Depository Library Needs Assessment/Benchmark: Academic Libraries Segment Report

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Library Services and Content Management

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Table of Contents

- *INTRODUCTION*
  - **Background & Methodology**
- *KEY FINDINGS*
- *SURVEY RESULTS*
- *CONCLUSION*
- *ABOUT OUTSELL*

Background

- The Federal Depository Library Program, FDLP, consists of a diverse grouping of almost 1,300 institutions encompassing academic, federal, state, local, public, and special libraries. Each federal depository library must comply with legal responsibilities to "make government publications available for the free use of the general public." Individual libraries may determine how to meet this requirement.

- Through its Public Access Assessment (PAA) program, the GPO bears the responsibility of ensuring that the resources it distributes to Federal depository libraries are made accessible to the general public. Assessments are categorized (access, collections, service, and cooperative efforts), and touch almost every aspect of library operations and service including access to depository resources through bibliographic, physical building, tangible collection, Internet, and onsite computer access. The GPO's PAA program also has an educational and customer relations aspect, with the GPO looking to develop the library's knowledge-base about FDLP requirements and best practices, as well as tools and services to enable libraries to successfully serve as federal depository libraries. r

- Over the past year, Outsell has worked closely with the GPO to better understand that led to the identification of discrete segments within FDLP. With the revised FDLP library types segmentation completed, Outsell designed a needs assessment and benchmark instrument to survey the FDLP libraries as input to its client relations program.

- This report presents the findings from that survey, both on an overall basis and with detailed analysis by type of library.

Methodology

- **Data Collection**. Outsell designed, programmed, and fielded the needs assessment and benchmark study instrument with input from GPO. Specifically, Outsell:
  - Programmed the questionnaire into a secure web-based server and performed quality testing of the survey program;
  - Provided a draft invitation which FDLP adapted and used to invite FDLP member library personnel to the survey site.
  - Collected responses into a database and monitored response, providing updates to FDLP on a regular basis during fielding.

- **Data Processing & Tabulation**. Once data collection was completed, Outsell processed the survey data and tabulated the responses. Data processing included cleaning and quality-checking the data, coding up to three open-ended questions, and providing a set of data cross-tabulated by up to 20 segments such as library type. Outsell has previously provided a raw data file showing individual responses to the survey, including individual library metrics.

- **Analysis**. Drawing on a deep understanding of academic, government, and special libraries; segmentation analysis; research design; needs assessment and benchmark research methods, Outsell consultants analyzed the survey results to identify key findings and draw implications for FDLP's client relations program.

- **Presentation**. In addition to the written report, Outsell will attend an on-site meeting to present the project and facilitate a discussion with the goal of identifying the group's "center of gravity" on reactions and thoughts about the outcomes and strategy. During this meeting Outsell will debrief and discuss the key findings and recommendations in a combination of facilitated discussion, and brainstorming actions for inclusion in the customer relations plan.

Segment Results: Academic Libraries

- **Needs Assessment**
- **Biennial Survey**

Key Findings

- 812 Academic libraries responded. Doctoral or master's college / university library accounted for more than half of all responses (53%). Potential number of users (median): 300,000; actual users (median): 7,000.
- Approaching 50% of respondents identified users of depository services as 2,000+; 25% identified 7,500+ users. Across all respondents, median number of depository services users: 1700.
- Respondents identified budget, workload, staffing, space/facilities management and cost-containment as leading (and clearly inter-related) concerns. More than half of respondents also identified Marketing/promoting services, Keeping up with technology, and User training as either a Major or Minor Problem.
- Almost all respondents (90+%) identified core services and content management activities: Reference desk, Electronic access to documents, Managing a physical library/collection, and Providing training on searching and effective use of information were cited by 90+% respondents.
- Almost 60% respondents do not measure library performance with regard to depository services. Those that do primarily use needs assessments. Less than 25% utilize satisfaction surveys.
- Almost all (91%) respondents identified access to depository materials as the most important FDLP services. More than half also identified: FDLP Desktop, Persistent identifier capability in cataloging records to full text, and Free access to Government fee-based databases

Key Findings cont.

- A digitized collection of FDLP historical materials led responses as the desired service/resource not currently available (73%). More than half of all respondents also identified the addition of pre-1976 cataloging records to OCLC and online historical coverage of GPO/Fedsys titles followed, albeit with less demand (55% and 54%, respectively).
- 90+% respondents cited Routine cataloging, Display of the FDLP emblem, and Knowledgeable library staff as methods for making all formats of depository publications visible to the public. 43% respondents identified no barriers for access to depository materials. For those who did cite barriers, online authentication to public access computers and the difficulty of accessing the collection within the library were prominent concerns.
- Respondents expressed the greatest levels of satisfaction with FDLP Desktop, the FDL Handbook, Conferences, askGPO, Cataloging, Communication, Web Tools, Classification, Distribution, and Acquisition of Agency Materials. The greatest levels of dissatisfaction were with Access to Government Fee-based Databases and Needs and Offers.
- 40% respondents identified an interested in receiving digital files on deposit. While more than 50% had discussed this interest with theirDean/Director, most felt they did not have Administrative Support.
- Only 6% respondents are considering whether to remain within FDLP.

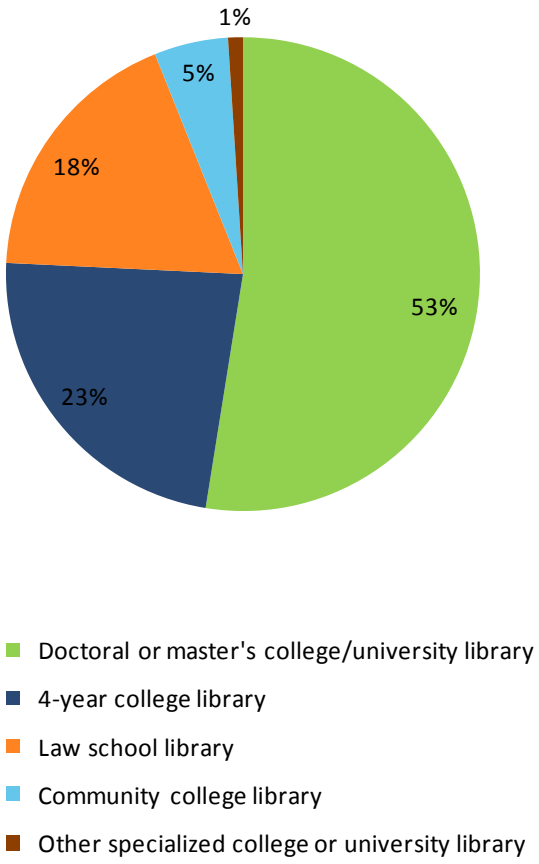
Academic Library Type

Of the 812 Academic library respondents:

- Doctoral or master's college / university library accounted for the majority (53%)

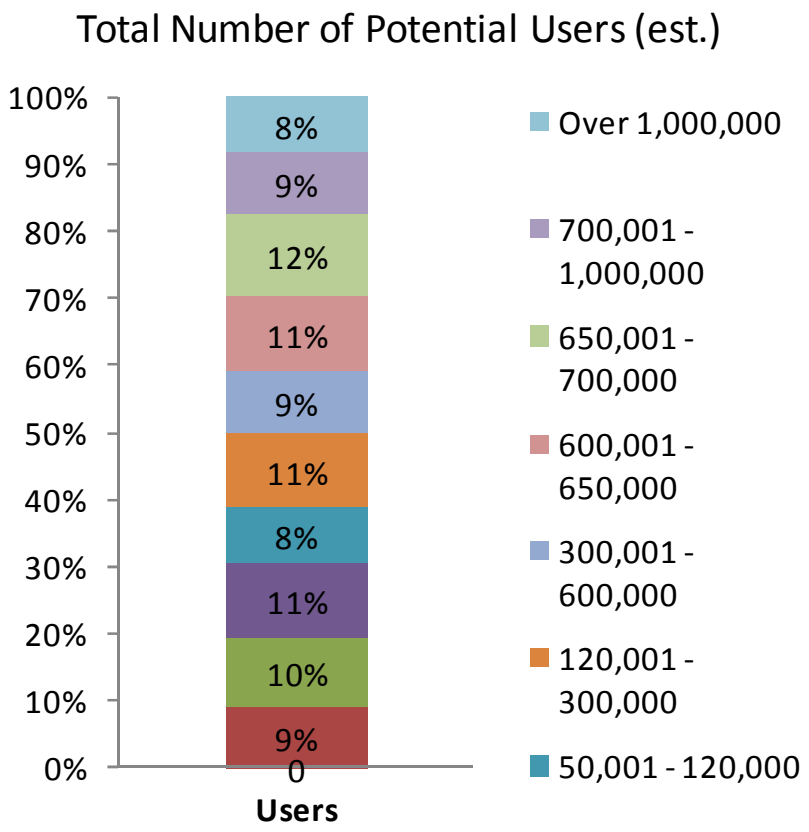
- Respondents from 4-year college libraries and Law School libraries comprised the bulk of the remaining responses

