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ABSTRACT

A survey of school media centers in Minnesota elementary and secondary schools was undertaken to determine the extent of the progress they have made towards meeting the Information Power guidelines for automation. Two hundred schools were selected to receive an eight-page questionnaire, and 57% responded. The results show that Minnesota library media centers have made some progress toward meeting automation guidelines, but that there are still many centers that need to be strengthened. Forty-eight percent of the schools lacked an automated circulation system, 75% percent had no automated catalog, and 84% were not using automation in reference services. These statistics indicate that school library media specialists need to seek out information about automation in order to provide the technology needed in the nineties. The following conclusions are based on analyses of the data received from the respondents: (1) there is a direct relationship between the size of a school and whether the school is likely to have automated catalog, circulation, or reference services; the larger the school, the greater the chance of its being automated; (2) schools are likely to implement automation in this sequence-circulation, the catalog, and reference services; (3) library media specialists are basically satisfied with the circulation system and automated catalog that they have selected; and (4) those library media specialists who have not yet automated cited lack of money and no perceived need for automation. A copy of the questionnaire used in this study is appended. (KRN)

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Facing the Library Media Challenge of the Nineties: A Survey of Automation in Minnesota Schools

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Facing the Library Media Challenge of the Nineties: A Survey of Automation in Minnesota Schools

Abstract

Results of a survey indicate progress Minnesota elementary and secondary schools have made toward meeting Information Power guidelines for automation in circulation, the catalog, and reference services. A relationship existed between a school's size and automation. Schools implemented circulation first, then the catalog, and finally reference. Library media specialists were satisfied with the automated systems they selected, but those who had not yet automated cited lack of money and no perceived need for automation. School library media specialists need to seek out information about automation in order to provide the technology needed to face the challenge of the nineties.



Facing the Library Media Challenge of the Nineties: A Survey of Automation in Minnesota Schools

As librarians wandered through vendors' exhibits at school library conferences years ago, they would have seen primarily print materials. Reference books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, and fiction books prevailed. It was a big day when preprocessed books appeared, complete with catalog cards, borrower cards, and spine labels. The advent in the early 1980's of automation systems designed specifically for school libraries changed the world of the school library media specialist tremendously. The technology improved in the next few years, and in 1988 Loertscher reported that "hardware and software for managing print and other media items in LMC collections are more compact, far less expensive and much more powerful than only a few years ago." Also in 1988, Information Power suggested that "all schools should actively plan for the automation of their records and procedures" (p. 78)².

Minnesota school library media centers are making progress toward meeting the *Information Power* guidelines for automation of library media services. In order to determine the extent of automation, a study was done to assess the direction schools in Minnesota are taking regarding automation within the school library media center. Specific questions to be answered included:



- To what extent is automation used in the school library media center for cataloging, circulation, and reference?
- Which computer applications are used for cataloging, circulation, and reference?
- What level of satisfaction with automation has been experienced by the users?

POPULATIONS

A table of random numbers was used to select 200 schools, elementary through high school, for this study. An eight-page questionnaire including both forced-choice and open-ended questions was designed and tested, and in 1990 it was sent to school library media centers in the state of Minnesota. The return rate was 57%.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SCHOOLS

The typical school district in the survey was comprised of six or seven elementary schools, one or two middle schools or junior high schools, and one or two high schools. The average media professional in the survey worked in an elementary school (50 percent), while 29 percent worked in junior and senior high schools and 11 percent worked in K-8 schools. Besides varying in grade levels, the schools surveyed also varied in size. More than half of the respondents (52 percent) worked in schools with 500-1,000 students, while 39 percent provided services for fewer than 500 students. The remaining respondents (9 percent) worked in schools ranging from 1,000 to 2,500 students.

Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of the library media specialists were likely to have at least one paid paraprofessional to assist them with their duties.

However, less than half of these paraprofessionals (42 percent) worked as many



as 31 to 40 hours per week, while more than one-quarter (26 percent) worked less than 20 hours per week.

To close the gap of hours without paraprofessional help and to keep up with the many library media center tasks, volunteers in the library media center were used by 57 percent of the respondents.

Collections

Most of the respondents (51 percent) administered print collections that averaged less than 10,000 items, although 43 percent of those surveyed were responsible for collections between 10,000 and 20,000. The average print collection was 12,000 items.

