

CARL Statistics 2002-2003

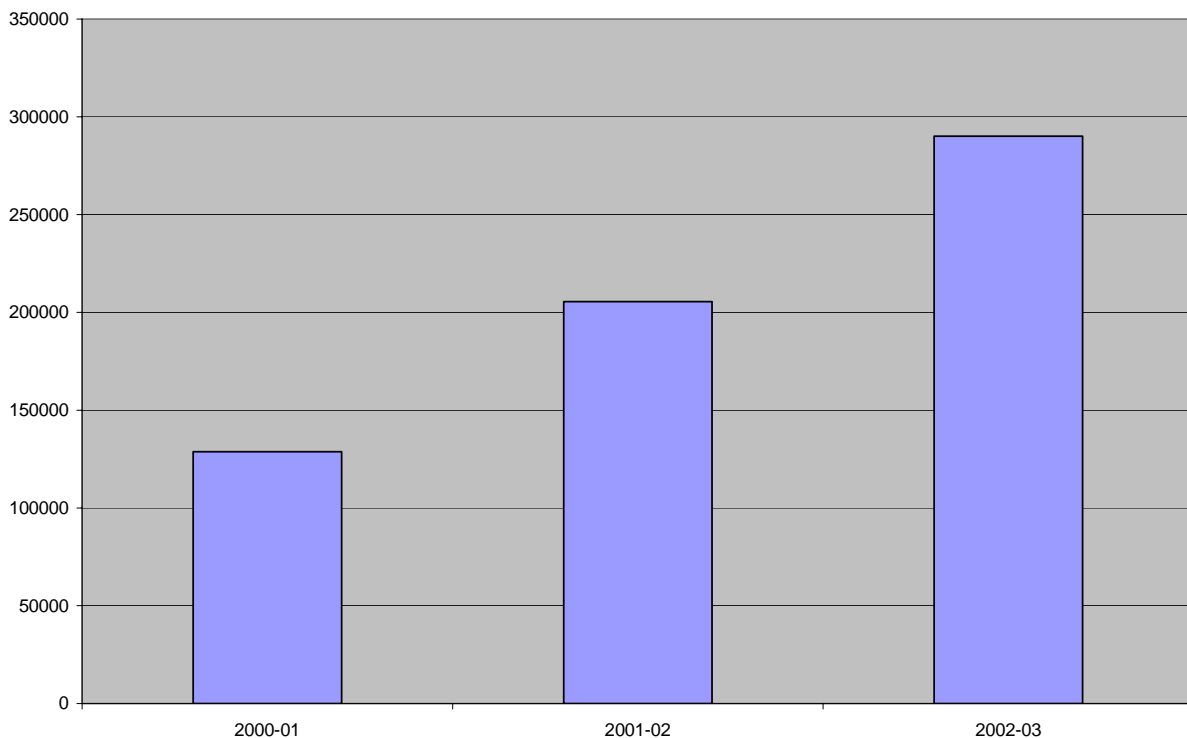
Trends and Observations

Introduction

“The real heroes of the digital revolution in higher education are librarians; they are the people who have seen the farthest, done the most, accepted the hardest challenges, and demonstrated most clearly the benefits of digital information.... It is a testimony to their success that we take their achievement for granted.”¹ This recent endorsement by senior university administrators is a perceptive observation. Indicators of the digital revolution in research libraries can be seen in the annual *CARL Statistics*: rapid expansion of access to electronic journals, more options for document delivery, easier access to data archives, new services.

Expanded access to electronic journals is the most dramatic evidence of the digital revolution in research libraries. The number of electronic serial titles accessible in member libraries rose by 41% from the previous year and more than doubled in two years.

Figure 1: Electronic Serial Titles



¹ Edward L. Ayers and Charles M. Grisham, “Why IT Has Not Paid Off As We Hoped (Yet)” *Educause Review*, vol. 38, no. 6 (November/December 2003):p. 43.

