

Library Services as Revenue Generators  
(2/2005)

The question I posted to this list:

- In your county or public law library, are services such as document delivery, memberships, conference room rentals and other fee-services viewed more as an additional service or, more as a source of revenue?
- do any institutions get a big revenue boost out of the fees charged for various services?
- does anyone charge for access to their electronic resources or databases above and beyond the printing charges?

I heard from 26 different libraries from Alaska, Hawaii and across the continental USA. The following is a summary of your responses.

The consensus is that services such as document delivery, membership, conference room rentals are services and not sources of revenue. In several instances, county/court policy permits cost recovery only, no mark-up.

Typical charges: photocopying, faxing (sending and receiving), computer printouts, sale of floppy discs, scan-on-demand, notary services, document delivery, overdue fines. Libraries view charges for these services as cost recovery. One library termed these charges "convenience items." Examples of charges: self-serve copying charges range from .10 to .25; fax (send) charges were in the \$1.00/page to \$2.00/page range.

Revenue from charges for copying, faxing and other services is welcome but is often a minor supplement. On the plus-side, one library pointed out that the copy charges belong to the library and cannot be taken away by another department.

Court filing fees are the major source of revenue for county law libraries.

Some institutions charge a fee for conference/meeting room rental. Some libraries sell discarded/deleted books.

Several institutions have membership fees or subscriber fees. Membership/subscriber fees give borrowing privileges to members. Libraries with members will often charge members a lower fee than non-members for copies and faxes.

Institutions do not charge for access to electronic resources but do charge for printing from in-house computers. When indicated, the cost of computer printouts was often more than the cost of self-serve copying.

Thanks again,

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