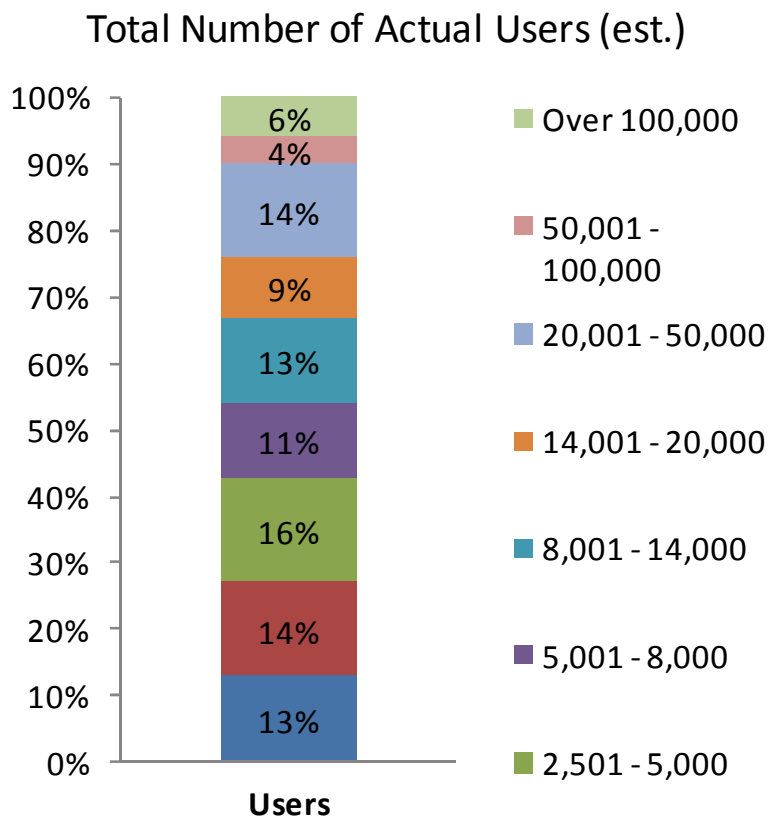
- Survey respondents did not include any
  - Engineering or technical school library
  - Service academy library
  - Tribal college/university library



Source: Q1. Which of the following best describes your library type?

Populations Served by Size: Potential and Actual

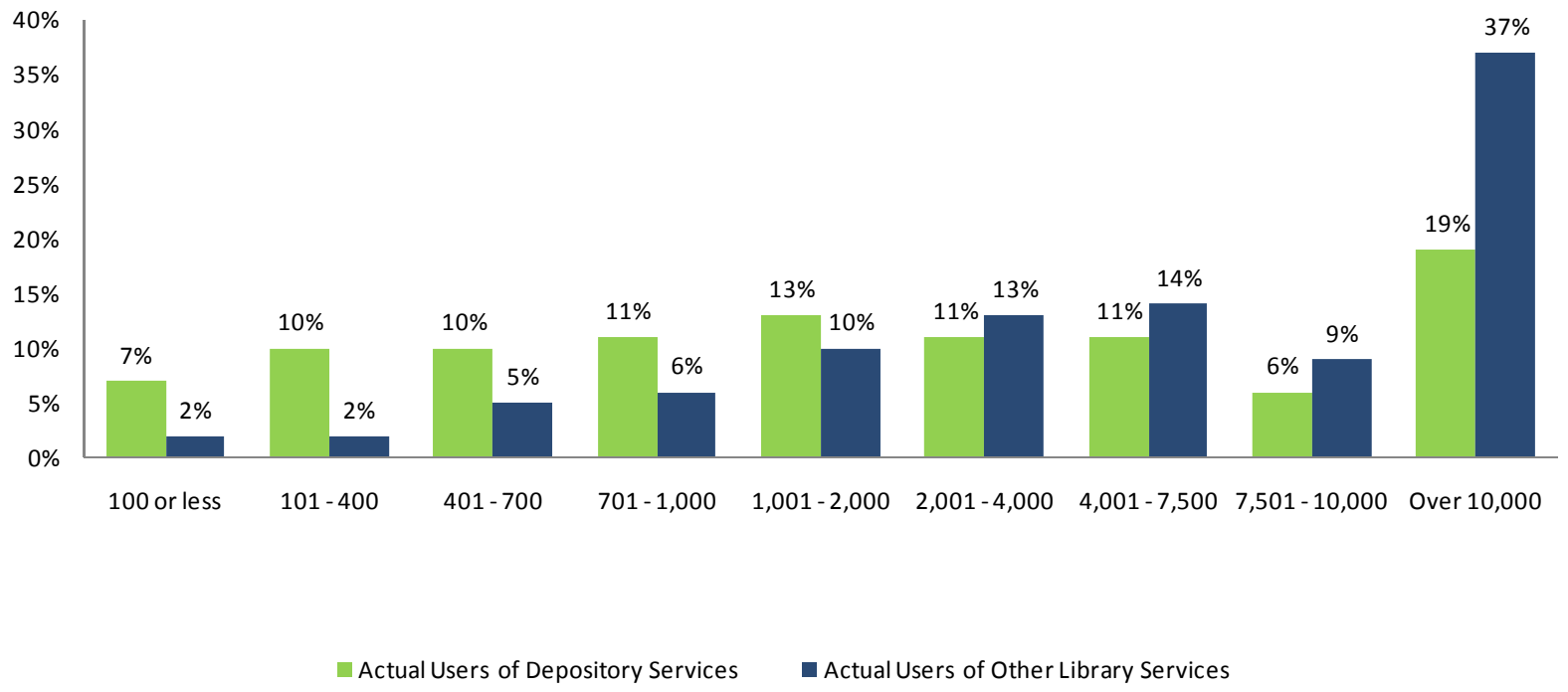




While approximations of potential users were evenly spread across all ranges (8-12%), estimates for actual user populations showed greater variance (4-16%)

Source: Q2. What is your best estimate of the approximate number of potential users (those in your area who would likely benefit from your services) and the approximate number of actual users that your library supports?

