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**SIDEBAR**

**SURVEY DATA FOR SOUTHWEST LIBRARIANS:  
CHANGES IN LAW LIBRARIES FROM 1996 to 2001**

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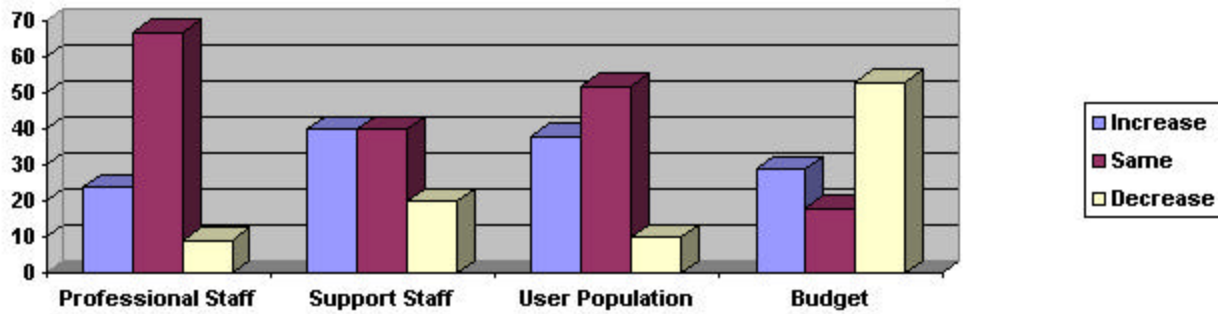
As part of a national research project, librarians answered a survey concerning changes in law libraries over the past five years. The survey inquired whether staffing, budgets, and user populations were increasing, decreasing or staying constant.

While the complete research results will be published in another publication, this is a report of changes within the SWALL region. Twenty-one librarians from Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas answered the survey that was posted to various listservs. Ten of these librarians worked in law firms, three worked in government libraries and eight in academic libraries. While the number of responses received is not a statistically significant sample, the data still yields useful results.

**Changes in Staffing User Population and Budgets**

As shown in Table 1, professional staffing levels remained the same in a majority of the libraries. Forty percent of the librarians reported increased support staff, and forty percent reported the same number of support staff.

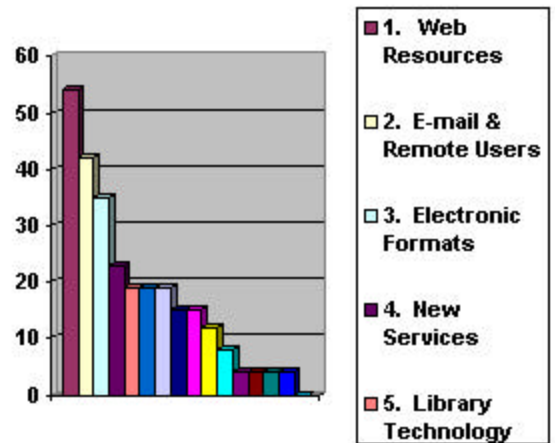
**Table 1: Staffing, User Populations and Budgets**



User populations remained the same in about half of the libraries, and increased in nearly 40% of the libraries. During the same period, a majority of the librarians reported budget decreases. Only ten percent of the respondents said that outsourcing occurred over the past five years.

**Types of Library Activities**

Libraries in the Southwest indicated some increase in user populations, raising the question of whether there has been any change to the types of activities performed by libraries? Nearly half of the librarians said that bibliographic instruction has assumed increased importance over the past five years. Additionally, the survey asked whether the librarians or their co-workers performed certain activities in 1996 and 2001. Most of these activities were recommended by the literature as activities a library should engage in to cope with change. Table 2 indicates the percentage of Southwest librarians who said these activities were being performed in 1996 and 2001.



