2010 OLTN ASSESSMENT SURVEY

10/20/2010

Report, results and appendix

2010 OLTN Assessment Survey

INTRODUCTION

In order to get a better understanding of Oklahoma libraries' technology and digital needs, the OLTN committee released an assessment survey. The survey was open to academic, municipal public, public systems, school and special libraries. The survey ran for three weeks, from September 9th, 2010 to October 1st, 2010. 154 libraries responded. Of that, 48.1% were school libraries. The next biggest responder was public libraries. Though this is a smaller sample than the last survey, from 2007, the percents are almost the same.

The survey consisted of 15 questions designed to assess the libraries impression, use and future needs for electronic resources. Oklahoma Digital Prairie Databases are the databases provided by the Oklahoma Department of Libraries (ODL) funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Digital Prairie is available to all Oklahoma libraries.

The survey's goal was to get a sense of what libraries need in order to increase Digital Prairie Databases usage. The resources in Digital Prairie Databases offer Oklahomans a chance to become information literate, as well as, the chance to access materials that are otherwise unavailable. The libraries serve as a gateway to these databases and their opinions are invaluable to making important decisions.

RESULTS

- **Question 1: Please tell us the type of library organization for whom you are completing this survey.**

  The largest group of responders was school libraries, making up almost half of the total respondents. Public libraries followed with 33%. Academic libraries accounted for 16.2% of responses.

- **Question 2: Please indicate how often the current Digital Prairie resources shown below are used in your library. Base your answer on the combined use by both staff and the patrons.**

  Respondents overwhelmingly, 44.7%, chose EBSCO as the database that is used daily. Books-in-Print was used least with 25.9% not using it at all.

- **Question 3: Please indicate how important each of the Digital Prairie resources is to your library.**

  EBSCO was chosen as the most important by 67.8% of respondents.

- **Question 4: Please indicate your participation in training related to the Digital Prairie services shown below.**

  The average responder had not been trained on any database in over three years.

■ Question 5: What types of training sessions has your library offered its customers on Digital Prairie resources?

Of all the databases, the libraries train most often on EBSCO. They train one on one at the computer with patrons and students. On the other three databases, little or no training was offered to customers.

■ Question 6: To what groups has your library offered training on Digital Prairie resources?

Students are most offered training on EBSCO and SIRS Discoverer. Library staffs are offered training on all the databases, focusing slightly more on Books in Print and World Cat. Faculties are most often training on EBSCO.

■ Question 7: For each Digital Prairie resource shown below, please indicate the ONE type of training that would be MOST useful to you if the training were provided by a trainer from the ODL staff.

Respondents would like hands-on training in the lab.

■ Question 8: Please indicate what level of training you need for each Digital Prairie resource.

Basic training was most requested for WorldCat. Intermediate training is needed for Books in Print. Advanced training was requested for EBSCO and, to a lesser degree, SIRS.

■ Question 9: Presented below are types of resources that the Oklahoma Department of Libraries may consider for inclusion in Digital Prairie if additional funding becomes available.

Libraries are interested in audiobooks, online encyclopedias, homework help and newspapers.

■ Question 10: Please provide any suggestions for a SPECIFIC online service, product or database you would like to see considered from the categories shown in question #9.

Among the most listed databases were: Mango Languages, Auto Repair Center, Heritage Quest, WorldBook Encyclopedia, Encyclopedia Britannica, Discovery Streaming, Novelist, ACT/SAT testing, Learning Express and Gale Literature databases.

■ Question 11: Please indicate whether your library would be willing to discontinue any of the following products in order to add the product(s) or service(s) you mentioned in Question #10.

51.2% would be willing to discontinue Books in Print. Almost all libraries would be unwilling to discontinue EBSCO.

■ Question 12: What would help your library the MOST in promoting Digital Prairie resources to your library customers?

Among the most listed responses were: posters, bookmarks, customizable printables and powerpoints, videos, and linkable presentations.

■ Question 13: Please indicate whether your library currently offers any of the services shown below.

Most libraries offer wi-fi, an online catalog and have a website. Very few offer podcasting, a twitter stream, a blog, a facebook page or digitized collections.

- **Question 14: How often do you use each of the following Internet-based resources to receive information?**

Most respondents use email as the main form of communication. Twitter is rarely used but other social networking resources like facebook, blogs, and wikis are used occasionally.

- **Question 15: Please provide any additional comments about Digital Prairie and its offerings you wish to make.**

The majority of respondents felt grateful for Digital Prairie's services, though some frustration was expressed with the selection of databases and the complicated sign up process.

EVALUATION

With nearly half of the responses coming from school libraries, it is reasonable to conclude that the survey reflects the schools' needs the most. However, both public and academic libraries responded in the open-ended questions and their main concerns were the same as the schools. Theses primary concerns are training and promoting the databases.

Of the databases, EBSCO is clearly the most valuable. In each comparative question, respondents selected EBSCO as the database they use most often and the one they feel most comfortable with. Books in Print and SIRS appear to be the least valuable with more respondents willing to drop Books in Print in favor of a different service. This is a big change from three years ago, when less than half of respondents were willing to drop any database in favor of another service. As for other services, even with the bias toward school needs, audiobooks and online encyclopedias were the most requested. Though it was not reflected in the statistics, in the open-ended questions, genealogy, foreign language and auto repair were often mentioned as desired categories for future databases.

Libraries are in need of training on all databases. Most respondents indicated a need for advanced training, though this is a subjective measurement. Libraries seem very interested in training such as Train the Trainer to take back to their library and provide better training to their customers. They would also like direct customer training. Libraries also want the resources to promote these databases, not only with physical objects like posters but virtual videos and slides.

As for communication, most schools libraries expressed frustration that most social networks were blocked at their schools. This may account for the low numbers using blogs, wikis and facebook. For now, email remains the most popular way to communicate.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The results of the survey provide good information for the OLTN committee to make future decisions. One of these decisions might be to drop one database in favor of another service. Libraries are grateful for the databases currently offered in Digital Prairie but there seems to be a desire to have different services that might be utilized more often, especially audiobooks and encyclopedias.

Training on all databases and all levels is needed and wanted. ODL currently offers field training so that participants can get a hands-on experience. If a computer lab is unavailable, ODL provides five iPads for training to use at the requesting library. Train the Trainer and direct patron training is also available. Training can be requested from the Digital Prairie Training blog at http://prairie.oklibshare.org/ or by contacting Sadie Mattox at 405-522-3476 or by email smattox@oltn.odl.state.ok.us. It is our goal to add more open workshops throughout the year.

Also on the training blog are promotional printable items, customizable powerpoints and online tutorials. In the future, ODL will try to provide promotional videos and customizable printables. ODL should also try to provide online classes for those who do not wish or who are unable to travel or have a trainer come to them.

In conclusion, the feeling toward Digital Prairie Databases is optimistic and hopeful. Many expressed that the resources are "indispensible". By keeping up with libraries digital needs, training and promoting Digital Prairie, the databases should see increased use. With increased use, the information literacy rate and general access to materials otherwise unavailable should rise.