Populations Served: Use of Depository or Other Services



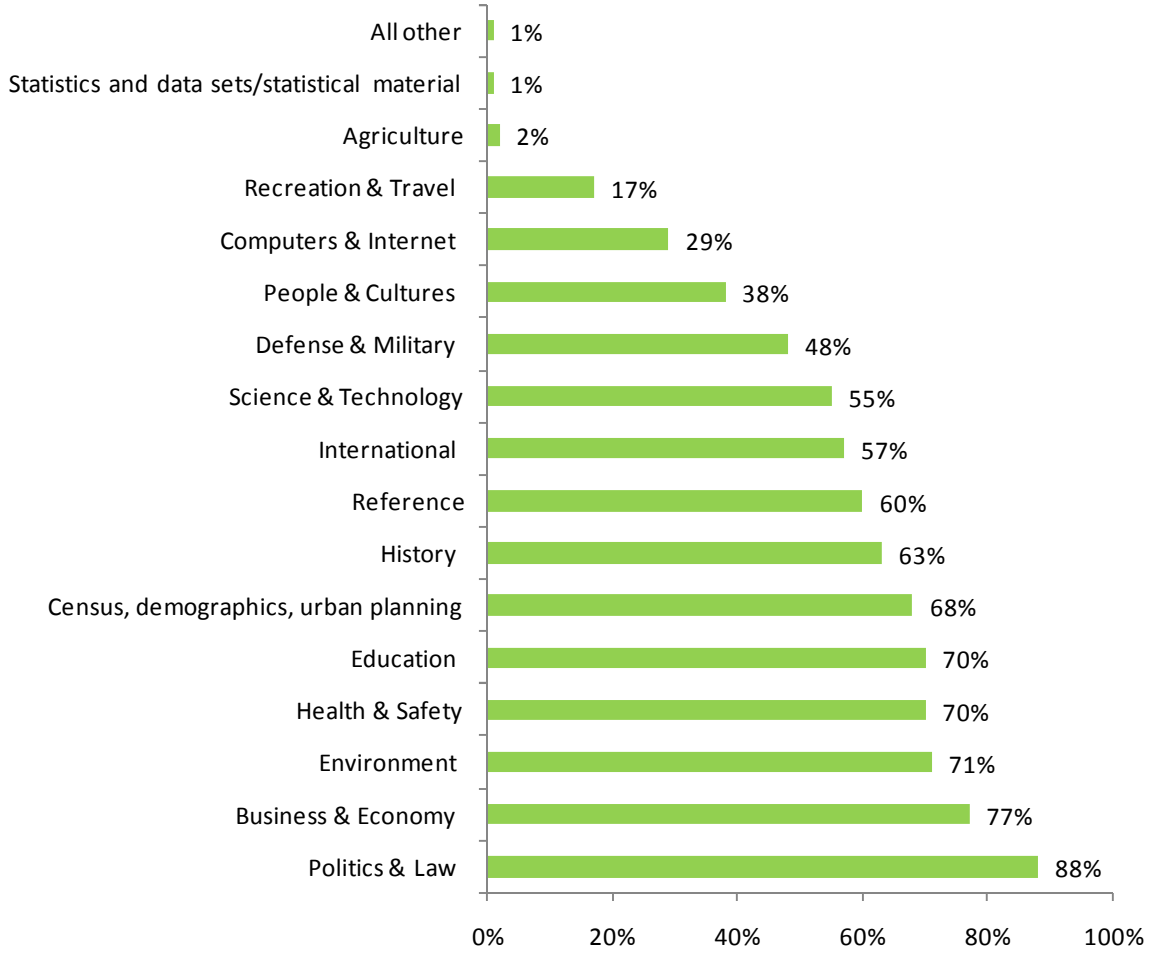
On average, respondents identified 35,000 users of depository services vs. 68,500 users of other library services.

Q2a. Of those [INSERT # OF ACTUAL USERS IN Q2] actual users, approximately how many of them represent your user base for depository services and how many represent your user base for other library services?

Populations Served: Subject Categories Used by Patrons

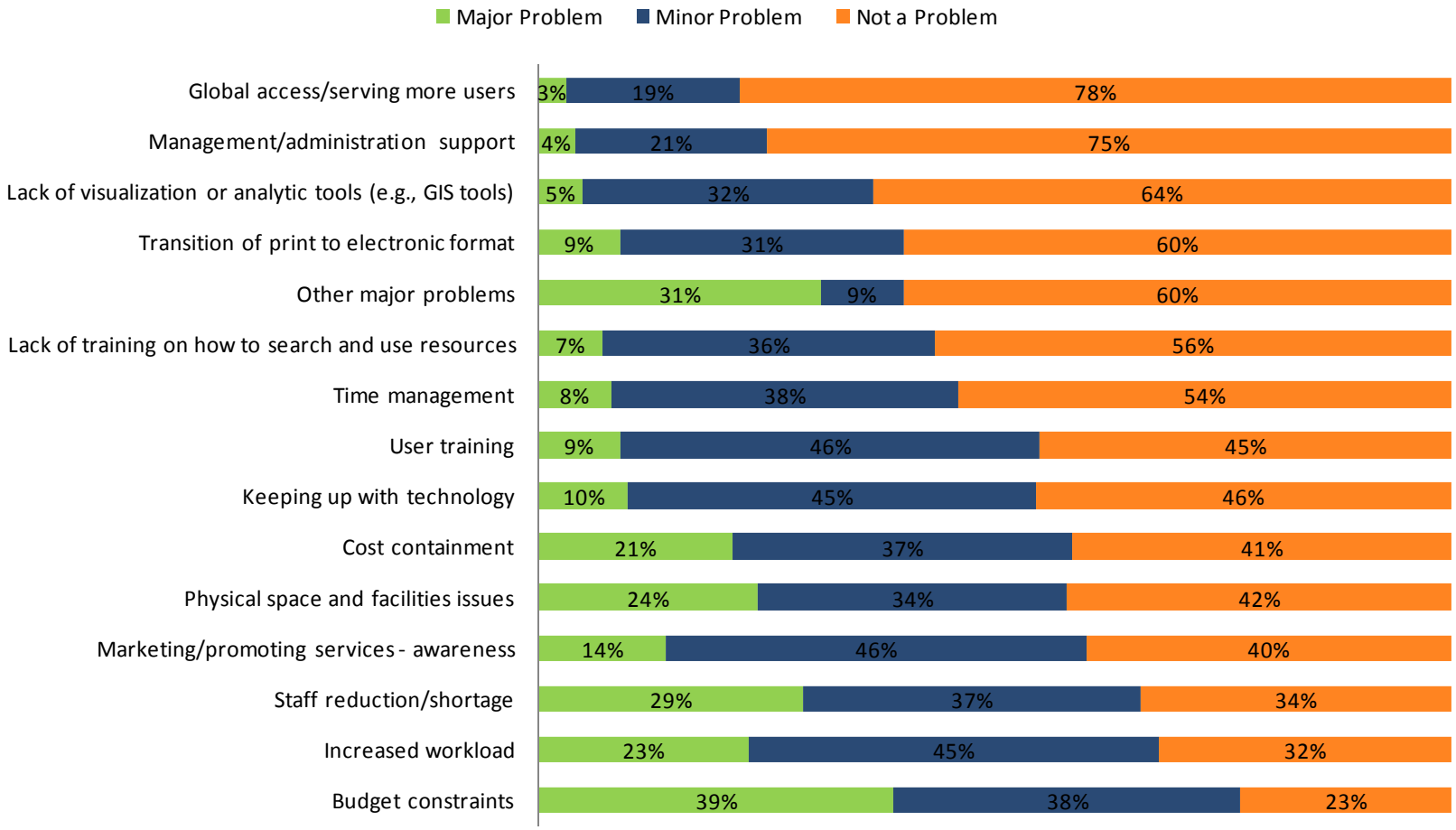
Politics & Law and Business & Economy lead the subject categories used most often by academic library patrons.

Amongst respondents, the following categories were identified as 0% use:
-Laws/legislation
-Literature
-Native American studies
-Forestry
-- Social work/sociology
-- Library Sciences



Q3. What are the key subject categories that your patrons use most regularly?

