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# Continuing Education Survey: ACRL Science and Technology Section

Susan Norrisey

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**CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY  
ACRL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SECTION  
SUSAN NORRISEY, Editor**

In 1996 it was decided to conduct a survey of the continuing education needs of the members of the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) Science and Technology Section (STS). It was the feeling of the STS Continuing Education Committee that data from this survey would be helpful to other STS committees in planning future programs. Findings were also thought to be of interest to other professional and academic organizations offering such programs to science and technology professionals.

As chair of the Continuing Education Committee, I have selected for this article the most pertinent findings from the survey in the hope it will be useful to other organizations of sci-tech librarians.

#### **Survey Instrument**

The survey form presented a list of 24 study topics, as shown in Table 1. These topics were grouped under the following categories: "Subject-based," "Internet/World Wide Web," "Electronic Resources," "Resource Sharing," "Management," and "Professional." STS members were asked to indicate their level of interest in each topic by checking either "0" for "no interest," "1" for "some interest," "2" for "interest," or "3" for "strong interest."

#### **Methodology**

The survey form was distributed to subscribers of STS-L, the Science and Technology Section Listserv discussion

group, twice during spring 1996. A copy of the survey was also included in the spring issue of *STS Signal*, the Science and Technology Section newsletter. Seventy-three completed survey forms were returned. Table 1 shows the topics listed on the survey form. STS members were asked to indicate their level of interest by checking either "0" for no interest, "1" for some interest, "2" for moderate interest, or "3" for strong interest.

#### **Findings**

The responses from the survey can be looked at in various ways. If one looks only at the responses indicating "strong interest," the most popular topics are ranked as shown in Table 2. On the other hand, if one simply adds the number of responses indicating both "strong interest" and those indicating simply "interest," the ranking changes slightly, as shown in Table 3.

In reviewing the results of the survey, committee members were somewhat surprised to see that interest in information on actual science/technology subject areas outranked interest in topics more directly related to librarianship. The topic, "Current issues and developments in science and technology," ranked high above other topics. One possible explanation might be that in many cases, new developments in science and technology will have an immediate affect on our jobs. Another explanation

might be that an interest in science and technology is a primary reason many of us were initially attracted to the field of science and technology librarianship.

Less surprisingly, responses indicated strong interest in "New developments on the Internet." The Internet continues to undergo immense change at a rapid pace. Newspapers and popular magazines are devoting extensive coverage of the Internet due to popular interest. It is no surprise that information professionals would be very interested in these developments that are already changing the way we do our jobs. The topics " Digital libraries and the future of print resources" and "Electronic

journals" also consistently held high rankings using the methods described above for looking at the data.

Committee members were also surprised to see that certain topics such as "Government policies and funding" and "Personnel and staffing issues were of less Interest to the membership." Coverage of some of these topics may best be served by other groups within ALA, such as the Government Documents Round Table or the Library Administration and Management Association, or other professional and academic groups.

**TABLE 1**  
**Study topics listed on survey form**

Subject-based:

Government policies and funding  
Current issues and developments in science and technology  
Subject training (Engineering, etc.)  
Subject reference training  
Communication with scientists and engineers

Internet/World Wide Web:

Internet/WWW access/searching skills & user instruction  
HTML/Authoring Web pages and user instruction  
New developments on the Internet  
Copyright on the WWW

Electronic Resources:

Electronic journals  
Electronic document delivery  
Electronic databases  
Digital libraries and the future of print resources

Resource Sharing:

Consortia  
Cooperative collection development

Management:

Science and technology collection management  
Budgeting and serials  
Marketing the library and services

Statistics as a management tool  
 Personnel or staffing issues  
Professional:  
 Statistics as a research tool  
 Preservation and archiving of science and technology materials  
 Getting published  
 Presentation skills

**TABLE 2.**

**Strong Interest Votes**

Current issues and developments in science and technology . . . . .	46
New developments on the Internet . . . . .	39
Science and technology collection management . . . . .	39
Digital libraries and the future of print resources . . . . .	38
Electronic journals . . . . .	34
Subject reference training . . . . .	33
Electronic databases . . . . .	33
Copyright on the WWW . . . . .	31
Electronic document delivery . . . . .	30
Internet/WWW access/searching skills and user instruction . . . . .	29

**Table 3.**

**Either Interest or Strong Interest Votes**

Current issues and developments in science and technology . . . . .	67
New developments on the Internet . . . . .	66
Digital libraries and the future of print resources . . . . .	65
Electronic journals . . . . .	63
Electronic databases . . . . .	62
Science and technology collection management . . . . .	59
Electronic document delivery . . . . .	57
Subject reference training . . . . .	54
Subject training (Engineering, etc.) . . . . .	53
Communication with scientists and engineers . . . . .	52

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 Members of the committee are:

Patricia Dolan; Susan M. Larson-Makar; Virginia B. MacEwen; Cheryl S. McCoy;  
 Ann C. Paietta; Katherine M. Whitley; Janet E. Young  
 Susan M. Norrisey, Chair  
 Engineering Librarian  
 Texas Tech Library  
 P.O. Box 40002  
 Lubbock, TX 79409-0002  
 Tel: 806/742-2236; Fax: 806/742-0737  
 E-mail: INTERNET:LISMN@ttacs1.ttu.edu