

CARL Statistics 2004-05

Trends and Observations

Introduction

“A man will turn over half a library to make one book.”

Samuel Johnson, 1775

This issue of the annual *CARL Statistics* is the latest in a long line that originated in 1969. During this time Canadian research libraries have undergone radical changes and the annual statistics continue to evolve to reflect these changes.¹ CARL academic library members exist to meet the educational and research needs of their university user communities, while the national institutions have a rather broader mandate. Librarians attempt to meet these needs by building and organizing local collections, providing access to networked resources and delivering a variety of services that are based on these resources. The annual *CARL Statistics* emphasize input measures (expenditures, titles available, collection size, etc.) and quantifiable service outputs (circulation volume, reference questions, seminar attendance, etc.) but as yet make no attempt to measure the effectiveness of library services from a user's perspective. To quote last year's edition of this publication, *“Other methods and resources are necessary to document the impact of research library collections and services and to show the importance of collaborative arrangements for our national information infrastructure.”*² CARL libraries are indeed engaged in a number of such projects to measure library effectiveness such as the LibQUAL+™ project³. This being said, the annual *CARL Statistics* provide the reader with an invaluable longitudinal picture of the main trends in Canadian research libraries and provide standardized comparative data for comparing libraries within and across regions of the country.

As in all compilations of this type, the reader has to be aware of the limitations of the data. While every effort is made to ensure the quality and consistency of the data, there are inherent difficulties in the definition and reporting of some measures. As well, owing to sporadic gaps in reporting and periodic changes to the definitions used, care must be taken in making multi-year comparisons. For further information and clarification the reader should consult the footnotes that accompany the text.

As was reported in last year's publication, Library and Archives Canada was created from the merger of the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada. As these two formerly distinct organizations have gradually integrated their operations some of the statistics reported by the merged organization have changed abruptly. CARL's newest member, the Library of Parliament, is not yet reporting its annual statistics.

¹ See: <http://www.carl-abrc.ca/projects/statistics/statistics-e.html>

² Hoffmann, Ellen. “CARL Statistics 2003-2004. Trends and Observations.” April 2005.

³ <http://www.libqual.org/>

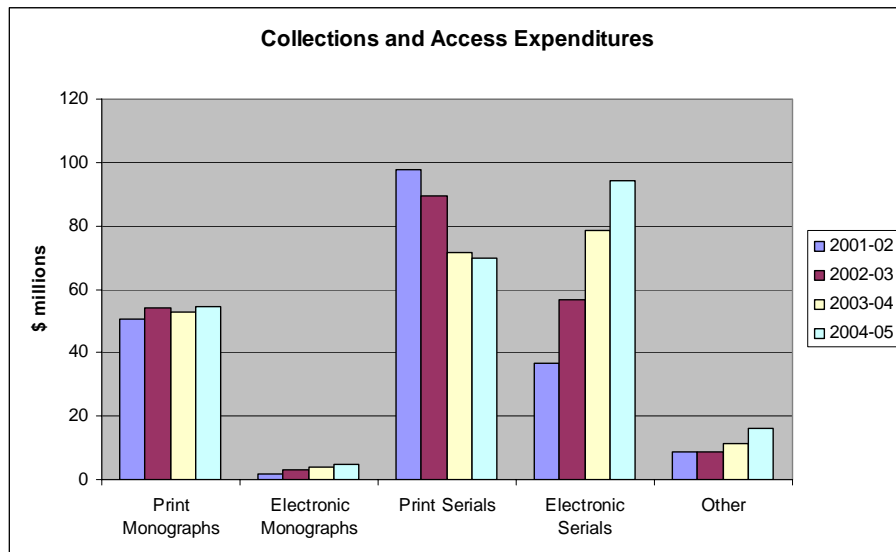
Collections and Access

It is now well accepted that research libraries are in the business both of building local collections and providing networked access to electronic and other resources. Developing collections and providing access are increasingly inter-related activities.

