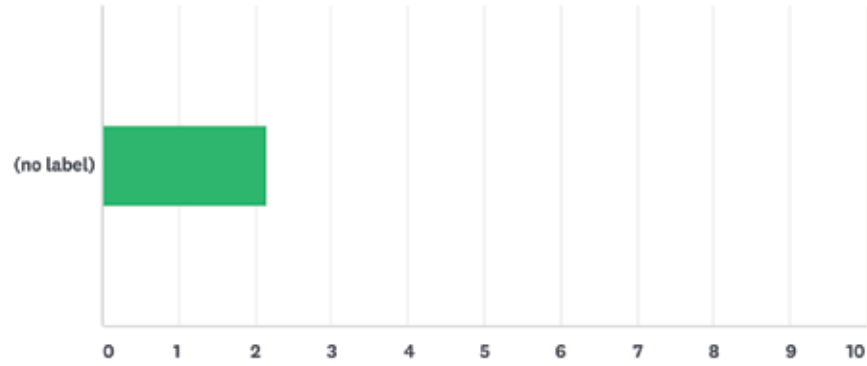| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
LibGuides	83.21%	565
Direct links to e-resources from library website	83.95%	570
Unified search box on library website	67.45%	458
Collection-specific search boxes on the library website	27.10%	184
Other (please specify)	5.60%	38
Total Respondents: 679		

Q21 How aware are faculty of the library's e-resources?
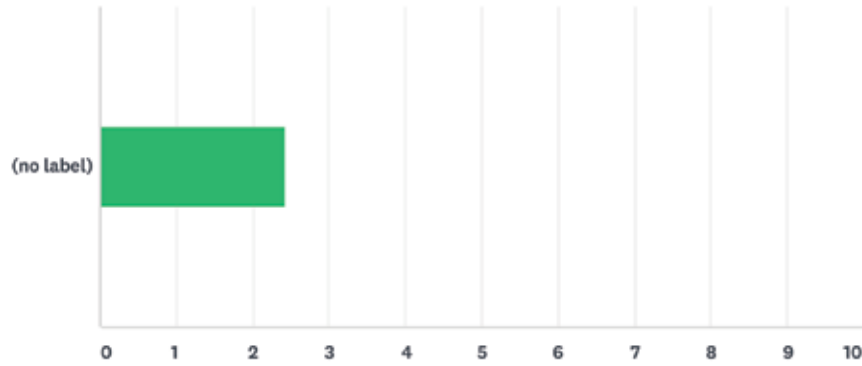
Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

	VERY AWARE	AWARE	NEITHER AWARE NOR UNAWARE	UNAWARE	VERY UNAWARE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	12.37% 84	65.24% 443	17.53% 119	4.71% 32	0.15% 1	679	2.15

Q22 How aware are students of the library's e-resources?
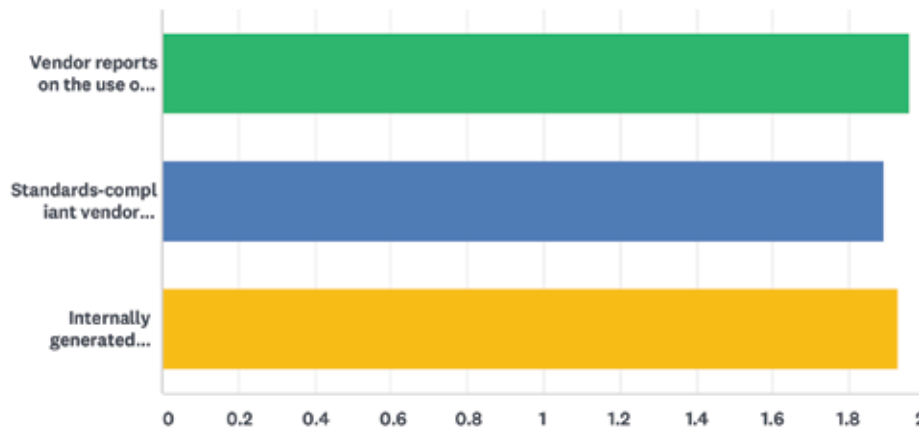
Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

	VERY AWARE	AWARE	NEITHER AWARE NOR UNAWARE	UNAWARE	VERY UNAWARE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	5.45% 37	56.55% 384	29.16% 198	8.10% 55	0.74% 5	679	2.42

Q23 Please indicate the importance of the following items on the assessment of electronic resources at your library.