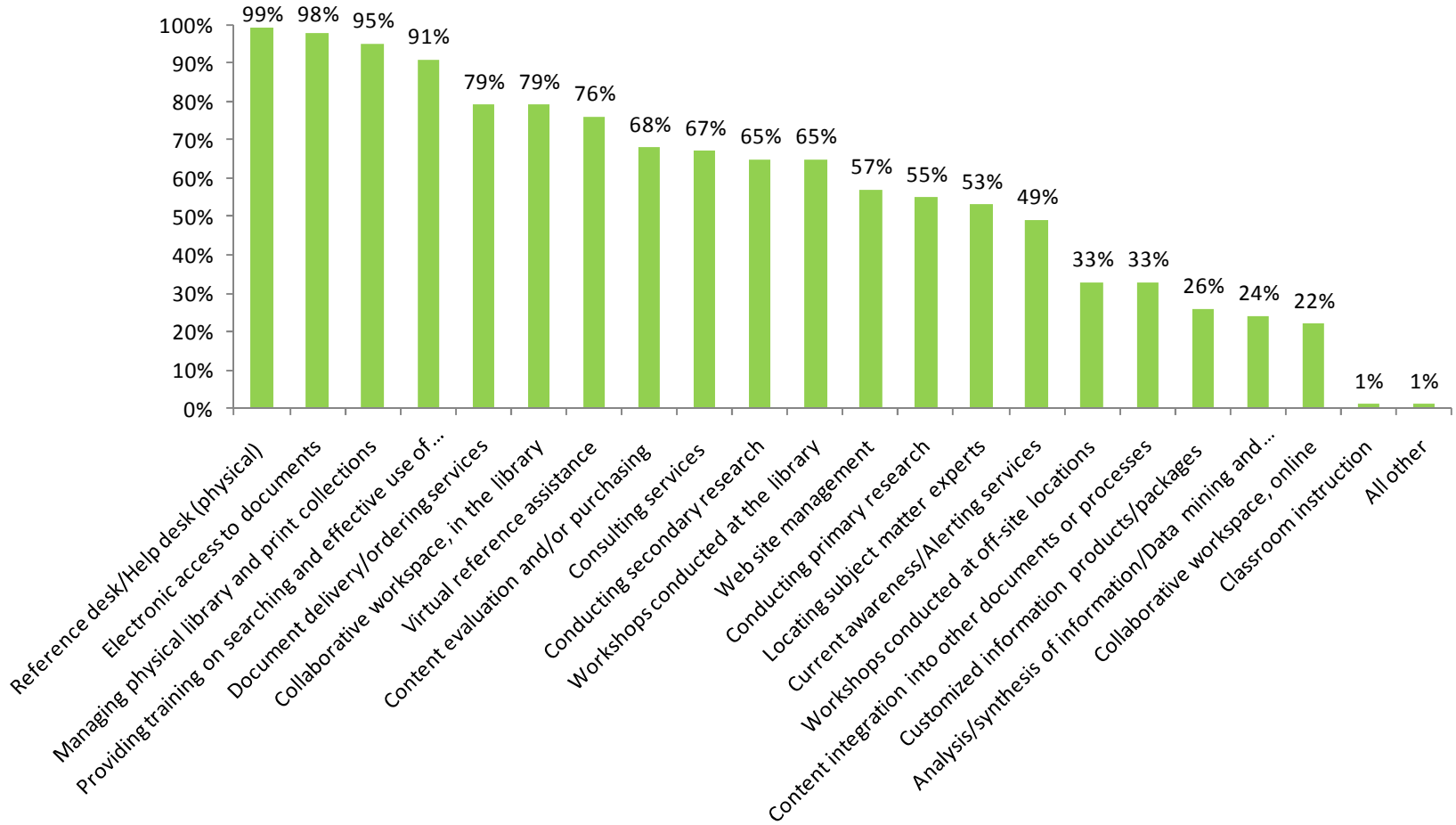
Problems and Challenges



Marketing/promoting services, Keeping up with technology, and User training, join “financial” concerns, as a concern (major plus minor problem) of more than 50% respondents.

Q4. In general, to what extent do you consider the following factors to be problems or challenges to providing information and services?

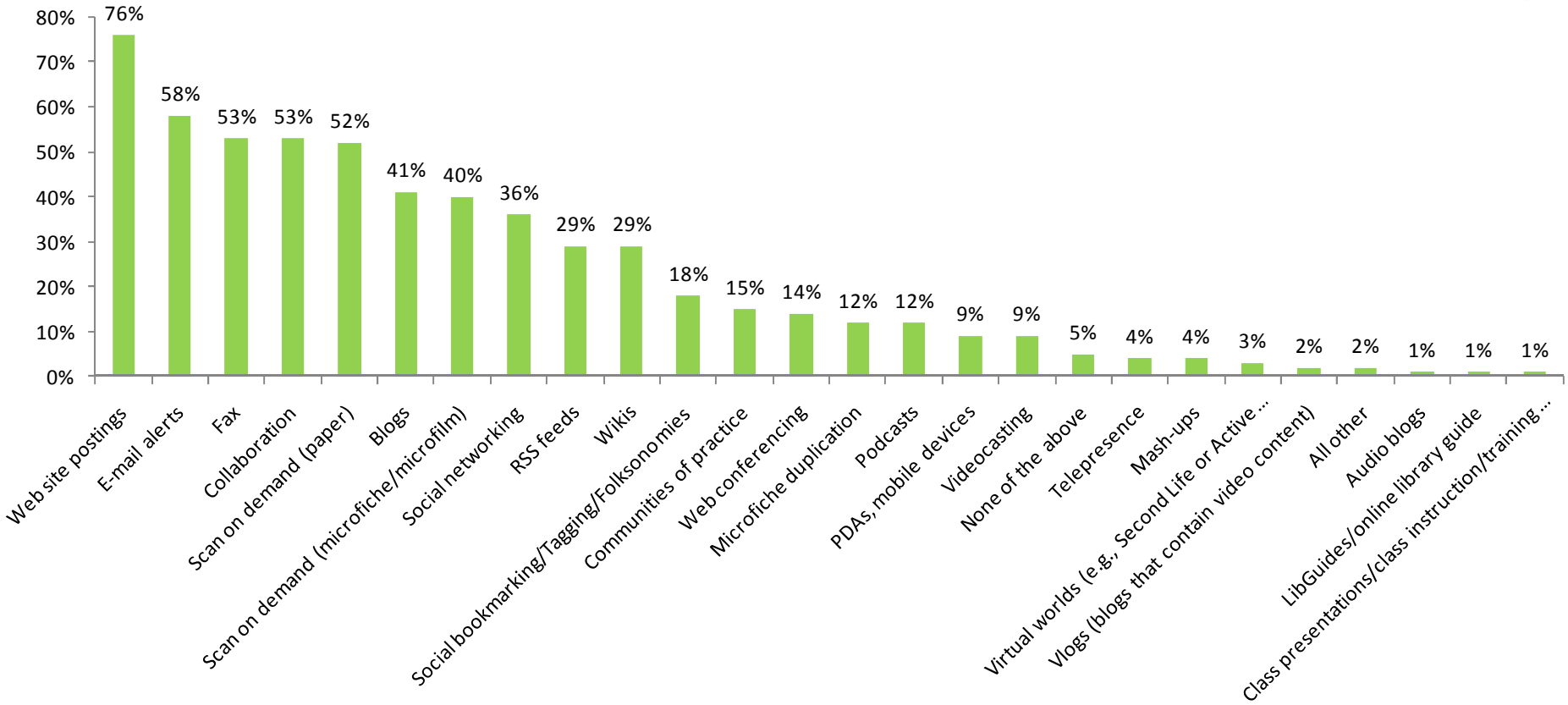
Services and Content Management Activities



Reference desk, Electronic access to documents, Managing a physical library/collection, and Providing training on searching and effective use of information were cited by 90+% respondents

Q5. Please indicate which of the following services and content management activities that you provide to your patrons.

Tools, Methods, and Applications of Managing and Delivering Information



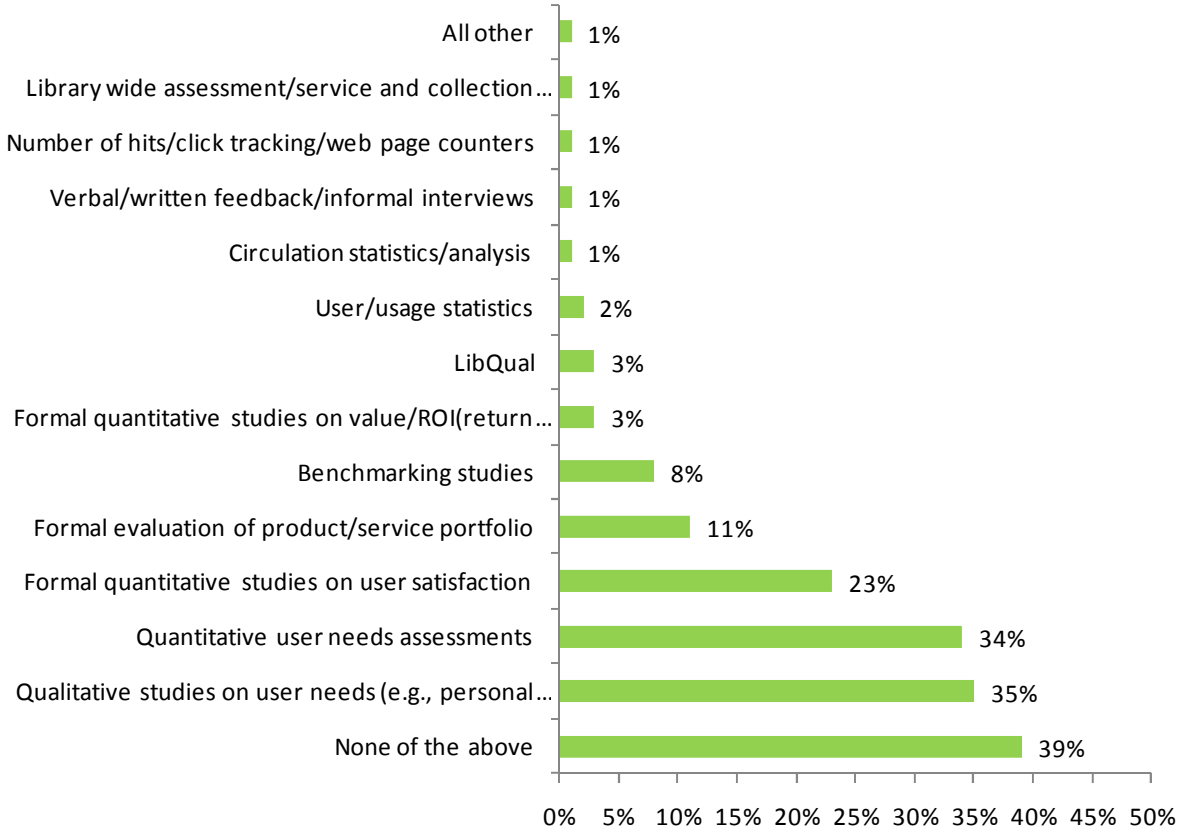
No more than 60% of respondents reported using any one of the suggested tools, methods, or applications of managing and/or delivering information services, with E-mail alerts topping the list at 58%.