In 2004-05 total investments in collections and access rose to \$242.9 million from \$236.1 million in the year before. This represents an annual increase of 2.9%, only slightly over the increase in the Canadian Consumer Price Index, which rose by 2.4% in the year starting April 2004. Total expenditures rose in all but 6 of the 29 CARL libraries reporting. With the end of the federal and provincial matching funding of the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (formerly the Canadian National Site Licensing Project), funding by external agencies for this major national initiative is now absent. The vast majority of library collections/access expenditures are funded by university operating grants, either institutionally or through a variety of consortial arrangements. External funding, while small for the system as a whole, is significant at a few institutions.

The shift of resources from print to electronic access continues unabated (Fig. 1). Of the 28 CARL members reporting, only 3 continue to spend more on print serials than on electronic serials. These 28 libraries spent a total of \$94.3 million on electronic serials in 2004-05, an increase of 20.2% over the previous year. At the same time total expenditures on print serials dropped to \$69.6 million, a drop of 2.9%. The results of this ongoing shift is evident in the fact that CARL libraries collectively held a total of 290,520 serial titles in print or microform (median 7,648) compared to offering access to 451,520 serial titles in electronic format (median 13,285) in 2004-05. At the same time the total value of serial cancellations held steady at just over \$3 million. Whether the apparent slowing of the decline in print serial expenditures will continue remains to be seen.

Fig.1



Overall expenditures on monographs in all formats were up 4.5% from the previous year to \$59.3 million. The total amount spent to acquire access to electronic monographs, while still small, continues to grow. In 2004-05 24 CARL libraries spent a total of \$4.81 million on electronic monographs. At one library, the University of Toronto, expenditures in this category more than tripled to \$679,323. Unfortunately, reporting on this emerging area of expenditure is not yet consistent from year to year. It also remains to be seen whether the new generation of electronic book readers, such as the one announced by Sony in 2006⁴, will stimulate greater interest in electronic monographs.

Library collections are not static things. New volumes are added and unneeded volumes are discarded or placed in storage on a continuous basis. Overall CARL libraries added 1.52 million total new volumes to their collections in 2004-05 (a median of 36,124) while 0.4 million volumes were withdrawn resulting in a net increase of 1.48 million volumes. Although all but a single library reported withdrawing volumes from their collections, only one library (UQAM) withdrew more volumes than were added. The University of Toronto continues to house the largest research library collection in Canada with 10.3 million volumes, while Library and Archives Canada (LAC) is a close second with 9.0 million volumes. However, LAC grew faster than the University of Toronto, adding 354,808 net total volumes to the collection. The 29 CARL libraries reporting held a total of 81.8 million volumes – an increase of 1.9% over the year.

Even in the age of electronic access, no research library can meet all the needs of its users from resources available on site. The gap is filled by inter-library lending (ILL) and contract document delivery services. There is a gradually declining trend in the number of ILL requests sent out by CARL university libraries and filled on their behalf. For the 26 university libraries (excluding the University of Alberta) this number declined from 549,000 in 2002-03 to 494,000 in 2003-04 and to 488,000 in 2004-05. At the same time contract document delivery numbers also appear to be dropping (though reporting of this category is sporadic). On the other side of the coin, CARL university libraries filled 640,000 requests from other institutions, up slightly from the year before. CISTI, Canada's largest document delivery provider, filled 620,000 requests in 2004-05. This number was down on the previous year's 690,000 and down again from the 760,000 of two years ago.