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEITHER IMPORTANT NOR UNIMPORTANT	UNIMPORTANT	VERY UNIMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Vendor reports on the use of their e-resources	32.55% 221	45.36% 308	17.23% 117	3.53% 24	1.33% 9	679	1.96
Standards-compliant vendor reports on the use their e-resources (such as COUNTER reports)	41.97% 285	33.43% 227	19.88% 135	3.24% 22	1.47% 10	679	1.89
Internally generated reports on the use of e-resources	34.61% 235	44.33% 301	16.05% 109	3.09% 21	1.91% 13	679	1.93

Q24 How does your library measure the success of its marketing efforts?

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
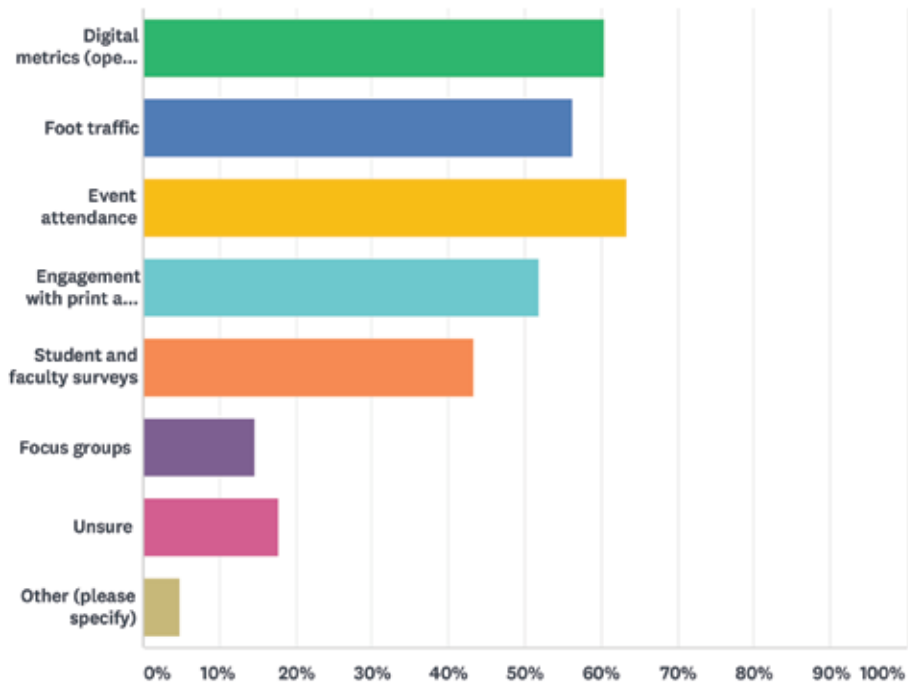
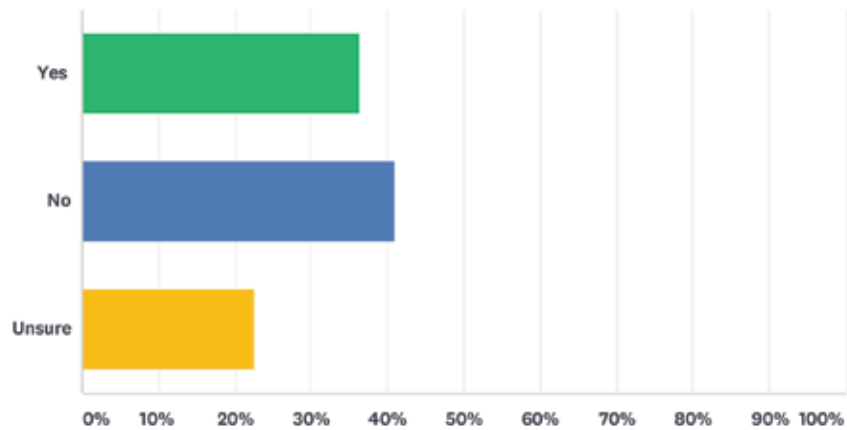| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Digital metrics (open rates, click-throughs, website unique visitors, social media engagement)	60.53%	411
Foot traffic	56.26%	382
Event attendance	63.48%	431
Engagement with print and digital resources	51.84%	352
Student and faculty surveys	43.30%	294
Focus groups	14.73%	100
Unsure	17.82%	121
Other (please specify)	4.71%	32
Total Respondents: 679		