Measuring Library Performance | Depository Services

Almost 60% respondents did not measure library performance with regard to depository services and usage.

For those who did measure performance, needs assessments topped the list with user satisfaction studies (quantitative) came second.

No respondents utilized Comment cards/suggestions, Counts statistics, Question tracking, or Curriculum needs/relevance studies.



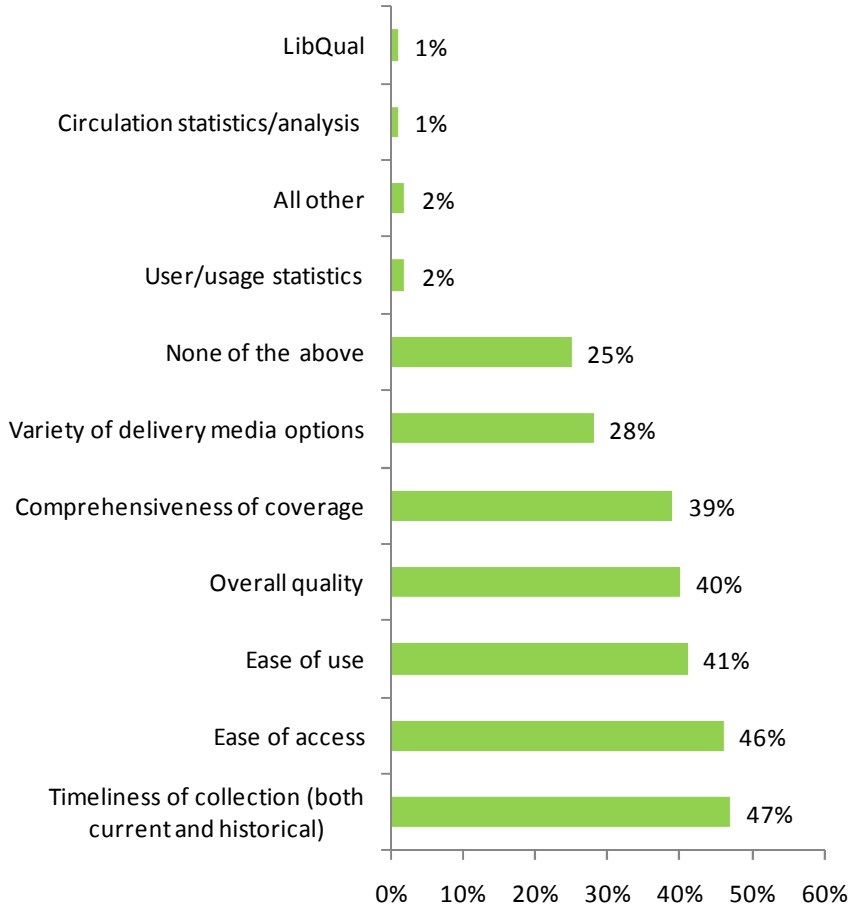
Q7. Which of the following types of studies, if any, do you utilize to measure your library's performance with regard to depository services and usage?

Performance Metrics| Usage of Content Collection

No more than 50% respondents reported measuring any one metric of content collection usage, with Timeliness of collection narrowly leading Ease of Access.

Only 40% cited measuring Overall Quality.

0% respondents reported measuring:
-Curriculum needs/relevance to academic mission
- Check-out/take off counts
-- Verbal/written feedback or informal interviews
- Library wide assessment / service and collection assessment
- Number of hits/click tracking/web page counters

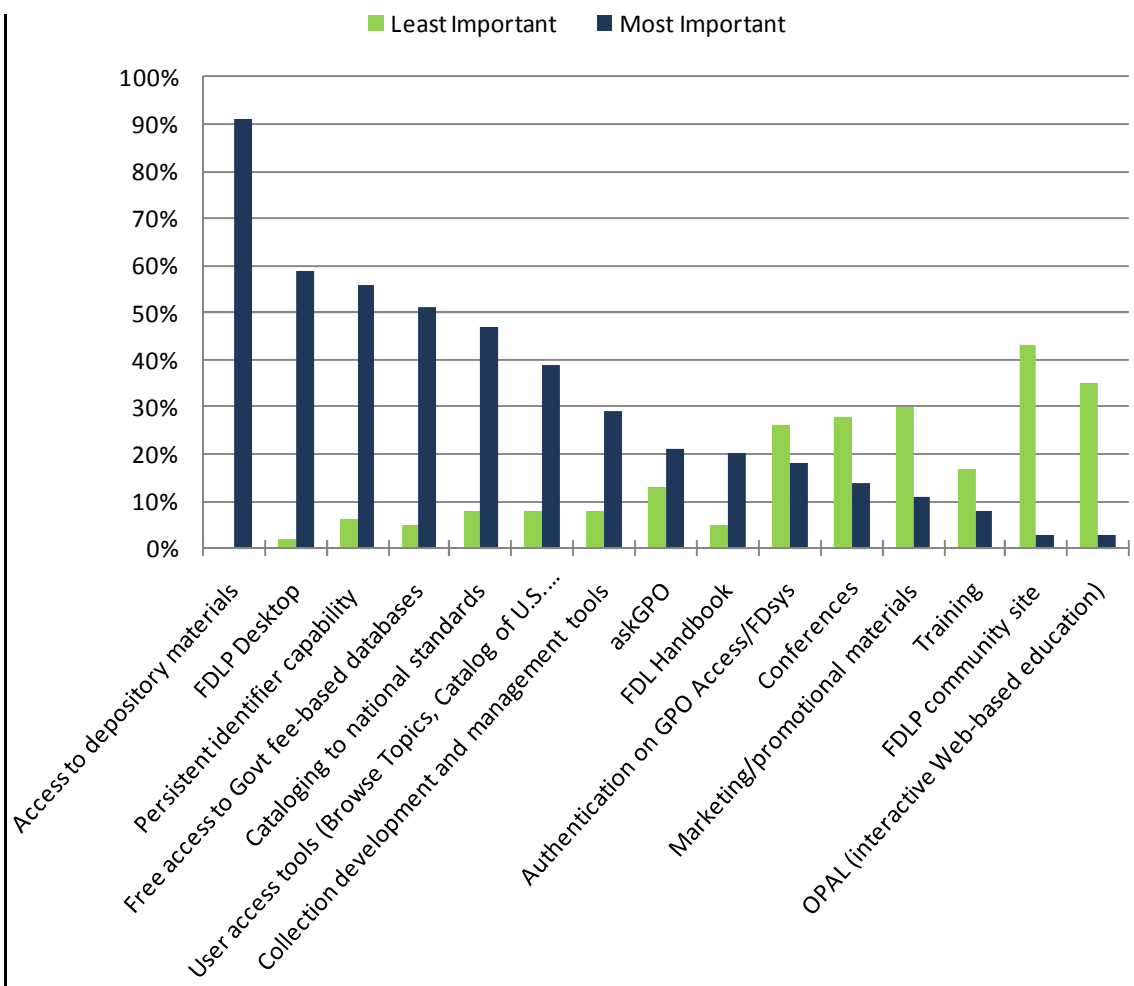


Q8. Which of the following performance metrics, if any, do you measure related to your library's content collection usage?