**Table 2: Performance of Certain Activities Five Years Ago and Today**

Percentage in 1996	Percentage in 2001	Activity Performed
52	100	Answering reference questions using free Internet resources
43	91	Answering reference questions using e-mail
10	19	Answering reference questions live over the Internet
57	71	Answering Reference/research about international law
24	86	Creating a web index of law resources
5	43	Current awareness using push technology software
10	48	Cataloging web pages
33	71	Web page design/maintenance
10	19	Designing user interfaces
24	38	Working with vendors of legal information to create new products to meet user needs
5	29	Purchasing e-books containing legal information
76	81	Marketing library services
67	62	Gathering library performance statistics
19	43	Knowledge management

The data indicate that most Southwest law libraries are now using free Internet resources and e-mail to answer reference questions, while about half did so five years ago. The fastest growing activity over the last five years was cataloging web pages. Other activities, such as purchasing e-books, creating web indexes and using push technology increased dramatically over the past five years. The increase in marketing library services was small, and gathering statistics decreased slightly over the past five years. Most of the libraries surveyed were already engaged in marketing and gathering statistics in 1996.

### **The Top Three Changes in the Law Libraries of the Region**

The last question in the survey was an open-ended question, which asked the librarians to list the top three changes in law libraries over the past five years. The librarians surveyed felt the most important change was the switch to electronic formats, followed by the use of web resources. The third most popular answer was the change in library technology, including new library automation or classroom teaching technology, intranets and more computers for patron use.

Nearly thirty percent of the respondents said that offering new services was among the top three changes. The new services included more teaching, authenticating web resources, e-delivery, knowledge management and more inter-library loan.

**Table 3: Top Three Changes in Law Libraries:  
Percentage of All Southwest Respondents**

<b>Types of Changes in Law Libraries</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents indicating changes</b>
1. Electronic Formats	62%
2. Web Resources	57%
3. Library Technology	38%
4. New Services	29%
5. E-mail & Remote Users	24%
6. Over-reliance of Patrons on Computers	24%
7. Library Organization	14%
8. Growing Collection	10%
9. Ease of Technology	10%
10. Increased Cost of Materials	10%
11. Subject Matter/Question Difficulty	5%
12. Staff Changes	5%
13. Difficulty Keeping up w/ Technology	5%

## **Variance Between Types of Law Library**

Did the answers to the survey vary depending on the type of library setting (academic, law firm or government) in which the librarian worked? [Table 4](#) shows a comparison of staffing, population, budget, outsourcing and bibliographic instruction data for the different types of libraries. Note that the results for the government libraries may not be as accurate, as only three government librarians from the Southwest responded to the survey.

A greater percentage of academic librarians reported increases in staff. The law firms had more decreases in support staff, budget increases and increases in user populations. Outsourcing occurred in some of the law firm libraries, but not in the other types of libraries. The government libraries were more likely to say the budget had decreased. The increase in the importance of bibliographic instruction was greater in the firm libraries and academic libraries than the government libraries.

[Table 5](#) shows the percentage of the different types of libraries involved in certain activities in 1996 and 2001. The data indicate that law firm libraries are currently more involved in push technology, knowledge management, purchasing e-books and working with vendors to create new products. The government libraries were more likely to answer questions live over the Internet and market library services.

The academic libraries are currently more involved in indexing web pages, researching international law, cataloging web pages, designing web pages, designing user interfaces and collecting performance statistics. All the libraries were about the same when it came to the use of free Internet resources and e-mail.

[Table 6](#) shows the percentage of libraries that started performing the activities over the past five years. A greater percentage of the law firm libraries began creating web indexes, using push technology, engaging in knowledge management, working with vendors to create new products and purchasing e-books over the last five years. A larger percentage of academic libraries began cataloging web pages and designing user interfaces over the last five years. The government libraries were more likely to have started using free Internet resources, using e-mail for reference, answering reference questions using Internet chat, marketing library services and designing web pages. None of the libraries started collecting statistics over the past five years, as there was a decrease in this activity.