Nonprint collections ranged from a low of 9 to a high of 10,200 items, with 1,000 items being the most frequently mentioned number. Forty percent of the respondents had fewer than 500 nonprint items in their collections, while another 20 percent had between 500 and 1,000 items.

A typical Minnesota professional in the survey had only about a one-inthree chance of working for a district that provided centralized services such as ordering, technical processing, cataloging, and equipment repair and distribution (see figure 1). For about two-thirds of the districts involved, the responsibility for these services rested with the building level media professional. With library media specialists having so many responsibilities, automation of some of these tasks has appealed to Minnesota school media people.

AUTOMATION IN CIRCULATION

The mission statement in *Information Power* stresses providing both students and teachers "intellectual and physical access to materials in all formats"



(p. 1). Further, Information Power states that "automated systems provide accurate and efficient ways of circulating and locating materials . . . " (p. 78). In Minnesota, there is a strong trend toward automation of circulation.

Of those responding to the survey, 53 percent indicated that they had an automated circulation system. Thirty-eight percent of those with an automated circulation system indicated that the circulation system was also a part of their automated catalog.

Figure 2 shows the relationship between a school's size and whether it had an automated circulation system. Survey results indicated that schools with more than 500 students were more likely to have automated circulation systems.

It was evident by the responses that library media specialists were satisfied with their choices; ninety-six percent indicated that they were happy with their system. When asked for reasons for their satisfaction, the library media specialists said that their system was efficient, fast, easy to use, flexible, user friendly, and that the company provided good customer support.

AUTOMATION IN CATALOGING

The mission statement of *Information Power* stresses providing "intellectual and physical access to information and ideas for a diverse population whose needs are changing rapidly" (p. 3). The guidelines explain that "... electronic catalogs make possible more convenient and extensive searching that widens the range of available resources within and beyond the school" (p. 31). Further, the guidelines challenge schools to "... actively plan for the automation of their records and procedures" (p. 78).

To what extent have Minnesota schools met this challenge? Only one-quarter of the respondents had moved to an automated catalog. Seventy-one percent of



these library media specialists used the Winnebago system, 14 percent used Follett, 11 percent chose Library Corporation, and 4 percent used MicroCat.

In keeping with the findings about automated circulation systems, there was again a relationship between the size of the school and whether or not the catalog was automated. Of the schools that had automated catalogs, only 25 percent had populations below 500 students. Fifty-six percent, on the other hand, had populations between 1,000 - 2,000.

As figure 3 shows, fewer elementary schools were likely to be automated, whereas the high school was the type of school most likely to have an automated catalog. This may be due to the complexity of the learner outcomes at the high school level.

The research data indicated that ninety-six percent of the respondents would recommend their system to others, in spite of the fact that only seventy-five percent of the respondents indicated they were satisfied with their system. The two reasons for satisfaction cited most often were that the system was user friendly and that the company offered good customer service.

Two-thirds of the library media specialists who did not yet have an automated catalog planned to automate in the next five years, and half of these planned to automate in one to two years. At the time this survey was conducted, 64% planned to use the Follett catalog and 36% favored the Columbia system.

Numerous responses were provided by 33%, who said they weren't planning to automate; sixty-two percent of this last group said there wasn't enough money, while 26 percent stated that there was no need to automate. Only 5 percent said they didn't have administrative support, and 7 percent gave no response.

Seventy-eight percent of the library media specialists who have automated indicated that their school installed an automated circulation system first. Only



eight percent reported that they automated the catalog first, and fourteen percent said that they automated circulation and the catalog at the same time (figure 4). Of those respondents with automated circulation systems, 98 percent said they would recommend the same order as was indicated in figure 4. Most, in other words, recommended replicating the automation sequence they had followed.

AUTOMATION IN REFERENCE

In today's information rich age, "few schools are equipped with the full variety of resources necessary to satisfy" the information needs of students and teachers (Information Power, p. 12). One way for school library media centers to provide greater access to information is through automated reference services. But of the three areas surveyed, reference service was the area least likely to be automated in Minnesota schools. The wide array of online databases for bibliographic searching and the CD-ROM products now available were used by only 18 percent of those responding to the survey.

As figure 5 shows, high schools were most likely to use these services.