Importance of FDLP Services (Most Important / Least Important)

Access to depository materials was the most important FDLP service cited. Also cited as most important (50+%):
-FDLP Desktop
- Persistent identifier capability in cataloging records to full text
- Free access to Government fee-based databases

FDLP community sites and interactive Web-based education topped the list of least regarded services.
-Responses were almost directly correlated when asked to rank "most important" or "least important". Some slight variations become apparent in regards to Training and the FDLP Handbook.

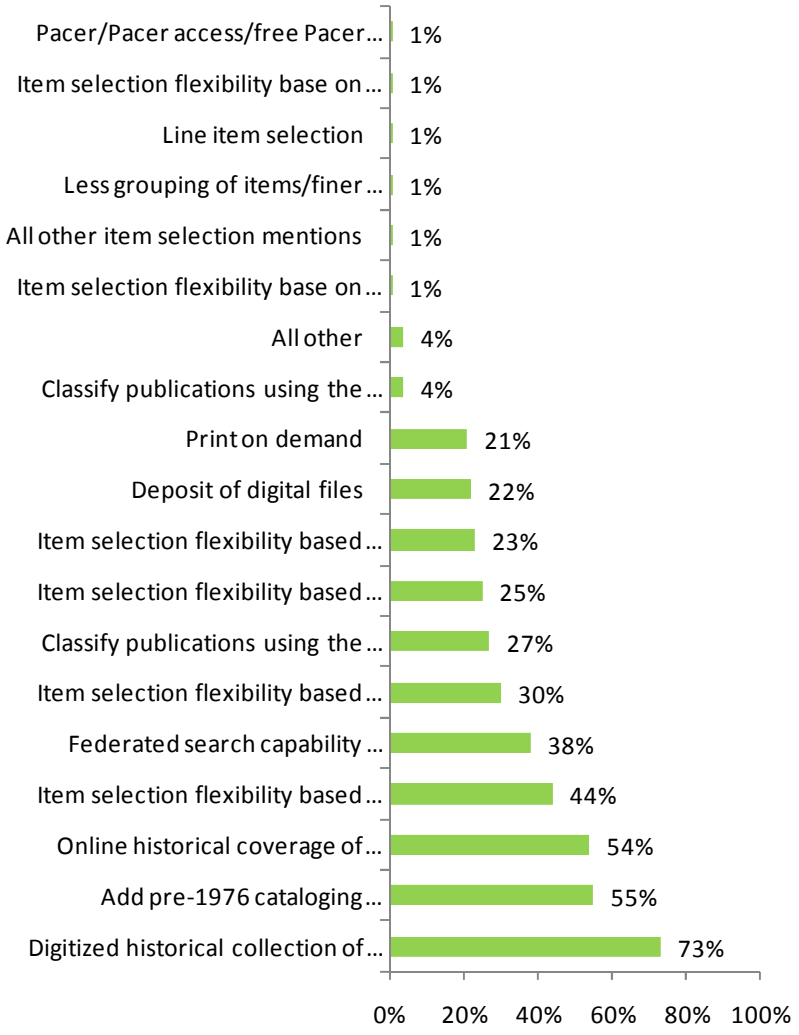


Q9. What are the most important services provided by the FDLP to your library?
Q9a. Now please indicate the least important services provided by the FDLP to your library

Services / Resources Needed but Not Currently Available from FDLP

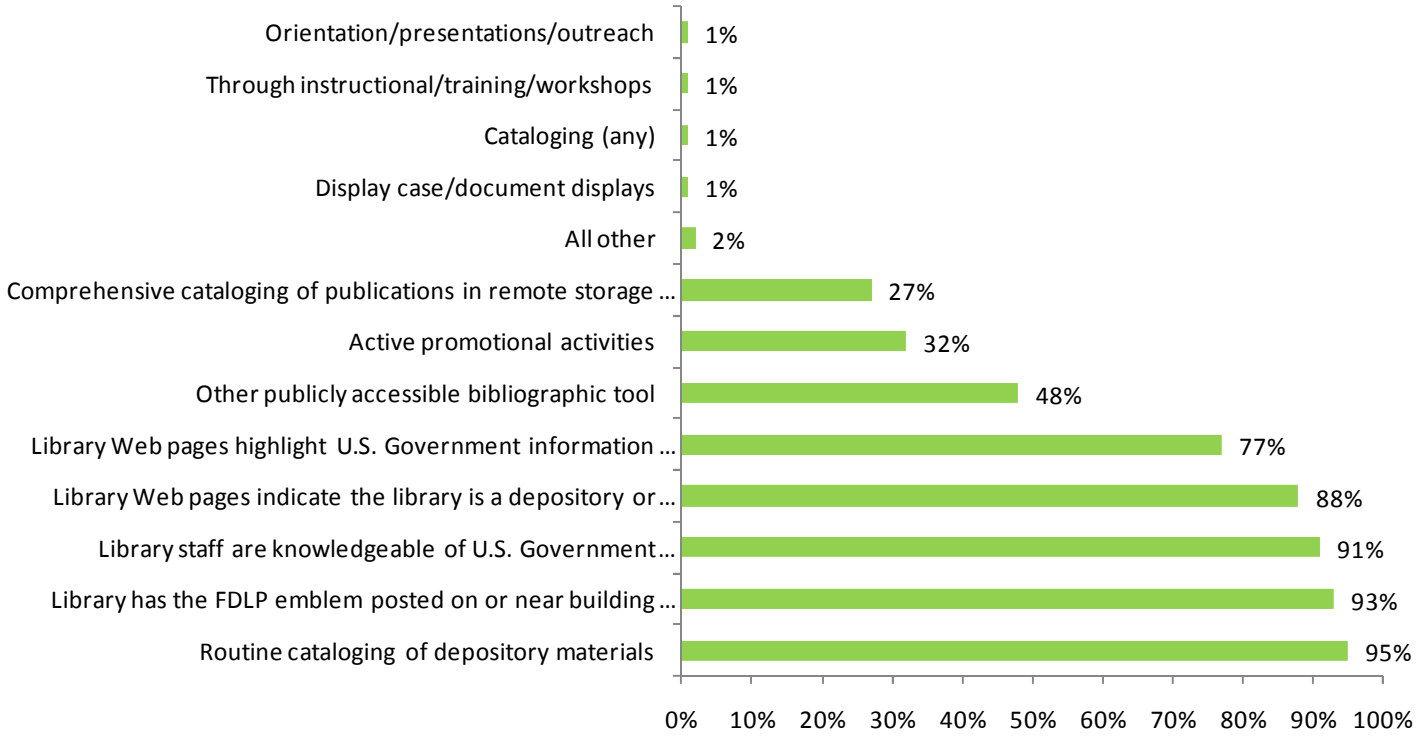
An overwhelming majority of respondents (73%) identified a digitized collection of FDLP historical materials as a desired service/resource not currently available. Adding pre-1976 cataloging records to OCLC came a distant second, followed closely by Online historical coverage of GPO/Fedsys titles.

Federated search was requested by only 38%, and only 22% requested deposit of digital files.



Q10. What services and/or resources do you need from the FDLP that you currently do not have?

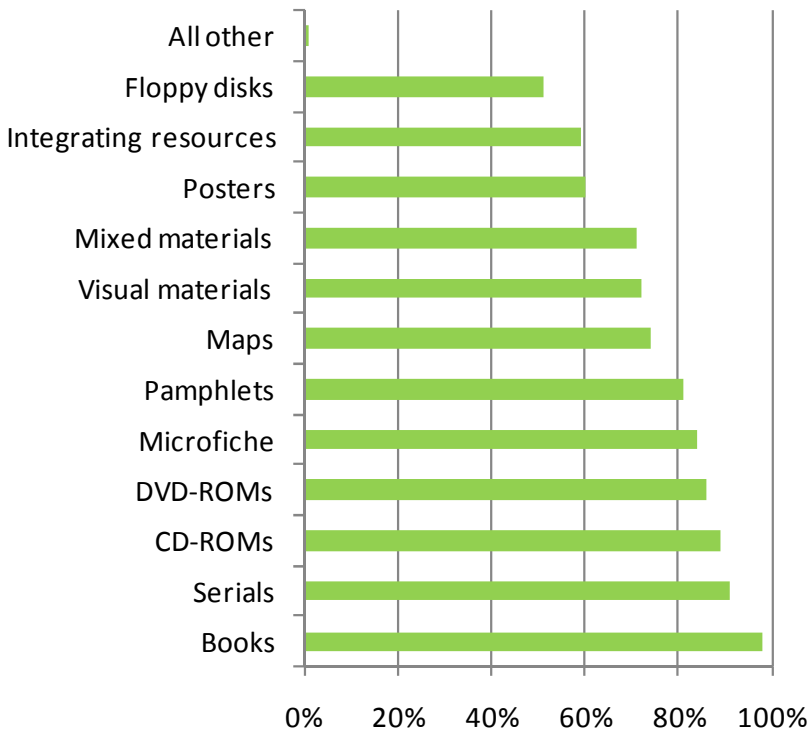
Methods for Making Depository Publications (All Formats) Visible



Q17. How does the library make the depository publications in all formats visible to the public?