The librarians from different types of libraries gave somewhat different answers as to the top three changes in law libraries over the past five years. The law firm and government librarians were more likely to mention a change to electronic formats than the academic librarians. The academic librarians were also less likely to mention e-mail/remoter users and a growing collection. They were more likely to mention changes in library organization and the ease of new technology.

None of the government librarians mentioned the use of web resources, which was a popular answer among the other types of libraries. It must be remembered that only three government librarians answered the survey. The government librarians were more likely to mention new services and the increased cost of materials. Over-reliance of patrons on computers was a more popular answer among the law firms. Only the law firm librarians mentioned difficulty keeping up with new technology and changes in subject matter or question difficulty.

## **How Do Southwestern Librarians Compare with the US At Large**

The data concerning Southwest librarians was part of a larger survey of United States librarians. Were there any significant differences in the answers given by Southwest Librarians, compared to the rest of the country? More increases in professional staff, user populations, and budgets were reported across the United States than in the Southwest region. The Southwest librarians were more likely to say that professional staffing and user populations remained the same, while budgets decreased.

The difference in professional staffing may be partially explained by the greater amount of law firms in the Southwest survey. Law firms nationwide reported less of an increase in professional staff. However, Southwest libraries of all different types reported less increases in professional staff than nationwide. The differences in user population and budgets are not explained by the fact that a lower percentage of Southwest government librarians responded to the survey, and a higher percentage of Southwest law firm librarians responded. Nationwide, more government libraries reported decreasing populations and budgets, while more law firm libraries reported increasing populations and budgets.

There were some differences in the activities performed five years ago and today between the Southwest and national results. More Southwest law libraries reported creating web indexes and using push technology than libraries nationwide. Nationwide, push technology was more common in law firms, and web indexing was more common in academic libraries. So, these results could be because of the low number of responses from Southwest government libraries. A lower percentage of Southwest librarians said that they designed user interfaces, worked with vendors to create new products and engaged in knowledge management. These lower percentages cannot be explained by the different mix of types of libraries in the Southwest results.

The librarians' top three changes over the past five years were somewhat different among the Southwest librarians and librarians nationwide. When listing the top three changes, the Southwest librarians were more likely to include the following: a switch to electronic formats and over-reliance of patrons on computers. They were less likely to cite changes in staff as among the top three changes.

The percentage of Southwest academic librarians who felt that the importance of bibliographic instruction had increased was lower than the percentage nationwide. More Southwest academic librarians felt the importance of bibliographic instruction had decreased compared to librarians nationwide. More academic librarians in this region said they currently indexed web pages and marketed library services compared to academic libraries across the country. Compared to other United States academic libraries, the Southwest academic libraries are currently less involved in gathering performance statistics. Additionally, the region's academic librarians were more likely to list the ease of new technology as a top three change.

The Southwest law firm librarians also reported more web indexing than law firm libraries nationwide. Fewer Southwest law firm libraries currently purchased e-books, engaged in knowledge management and marketed library services than law firm libraries across the country. The Southwest law firm librarians were more likely to list

changes in library technology among the top three changes, compared to firm libraries nationwide.

As few Southwest government librarians responded from the Southwest region, it is difficult to compare them to similar librarians in other regions. One difference that stuck out was the considerably lower percentage of government libraries in the Southwest engaged in collecting performance statistics. None of the Southwest government librarians mentioned use of web resources as a top three change, while half of librarians nationwide did so. The Southwest government librarians did not mention new types of users, a popular answer among government libraries nationwide. Southwest government libraries were more likely to mention new library services as a top three change.