Even this increase does not reveal the deepening availability of online journal backfiles and the enhanced links among online indexes and journals that are expanding the scope and convenience of access to electronic journals. Usage data on the Canadian Research Knowledge Network web site (www.researchknowledge.ca) documents that more intense use of electronic resources is a reality, not just a potential.

In research libraries as in other organizations, planning and outcomes are linked through a chain of expectations--from inputs to activities to outputs to outcomes. The annual *CARL Statistics* provide information about inputs, activities and outputs. This national data, collected over many years, is an important source for monitoring Canadian research libraries, for observing trends and for suggesting issues which need further exploration. Other methods and resources are necessary to document the impact of research library collections and services and of the collaborative arrangements which are creating an effective national resource.

Careful readers of the *CARL Statistics* need to remember that, in spite of attention to corrections and clarity, there are limitations in the data. Definitions may vary, either over time or as interpreted by an individual institution. The reliability and accuracy of data collection and reporting methods may be inconsistent. Every year there are some data elements that are not reported by all libraries. Thus, conclusions or comparisons--whether between institutions or over time-- should be made with caution, with knowledge of context and, preferably, in conjunction with other assessment methods. The footnotes for each table are an important part of the data.

Collections and Access

Describing the dynamic nature of research library responsibilities, a report from the Association of Research Libraries observed that “developments in digital technology, the introduction of the Web and the Internet, and new methods of creating, sharing, and using knowledge have changed dramatically the traditionally understood definitions of library collections and access services. Building collections and creating access to them are no longer achieved just within the walls of the library. Broadly defined, collections and access responsibilities are no longer distinct spheres within research libraries.”² Unfortunately, research library statistics and report traditions tend to separate these “inextricably linked” activities.

Total investment for collections and access rose to \$225.2 million from \$207.6 million, an increase of 8.5% during a period when the Canadian Consumer Price Index rose about 3%. Expenditures for collections and access increased in 23 of the 29 member libraries. Institutional funding received from external sources and expenditures on behalf of institutions by external agencies were nearly 7% of the expenditures for collections and access.

Forty percent, the largest proportion, of collections and access expenditures was for print serial titles. At the same time, there was evidence of the transition to digital information. The amount spent for print serials continued to decrease, from \$97.7 million last year to \$89.6 million this

² ARL Collections & Access Issues Task Force, “Collections & Access for the 21st-Century Scholar: Changing Roles of Research Libraries,” ARL: A Bimonthly Report on Research Library Issues and Actions from ARL, CNI, and SPARC, no.225 (December 2002), <http://www.arl.org/newsletr/225/>.

year. Eight university libraries spent more on electronic serial titles than on print serial titles, whereas in the previous year only one did so. Expenditures attributed to print monographs and electronic serials were each about one-fourth of the total expenditures for collections and access.

Again, total expenditures on print monographs increased from the previous year. Fewer institutions than last year increased expenditures for print monographs. Concordia, however, more than doubled these expenditures. Even as expenditures increased, the total number of print monographs purchased declined slightly from 617,015 to 608,333, ending several years of increases in monograph acquisitions. The variety among CARL member is evident in the number of volumes added at individual institutions: from 16,569 to 362,161 volumes with a median of 41,539 volumes added.

The ratio of “volumes withdrawn” to “volumes added” ranged from 0 to .93 of volumes and .20 was the median. That is, one library withdrew no volumes and another library withdrew .93 volume for each volume added. Information beyond *CARL Statistics* would be necessary to determine whether this difference in practice results from library culture and policy, from the availability of space, from the availability of staff, or for other reasons. The amount of shelving added by the reporting libraries is less than half the amount needed to shelf the net new volumes.

The steady and substantial increase in expenditure for and access to electronic serial titles was described above. McGill spent almost \$2.5 million on electronic monographs, more than all other institutions combined.

Service Trends

Probably reflecting both the variety among CARL members and the turbulence of the transition to digital information, circulation activity again showed a mixed picture. Total circulation was stable; circulation (initial loans) increased in half the libraries and decreased in half. Interestingly, the range is from an increase of 15% to a decrease of 15%. In-house collection showed more consistent, and generally larger, percentage decreases. Overall, in-house use decreased 11%.