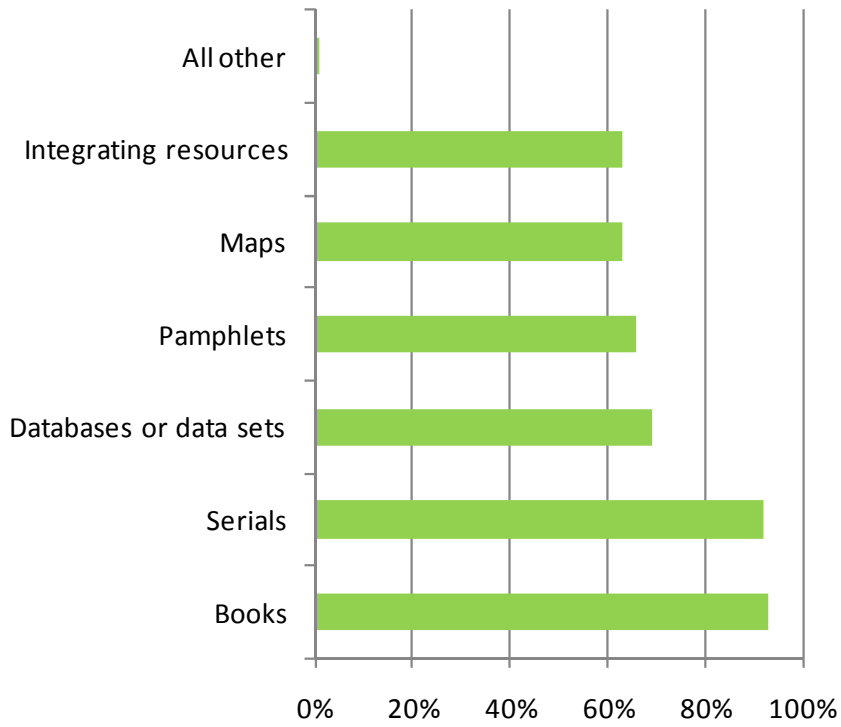
Routine cataloging, display of the FDLP emblem, and knowledgeable library staff were most cited as methods for making all formats of depository publications visible to the public.

Piece Level Records and Cataloging of Online Materials



Libraries identified educational kits/kits as the only materials to not have piece level records available.

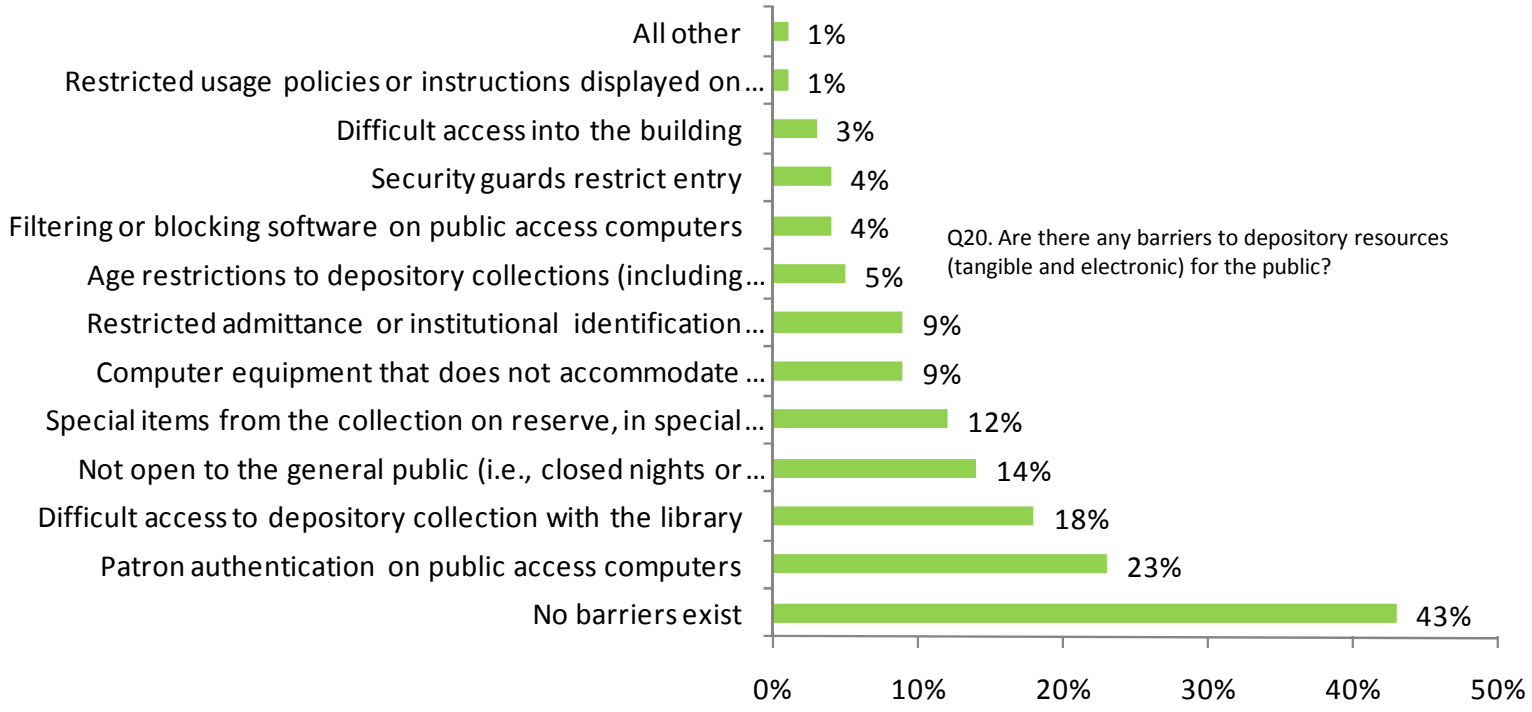
Q18. Please indicate if you provide piece level records for the following types of tangible materials received within the past five years.



Books and serials lead the online materials disseminated by FDLP which are included in library catalogs

Q18a. Do you include records in your catalog for the following types of online materials disseminated through the FDLP?