Only 5 percent of the elementary schools were offering any kind of automated reference service. Of those library media centers using on-line searching, Dialog was the database system used most often (29 percent), followed by Wilschline (14 percent). CD-ROM products were used by only 12 percent of the surveyed library media specialists. Products mentioned included Ebsco Magazine, Groliers Encyclopedia, Infotrac, World Fact Book, and Newsbank.

CONCLUSIONS

This research provides some concrete evidence of what is happening in Minnesota school library media centers in regard to meeting the *Information*



Power guidelines for automation. Some conclusions that can be drawn include the following:

- There is a direct relationship between the size of a school and whether the school is likely to have automated catalog, circulation, or reference services. The larger the school, the greater the chance of being automated.
 - The circulation system is automated before the card catalog in most cases.
- Schools are likely to implement automation in this sequence: circulation, the catalog, and reference services.
- Library media specialists are basically satisfied with the circulation system and automated catalog that they selected.
- Those library media specialists who have not yet automated give the following reasons: 1) lack of money, and 2) no perceived need for automation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Why should library media specialists go to all the labor and expense involved in automating library systems? How will it benefit them and the students and staff they serve? Loertscher says that automation should save time, be more accurate, be more efficient, be easy to use, be adaptable, and be cost-effective. (p. 131-133)³ These are all good reasons for library media specialists to consider automation.

Library media specialists need more information and support as they grapple with the automation decisions that must be made. A library media specialist might ask, "Should we automate circulation or the catalog first, or both at the same time? Which company offers the services and enhancements our school needs for the price our district can afford?" Region- or area-wide workshops and/or inservice training sessions should be offered on a regular basis to give library media specialists



the information they need to be able to compare the different automated systems in order to make these informed decisions that will have far reaching consequences.

Once library media specialists have narrowed their choices, they should make their needs known often enough and to the right people. Since all automated systems are expensive to set up in terms of hardware, software, and "people power" to make them work, these expenses often need to be budgeted for years in advance. Library media specialists should be in constant communication with the administrators who make the decisions concerning automation. One of the survey respondents made the excellent suggestion that the library media specialist stress to administrators the time and labor savings automation will bring to teachers and students, rather than focusing on how it will help the library media specialist.

Another advantage automation provides is that once library media specialists have automated bibliographic records, they have taken an initial step toward electronic networking with other media centers in the same city and/or region. Every school library media center needs a good basic materials collection, but not every collection needs to duplicate expensive materials of desirable — though limited — use.

This study has shown that Minnesota library media centers have made some progress toward meeting the *Information Power* guidelines concerning automation. However, there are still many school library media centers that need to be strengthened. As indicated by the survey's statistics, 48% of the schools lacked an automated circulation system, 75% had no automated catalog, and 84% were not using automation in reference services. Thus, library media professionals should continue to seek out information concerning automation.

As school library media professionals attend conventions of the 1990's, they will see exhibits that feature new and better systems for automating circulation and



the card catalog ... word processing programs designed to produce tailor-made bibliographies ... hypermedia desktop presentation programs ... CD-ROM systems with color screens and motion sequences ... and a myriad of computers and printers for running the many applications. As professionals network with other professionals, make site visits to model library media centers, attend workshops, and read professional literature, the conduit will be provided for increasing automation for school library media centers. If school library media specialists are to provide access to information for students, faculty, and staff, they need to be aided and empowered by the latest technology in order to face the challenge of the nineties. Only then can they hope to fulfill their ideal roles of information specialist, teacher, and instructional consultant.

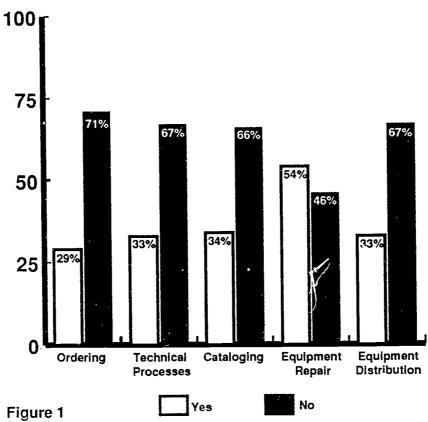


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- David Loertscher, "High Technology in School Libraries," Media and Methods,
 25:21-24 (September-October 1988).
- 2. American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology, Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs (Chicago: American Library Association, 1988).
- 3. David V. Loertscher, Taxonomies of the School Library Media Program (Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1988).