The average number of hours per week of reference service offered by CARL university libraries was 95.4, maintaining the gradual increase from 91.7 in 1999-2000. The median hours of service were 94 with a range from 138 to 75.

The total number of reference transactions decreased slightly. However, the general trend is down with decreases in 21 libraries. The decline was masked by a 19% increase representing 85,287 transactions reported by the University of Toronto. Twenty-eight libraries offered asynchronous reference service via e-mail up from 25 the previous year and 14 libraries offered synchronous reference service via Internet chat capability up from eight the previous year.

The total number of participants in library instruction presentations increased by 16.8%. Again, there was great variation among institutions with changes from -25.3% to 235.1%, but the general trend was up. These figures may represent new programs, new modes of delivery, and

new demand or they may reflect altered methods of collecting and reporting data. Information about the outcomes for participants of these presentations must rely on other evaluation methods.

Document Delivery Services

Document delivery policies, practices and activity levels in 2002-2003 were very similar to those in the previous year. Nationally, the number of items sent to other institutions was stable. However, the number of items sent by CISTI (755,746) is greater than the number sent by all other institutions combined. Thus, a continuing decline in the number sent by CISTI masked an increase in the number sent by university libraries.

In spite of the substantial increase in the availability of electronic journals, the number of copies of articles received by libraries has not decreased significantly. Among the possible causes of continuing demand for journal articles are: online indexes and abstracts that make resource discovery easier; document delivery contracts that make resource retrieval easier and at least a decade of journal cancellations,

There was a modest increase in the adoption of technology to support user access and library operations. There has not been an expansion of intra-institutional delivery services.

Data Services

Information is less complete, and less standardized, for data services than for the older surveys. The number of physical files increased by 17% nationally. However, growth rates ranging from -49% to 627% at the 16 reporting libraries reporting may indicate revised counts as much as acquisitions and deaccessions. Unmediated access rose by 33% at the ten libraries which report this information. Like document delivery services, data services are extremely dependent on a sophisticated network of consortia and cooperative agreement to meet the needs of local researchers. Fostering these collaborative arrangements requires financial investment, technical knowledge and political wisdom—none of which are visible in the annual statistics.

Library Staffing

The percentage of the library budget spent on salaries and wages remained stable as the absolute expenditure for salaries and wages increased by 5%. Some of the additional expenditure reflects a 2% increase in the number of library staff, the second year of modest staff growth. Professional staff grew more in both absolute and percentage terms than the other staff categories. Among professional staff, the number of administrative librarians and other professionals remained stable; the increase occurred among non-administrative librarians.

The growth of library staff was much more substantial in the national libraries than in university libraries. The number of staff in the two national libraries increased by 6% whereas the number of staff in the 27 university libraries increased by 1%. During the same period, university enrollment increased by 3%. The number of staff increased or remained the same in 22 of 29 member libraries.

The average years of experience of professional staff in university libraries continues to drop, but there is great variation among regions and institutions. For example, the average years of experience of professional staff in all regions except British Columbia is greater than the national average. In 20 of 27 institutions the change in average number of years experience was less than a year, but in three institutions it was 3 or 4 years. In all three cases the number of professional staff increased or remained which is evidence that the change represents new hires of junior professional staff, not just the result of retirements and attrition.