Services

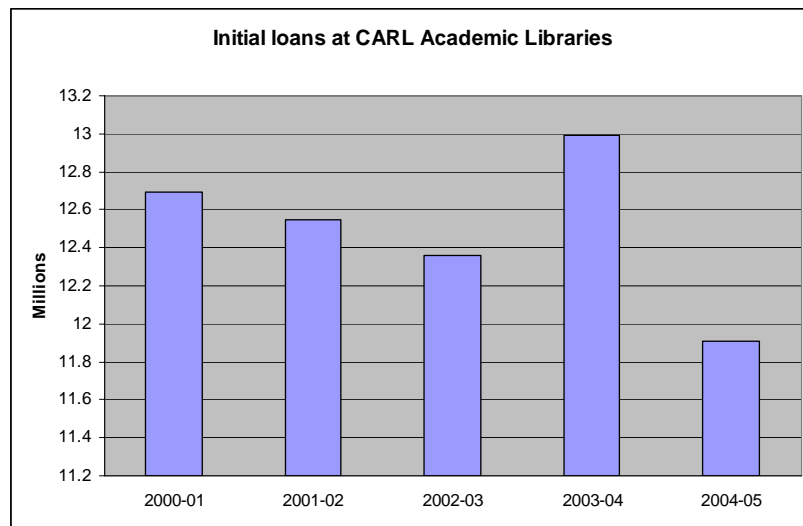
The annual compilation of *CARL Statistics* presents information on some of the more readily quantifiable aspects of the services provided by each institution. They also try to capture information on newly emerging services which may or may not become features of their ongoing activities in the future.

The major indicator of library collection use in academic libraries is circulation. There are always difficulties in comparing circulation data, owing to differing local rules on

⁴ <http://products.sel.sony.com/pa/prs/index.html>

what circulates and for how long. The number of initial loans was down in all but 6 of the 27 CARL university libraries compared to the previous year. Overall these libraries made a total of 11.9 million initial loans in 2004-05 down by 8.3% from the previous year, this despite an apparent ongoing increase in total student enrolment.⁵ While the previous year's volume of initial loans showed an increase of 5%, that increase was less than the increase in student enrolment. The long term trend in circulation volume over the last 5 years appears to be downwards, although there are significant local variations (Fig. 2). As some libraries allow serials to circulate, some of the drop in loans can be attributed to the transition to electronic serial subscriptions, but it is not clear that this is the only factor at work. It will be interesting to see if this trend changes over the next few years with the anticipated increase in graduate student enrolments.

Fig. 2



The trend in the statistics on in-house use (for those libraries that measure such use) is also down from the previous year. Of the 22 academic libraries who track such activity, in-house use is down in 19 libraries, in some cases by a considerable amount. There is no discernable trend in reserve-borrowing statistics.

Turnstile counts are a measure of traffic entering or leaving the library building(s). For the 20 academic libraries reporting such counts in a seemingly consistent manner, total traffic was up slightly from the previous year, from 18.9 million to 19.2 million – an increase perhaps reflecting increasing student numbers.

Another way in which academic libraries serve their user community is by answering users' questions and educating users on effective use of library resources. Reference questions counted at CARL university libraries dropped slightly from the previous year,

⁵ Unfortunately the release of the official national data on student enrolment compiled by Statistics Canada lags at least 2 years behind the publication of the *CARL Statistics* making it difficult to relate changes in use to student numbers with any precision.

from 2.5 million to 2.3 million, a drop of 4.2%. Over the past 5 years this number has oscillated up and down, but in a generally downward direction. Total public service hours and the number of public service points staffed remained approximately the same. The total number of participants in library presentations at CARL universities also dropped slightly in 2004-05 compared to the previous year, from 333,933 to 324,808 – a drop of 2.7%. Given rising student numbers, there is no clear answer to the decline in these service indicators.

A number of emerging service trends continue to unfold. Another library (York) added a “learning commons”, bringing the total to 21 such facilities. Carleton was on the point of increasing this number to 22. The number of academic libraries lending laptop computers has increased from 10 to 11. At the same time, 24 out of 29 CARL libraries have undertaken at least one digitization project – up from 22 the previous year.

