



To: Metropolitan Libraries Section of IFLA

From: Elizabeth Glass, Manager Planning and Development, Toronto Public Library

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Subject: 2007 Metropolitan Libraries Section Statistics

CC: Standing Committee Members: Chair: Ms Liv Saeteren
Secretary/Treasurer: Tay Ai Cheng, Information Coordinator:
Vicki McDonald, Sharon Kien San THIEN

Purpose

To present the 2007 statistics of the Metropolitan Libraries Sections' Annual Survey of Libraries.

Background

The Metropolitan Libraries Section of IFLA (formerly INTAMEL) for many years has regularly undertaken the collection of members' statistics. Libraries of all kinds are looking at how well they serve their users. Public libraries are no exception. This data has proved to be a very valuable tool for the members as a measure of cost effectiveness, transparency and accountability. It also serves as a comparative benchmarking tool and reflects the changing role of libraries. The survey is based on the International Standard ISO 2789:2003.

In 2004, Toronto Public Library assumed the responsibility for the compilation of data from the Hannover Public Library.

Process

In the fall of 2008, Toronto Public Library reviewed all the requested changes for the 2007 survey and proceeded with changes to the following survey questions:

- Section E: Use and Users: Added age groups of **16c. Child (0-14), and 16d. Adults (15-64) and 16e. Older Adults (65 and over)**. This is an optional question because not all libraries distinguish age groups in their collection of statistics.
- To the survey questions **18. On-site Loans, 20. Information Requests, and 21. Visits**, the survey questions were further clarified with the insertion of the definition of “*Grossing up methodology*” as recommended by ISO/DIS 2789.

Report of Survey Findings

Twenty-five library systems participated in the annual survey. This is a significant drop from the 2006 survey participation rate which enjoyed an increase from 2005. Reasons for the drop of submissions could include external circumstances of reduced funding and labour disruptions. Attached is a draft of the compiled results of the 2007 data. For analysis purposes, library systems have been organized by the size of the population they serve within three categories:

- 1,000,000 population and over (11 library systems, down from 13 in 2006)
- 500,000 to 999,999 (9 library systems, down from 16 in 2006)
- 250,000 to 499,999 (5 library systems, down from 10 in 2006)

Keeping in mind that the same libraries do not participate each year, general overall trends are:

- Circulation decreased slightly;
- Library visits increased slightly;
- Electronic holdings increased by 6 times.

An increase in visits reflects the Library’s goal of being accessible for all, socially inclusive and the importance of the Library as a physical space. The large increase in electronic collections is an example of libraries responding to the customers’ need for 24/7 accessibility.

Next Steps

In the spring of 2008, Toronto Public Library’s request for funding to automate the administration of the IFLA Metropolitan Libraries Section of the Annual Survey of Statistics was delayed. Toronto Public Library on behalf of the Advisory Group, is resubmitting the request to clarify the Committee Members’ concerns and provide additional information.

Due to the drop in participation rates from the 2006 survey year to the 2007 survey year, Toronto Public Library feels it would be in the Committee Members’ interest to have the

survey automated. The proposal for a web-based data collection system which Toronto Public Library has put forward would be designed with a user-friendly format in mind. Respondents will be able to collect data and generate summary tables of information which is meaningful to their library and their community. The benchmarking capabilities of an online survey tool will allow members libraries to compare service and performance with other libraries and use this information for library advocacy.

Conclusion

Libraries conduct surveys to gain greater understanding of services offered by libraries and how their services compare. There is an increasing demand for accountability, transparency and efficiency and surveys assist libraries in benchmarking their services against relative comparators. In its role as survey administrator, Toronto Public Library is committed to working with the Standing Committee members to:

- Ensure the survey reflects the expanding and changing role of metropolitan libraries
- Improving usability and currency of the survey instrument
- Increasing the number of participating libraries.