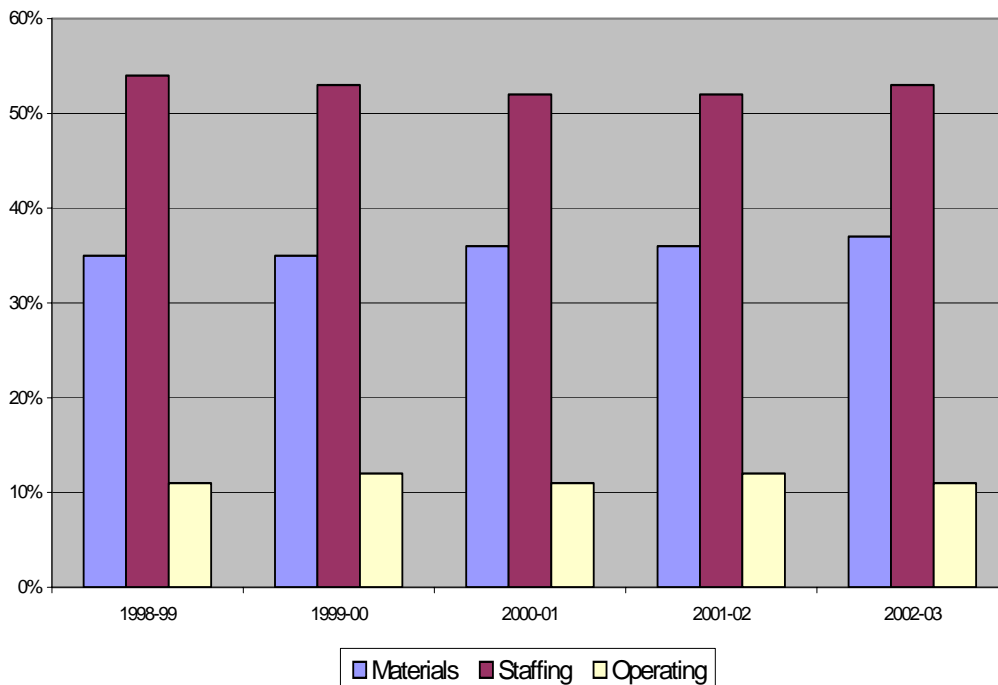
Although the average years of experience dropped, the average professional salary in university libraries was \$68,748 in 2003-2004, up from \$65,592 the previous year. This is an increase of 4%. Ontario had the highest average salary, although the Atlantic region, Quebec, and the Prairie region had higher average years of experience. This is a change from the previous year. Carleton and York continue to report the highest average salaries, although the average salary at Carleton has dropped from \$85,235 to \$82,735. Three institutions report higher average years of experience than Carleton. Western continues to report the lowest average salary and the lowest average years of experience.

Salary distribution tables for professional librarians in university libraries continue to demonstrate the close link between years of experience and salary. Average salaries climb from \$49,293 for those with less than 7 years of professional experience to \$83,479 for those with over 35 years of professional experience. In 2003-2004, there were 316 librarians in university libraries earning more than \$80,000, up from 229 the year before.

Expenditures

Total expenditures in Canadian research libraries increased by 5% over the previous year, about two percent above the CPI for that period. Twenty two of the twenty nine member libraries spent more than in the previous year. Considering the digital information revolution in research libraries, there has been a remarkable consistency in the proportion of expenditures on materials, staffing and operating budget lines in recent years.

Figure 2: Allocation of Resources



Driven by more than a decade of rapid price increases for journal subscriptions, absolute expenditures on library materials have risen faster than the overall library expenditures. As a result, total expenditures on staffing and operating have risen more slowly than overall library expenditures. The leaders and staff in Canadian research libraries have demonstrated creativity and flexibility in their ability to participate in a digital information revolution largely through internal reallocation of library budgets.

Total expenditures in Canadian university libraries increased by just over 3% from the previous year and closely matched the increase in the student enrollment. There is a great variation in expenditure per student at Canadian university libraries, ranging from \$351 to \$1,256 with a median of \$535. No university collects a student access fee to help fund the library budget.

Conclusion

In October 2004, *The Globe and Mail* published a University Report Card <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/generated/realtime/specialReportCard.html> that compiled the opinions of 27,811 undergraduates who were members of the studentawards.com online database. In almost every instance, CARL university libraries received grades of A+, A, A- and B+ from these students. Some of the foundation for these student opinions can be found in the input and output data of the *CARL Statistics* in earlier years.

Ellen Hoffmann
York University Libraries
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