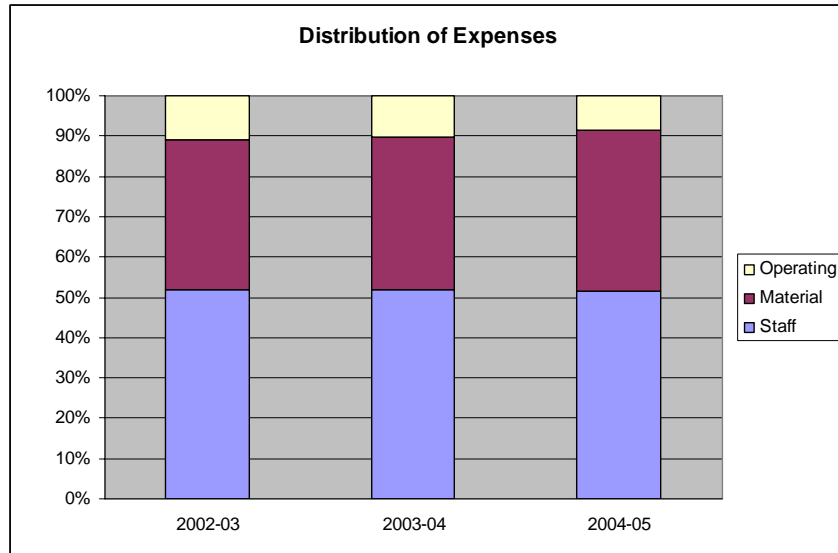
Personnel

The renewal of the professional library cohort continued in 2004-05, but the rate of increase slowed from that of the year before. The number of professional staff stayed the same or increased at 21 of 27 academic libraries. The number of professional staff at LAC showed a massive jump in 2004-05 compared to the year before, presumably because of the amalgamation of the former National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada. Overall the total number of professional librarians increased nationally by only 3 to a total of 1,482.

On the other hand, leaving LAC aside, support staff numbers dropped from 3,523 nationally to 3,482. (Including LAC overall support staff numbers increased due to the inclusion of the Archives.) The downward trend in support staff employment perhaps reflects the ongoing switch to electronic serials and the continuing automation of library processing. Probably for similar reasons, total casual staff employment also dropped from 715 FTE to 673 FTE across the country.

As Fig. 3 demonstrates, personnel costs continue to be the largest expenditure item for CARL libraries. The overall proportion of library expenses devoted to personnel across the country remained fairly constant in 2004-05 at 51.6% of overall expenses. The proportion of expenditures on library materials continued to increase marginally to 39.7%. Other operating expenses meanwhile dropped to 8.7% of total expenditures (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3



The *CARL Statistics* include the annual salary survey of the 27 academic libraries for 2005-06. The median salary for professional library staff continues to increase, growing from \$71,219 to \$72,873, an increase of 2.3% from the previous year and in line with the Canadian Price Index. There continues to be a wide variation in professional salaries with Carleton continuing to top the list with a median salary of \$96,413, while Western Ontario brings up the rear with a median salary of \$56,929. Some of the differences are accounted for by differences in average years of experience, but most of the differences are due to contractual factors. The overall average years of professional experience of CARL librarians is fairly steady at 17.9 (18.1 the previous year), as is the average of years spent in the reporting library at 13.9. The national median salary for non-administrative librarians is \$67,543, while for administrative librarians the national median is \$85,884. York tops the list for the former, while Carleton tops the list for the latter.

Summary

2004-05 was a good year for CARL libraries. As public finances have improved across the country there has been an increased level of transfers to universities both for teaching and research. In Ontario the year marked the year that the “double cohort” passed into second year and student enrolments were generally up across the country. At the same time the Canadian dollar continued to increase in value against the currencies of most major publishing countries. Library materials costs did not increase at the same rates seen in earlier years. Meanwhile general inflation was held at modest levels, reducing pressures on salaries. Against this background, library collections were able to grow, staff renewal was able to take place and the continuing transition to an information-rich electronic environment was able to take place without substantial financial constraints.

The continuing decline in library usage indicators, not all of which can be attributed to the electronic revolution is a cause for concern that should be addressed

In closing it is worth noting that according to the 2005 Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium of 12,800 first year undergraduate students at 28 universities across Canada, of those attending 10 of the larger universities (all CARL members), 87% reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their library facilities. It is also noteworthy that the library is one of the few services that 100% of respondents claimed to have used on their campus.

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Ottawa, May 2006.