Services Offered by District







Automated Circulation in Relation to Size of School

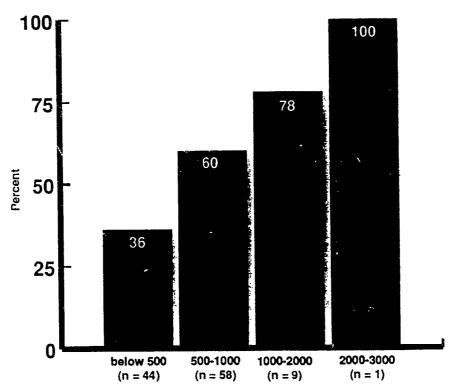


Figure 2

Automated Catalog in Relation to Grades in School

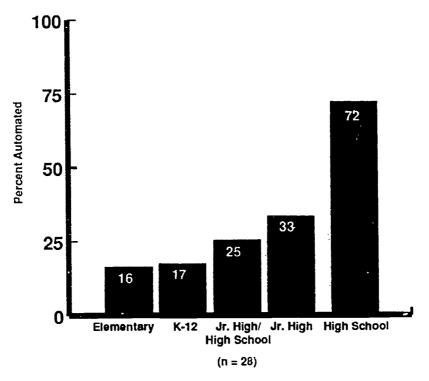


Figure 3



Which System was Automated First?

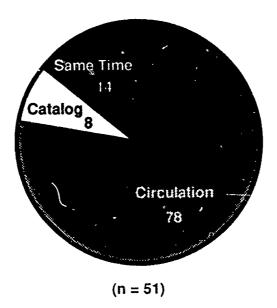


Figure 4



Automated Reference Services

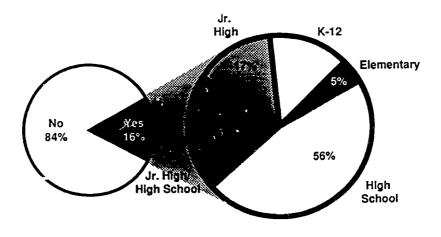


Figure 5



AUTOMATION IN MINNESOTA LIBRARY MEDIA CENTERS QUESTIONNAIRE

INFORMATION	ABOUT YOU:
1male	fernale
2. Not counting n	nedia experience, how many years of full-time teaching experience do you have?
3. How many year	rs of full-time experience as librarian, media generalist or specialist do you have?
2. 3.	ghest degree? B.A. / B.S Master's Specialist other ()
5. How long ago	did you take courses in cataloging? years ago in reference? years ago in computers in schools? years ago
6. Would you be computer	interested in a "refresher" course in cataloging (yes), reference (yes), or in schools (yes)?
	ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL: (if you serve more than one school, answer life for one school only.)
7. What is the st	udent population of your school district?
8. How many sch	pools are in your district?
2 3 4	_ elementary schools _ middle schools _ junior high schools _ high schools
-	dents are in your school?
10. What grades	s are in your school?
11. How many fa	aculty members are in your school?
12. How many lik	orarians or media generalists are in your district?
13. How many n	nedia specialists are in your district?
	a paid paraprofessional?
y	es o (please skip to question 17)
1	aid paraprofessionals do you have? 1 1 - 2 2 3 - 4 3 5 or more



16.	How many hours/week does each of your paraprofessionals work?
	11-10 hours/week
	2 11-20 hours/week
	3 21-30 hours/week
	4 31-40 hours/week
17.	Do you have volunteer aides?
	yes
	no (skip to question 20)
18.	How many volunteers do you have?
19.	How many total hours/week do they volunteer?
20.	Check the methods of library/media center use that describe your program:
	1 I give instruction in using the center once a week for every class
	2 I give instruction in using the center on a regular basis for every class
	3 The fixed scheduling is part of teacher preparation time
	4 I use flexible scheduling for all classes
	5 I use flexible scheduling for some classes and/or some activities
	6 I work with teachers to plan activities in the center
	7 I develop my own curriculum
	8 I use a district curriculum
	9 other (describe briefly)
21	. Check those that apply to your situation:
	1 full time position
	2 part-time position
	3full time in one school
	4 serve more than one school ([number] schools with total population of students and faculty members)
00	Approximate size of your collection: print items
22	. Approximate size of your collection: print items non-print items
23	. Which of these services are offered by your district? Check those that apply:
	1 ordering
	2technical processing / technical services
	3 cataloging
	4 equipment repair
	5 equipment
	6 production for instructional purposes
	7 union catalog for district
	8inter library loan within district
	9 inter libray loan outside district
	10curriculum design
	11other (briefly describe)
	145140 anain-
24	s. MEMO region
^-	NEMO members 1000 no
25	i. MEMO member: yes no