### **Summary**

In summary, the majority of law libraries in the Southwest have had the same or increased staffing, budgets and user populations. More of the librarians nationwide reported increased staffing, budgets and user population than the librarians in the Southwest region. Similar to other U.S. law libraries, many Southwest law libraries started doing activities or adopting technologies recommended by the literature over the past five years. Gathering performance statistics has decreased slightly over the past five years. In libraries across the country, a small percentage increase in gathering performance statistics occurred. The Southwest librarians felt the top change in law libraries over the past five years was the switch to electronic formats,

closely followed by the use of web resources. Other popular answers were changing library technology and offering new services. Nationwide, the use of web resources was a more common answer than the switch to electronic formats. Otherwise, the results for the top changes were similar.

Librarians from different library settings gave somewhat different answers. More academic libraries reported staff increases. More law firm libraries reported budget increases and increases in users populations, but also reported more outsourcing and decreases in support staff. The different types of libraries had different involvement in the various technologies and activities. They also had somewhat different answers as to the top three changes in law libraries over the past five years.

## Appendix

**Table 4: Staffing, Users, Budget, Outsourcing and Bibliographic Instruction in Different Types of Libraries**

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		PROFESSIONAL STAFF	SUPPORT STAFF	USER POPULATION	BUDGET	BIB. INSTRUCTION	OUT-SOURCING
<b>ACADEMIC</b>	%I	38	50	25	20	50	0%y
	%S	50	38	63	20	25	
	%D	12	12	12	60	25	100%n
<b>FIRM</b>	%I	20	30	50	40	50	20%y
	%S	70	40	50	20	30	
	%D	10	30	0	40	20	80%n
<b>GOV</b>	%I	0	50	33	0	33	0%y
	%S	100	50	33	0	67	
	%D	0	0	33	100	0	100%n
<b>ALL</b>	%I	24	40	38	29	48	10%y
	%S	66	40	52	18	33	
	%D	10	20	10	53	19	90%n

I=Increased S=Same D=Decreased

**Table 5: Percentages of Libraries Engaged in Certain Activities in 1996 and 2001**

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	<b>Percentage: Academic</b>	<b>Percentage: Law Firm</b>	<b>Percentage: Government</b>
<b>Free 96</b>	50	60	33
<b>Free 01</b>	100	100	100
<b>Email 96</b>	38	50	33
<b>Email 01</b>	88	90	100
<b>Live 96</b>	0	20	0
<b>Live 01</b>	13	20	33
<b>Index 96</b>	38	10	33
<b>Index 01</b>	100	80	67
<b>Intl 96</b>	75	50	33
<b>Intl 01</b>	88	60	67
<b>Push 96</b>	0	0	33
<b>Push 01</b>	38	50	33
<b>Catweb 96</b>	25	0	0
<b>Catweb 01</b>	75	30	33

**Table 5 (cont.): Percentages of Libraries Engaged in Certain Activities in 1996 and 2001**

<b>Design 96</b>	63	20	0
<b>Design 01</b>	88	60	67
<b>Face 96</b>	13	0	33
<b>Face 01</b>	38	0	33
<b>Vendor 96</b>	13	30	33
<b>Vendor 01</b>	25	50	33
<b>Ebook 96</b>	13	0	0
<b>Ebook 01</b>	25	40	0
<b>Market 96</b>	88	70	67
<b>Market 01</b>	88	70	100
<b>Stat 96</b>	88	50	67
<b>Stat 01</b>	75	50	33
<b>Know 96</b>	13	20	33
<b>Know 01</b>	38	50	33

**Table 6: Percent of Libraries which Performed Activity in 2001, but not in 1996**

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	Percentage of all Cases (%)	Percentage of Academic (%)	Percentage of Firms (%)	Percentage of Gov't Libraries (%)
Free	48	50	40	67
E-mail	48	50	40	67
Live	10	13	0	33
Intl	14	13	10	33
Index	67	63	80	33
Push	38	38	50	0
Catweb	38	50	30	33
Design	38	25	40	67
Face	10	25	0	0
Vendor	14	13	20	0
Ebook	24	13	40	0
Market	5	0	0	33
Stats	0	0	0	0
Know	24	25	30	0

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