Barriers to Access



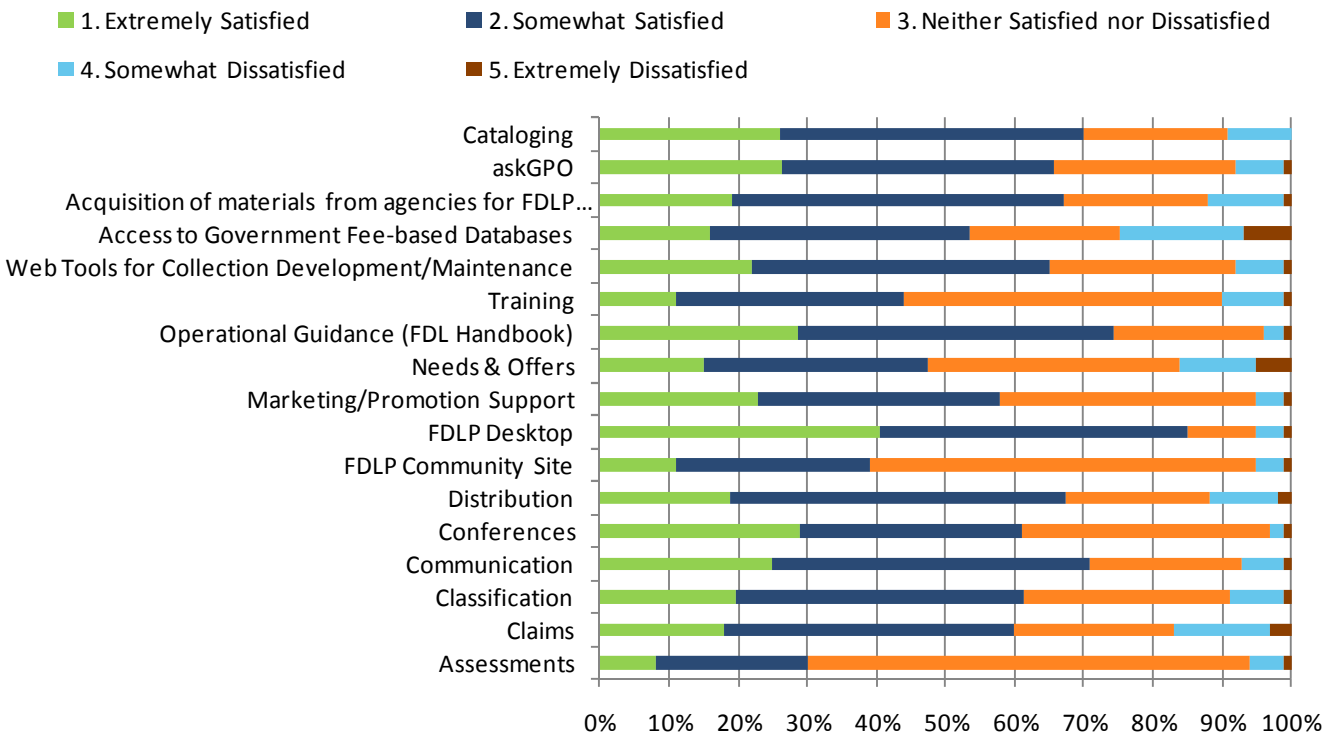
43% respondents reported no barriers for the public to access depository materials (tangible or electronic). Barriers themselves were varied, with Authentication to computers leading the identified concerns.

Barriers to Access – Work Arounds

Respondents identified work-arounds as follows (in descending order):

Difficult Access into Building	Difficult Access to Depository Collection	Computer Equipment Does Not Accommodate People with Disabilities	Patron Authentication on Public Access Computers
• No handicapped door-requires assistance - staff-help desk staff will open doors • Access available with assistance from staff/support service • Parking issues/parking lot doesn't offer flat entry/lack of parking • Backdoor access/enter via loading dock with assistance • Staff will retrieve/pull materials (document delivery) • Plan to have an elevator-handicapped access in near future (in the process) • Access when elevator is repaired/no working elevator	• Staff will retrieve/pull materials (document delivery) • Access available with assistance from staff/support service •Plan to have an elevator-handicapped access in near future (in the process)	• Access available with assistance from staff/support service • Special computer equipment/software available • Guest cards/passes available	• Guest login available • Username & password required (staff will issue-provide) • Staff will log on for patrons • Access available with assistance from staff/support service • Special computer equipment/software available

Satisfaction with FDLP Services



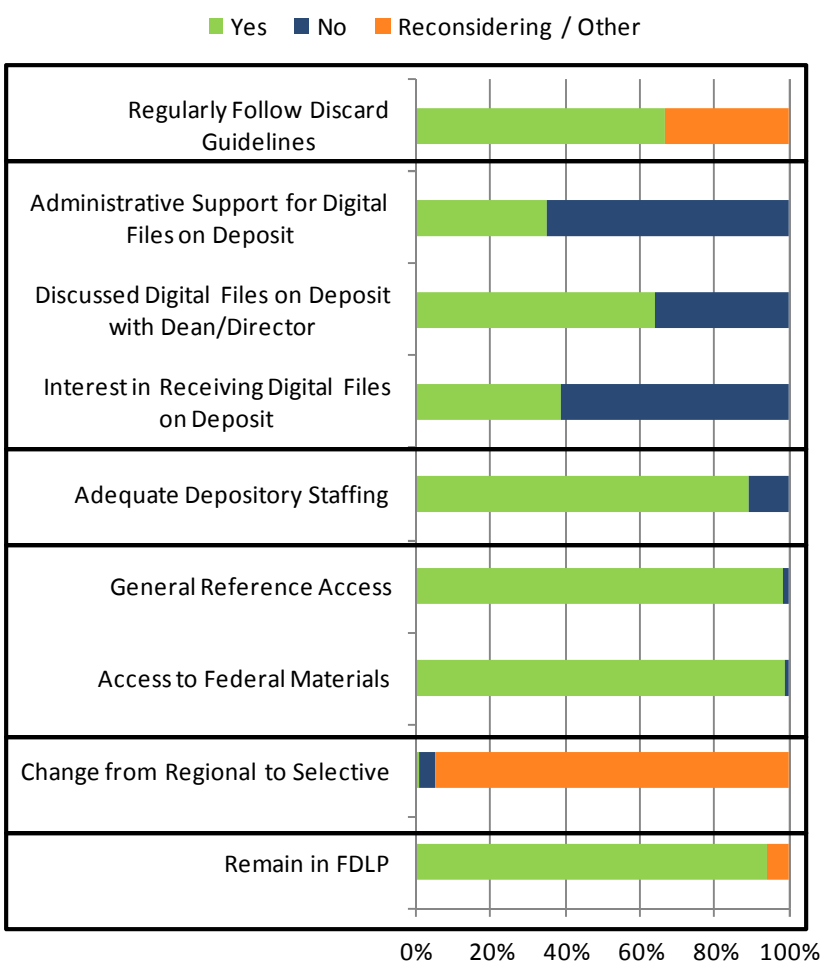
Q11. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with FDLP services?

-More than 60% respondents were pleased (Extremely or Somewhat Satisfied) with FDLP Desktop, the FDL Handbook, Conferences, askGPO, Cataloging, Communication, Web Tools, Classification, Distribution, and Acquisition of Agency Materials.

- Greatest levels of dissatisfaction were related to Access to Government Fee-based Databases and Needs and Offers

Select Characteristics

- **Discards**. Approximately 2/3rd of respondents regularly follow discard policies; the remaining 1/3rd of respondents do follow policies but do not have a regular process.
- **Digital Deposit**. Approaching 40% per cent respondents are interested in receiving digital files on deposit. More than 50% have discussed this interest with Dean/Director, but less than 40% feel they have Administrative Support.
- **Adequate Staffing**. The vast majority of respondents believe staffing levels for depository services are adequate.
- **Access** to Federal materials and general reference services is all but universal.
- **Regional / Selective**. Only 1% respondents indicated consideration of status change. Most respondents (95%) were not regionals, so response was Not Applicable ("Other").
- **Remain in FDLP**. 6% respondents were considering whether to remain with FDLP.



See Survey source questions, following page.

Select Characteristics – Survey Questions

- **Discards**. Q19. Are depository discards regularly processed in conformance with GPO instructions found in the Federal Depository Library Handbook and regional guidelines or state plans, if applicable?

- **Digital Deposit**. Q18a. Please answer the following questions related to receiving deposit digital files of online publications

- **Adequate Staffing**. Q16. Do you find that depository staffing is adequate to fulfill basic depository responsibilities?

- **Access.** Q14. May any member of the general public access and use Federal government information resources in all formats at your library? Q15. Does the library provide reference service for the general public?
-
- **Regional / Selective**. Q12. Does your library plan to remain in the FDLP?

- **Remain in FDLP**. Q12. Does your library plan to remain in the FDLP?

 See questions, following page. Q12, 14, 15,, 18, 19

Q18a. Please answer the following questions related to receiving deposit digital files of online publications

Conclusion – Academic Libraries Segment Analysis

APPENDIX – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

(attached as WORD document)

About Outsell

The information, analysis, and opinions (the "Content") contained herein are based on the qualitative and quantitative research methods of Outsell, Inc. and its staff's extensive professional expertise in the industry. Outsell has used its best efforts and judgment in the compilation and presentation of the Content and to ensure to the best of its ability that the Content is accurate as of the date published. However, the industry information covered by this report is subject to rapid change. Outsell makes no representations or warranties, express or implied, concerning or relating to the accuracy of the Content in this report and Outsell assumes no liability related to claims concerning the Content of this report.

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