Q25 Does someone at your library generate reports on the results of the library's marketing efforts?
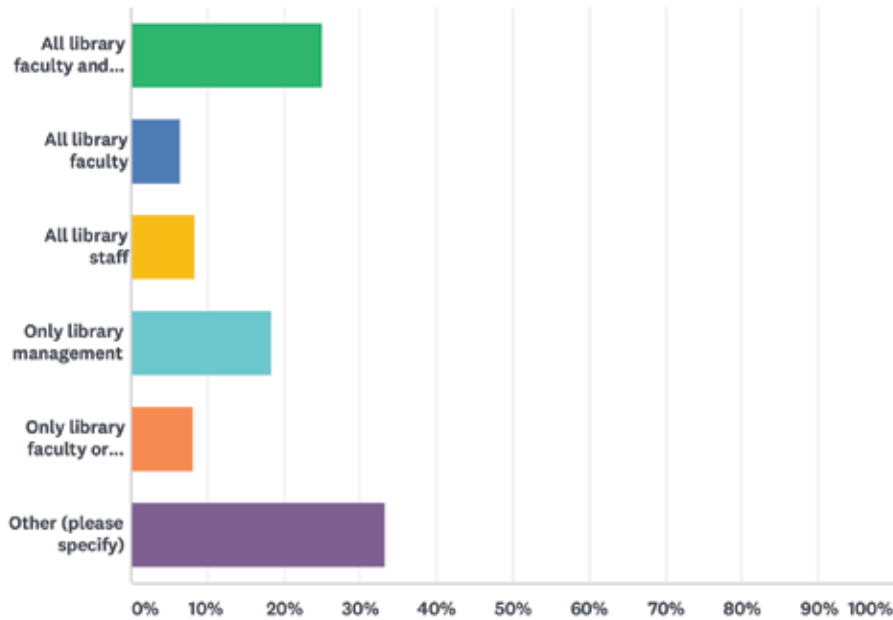
Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	36.38%	247
No	40.94%	278
Unsure	22.68%	154
TOTAL		679

Q26 If someone generates reports on the results of the library's marketing efforts, who is the audience for these reports?

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
All library faculty and staff	25.18%	171
All library faculty	6.48%	44
All library staff	8.39%	57
Only library management	18.41%	125
Only library faculty or staff with marketing responsibilities	8.25%	56
Other (please specify)	33.28%	226
TOTAL		679

Q27 If someone in the library generates marketing and outreach reports, what are the reports being used for?

Answered: 679   Skipped: 0
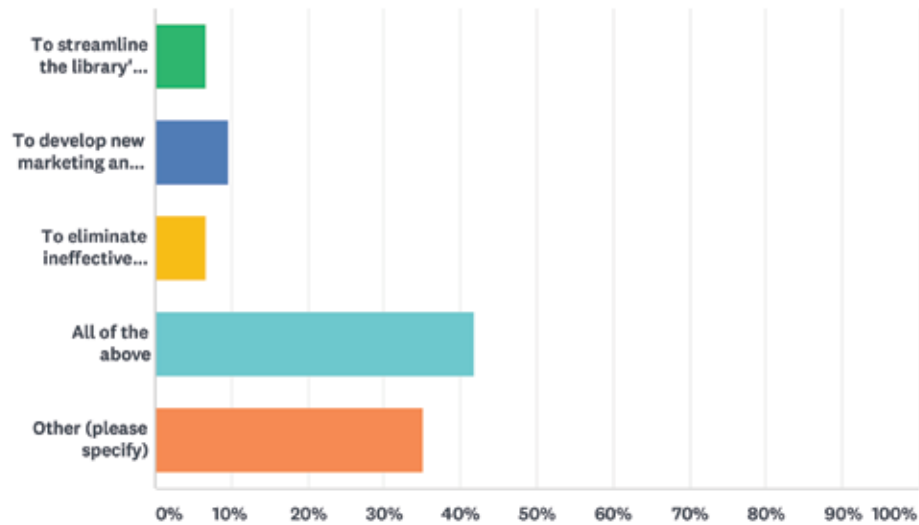
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
To streamline the library's marketing and outreach efforts	6.63%	45
To develop new marketing and outreach tactics	9.72%	66
To eliminate ineffective tactics	6.63%	45
All of the above	41.83%	284
Other (please specify)	35.20%	239
TOTAL		679

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Choice White Paper: Marketing Academic Library
Resources and Services