3 **AUTOMATION OF CATALOGING:** 26. is your catalog automated? ____ no (if no, go to question 40) 27. If yes, what system do you use? (e.g. Winnebago, Follett, etc.) 28. What brand of computer do you use to drive the system? 29. What peripherals do you use? (modem, printer, etc.) 30. How many terminals or work stations are available for student use? 1. ____ 0-3 2. ____ 4-6 3. ____ 7-9 4. ___ other 31. What brand are these workstations? 32. Are any of these located outside the media center? ____ yes ____ no 33. Did you and/or your staff convert your card catalog to MARC format? ____ yes (skip to question 35) ПО 34. If no, check the line that applies: 1. ____ the vendor did our conversion 2. ____ we did not convert our records to MARC format 3. ____ other (please state): 35. Do you receive your current bibliographic records in MicroLIF format? ____ yes ____ no 36. Are you satisfied with your present system? ____ yes (skip to question 38) ____ no 37. If no, why not? 1. ____ too many problems

2. ____ not enough help from company

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3. ____ students can't use it 4. ____ teachers can't use it 5. ____ not flexible enough 6. ____ other (please state):



38.	Would you recommend your present system to someone just getting started in automation? yes
	no
39.	Please give a reason or two why or why not: (after answering, skip to question 43)
40.	Do you plan to automate your card catalog 1 in the next 1-2 years (skip to question 42) 2 in the next 3-5 years (skip to question 42)
	3 no foreseeable plans
41.	What are your reasons for not automating? Check any that apply. 1 not enough money (skip to question 43) 2 no support from administration (skip to question 43) 3 no need for it (skip to question 43)
	4 other (please state): (skip to question 43)
42.	If you plan to automate, have you narrowed your choices for the system you will use?yes; name of system(s) being considered:
	no
43.	When you order materials for your library, do you order cataloging kits at the same time? yes no
44.	Of the print materials you order annually, for what percentage is cataloging not available commercially? 1 0 - 5% 2 5 - 10% 3 10 - 15% 4 15% +
45 .	Who does the cataloging for these remaining print items? 1 the media specialist or member of the staff 2 a different vendor from the original jobber 3 these items wait until commercial cataloging is available (skip to question 47) 4. other (please state):
	♥. Ulidi (Didabo bialo).



46.	What kind of cataloging is done for the print materials you or a member of your state catalogs?
	1 full MARC records
	2 abbreviated MARC records
	3 main entry and title listing only
	4 your own system
	5 other (please state):
47.	Of the nonprint materials you order annually, for what percentage is cataloging not
	available commercially?
	1 0 - 10%
	2 10 - 20%
	3 20 - 30%
	4 30% +
48.	. Who does the cataloging for these remaining nonprint items?
	1 the media specialist or member of the staff
	2 a different vendor from the original jobber
	3 these items wait until commercial cataloging is available (skip to question
	5 0)
	4 other (please state):
49	. What kind of cataloging is done for the nonprint materials you or a member of your staff catalogs? 1 full MARC records 2 abbreviated MARC records 3 main entry and title listing only 4 your own system 5 other (please state):
Al	JTOMATION OF CIRCULATION
50	. Do you have an automated circulation system?
	yes
	no (skip to question 5?)
	to a substant at a translation and a foreign outs motion and antique?
51	. Is your automated circulation system part of your automated catalog?
	yes
	no
52	Mhich did you automate first?
	1 circulation
	2 catalog
	Mould was recommend this ender to others just beginning to outomate?
53	B. Would you recommend this order to others just beginning to automate?
	yes (skip to question 55)
	no



54. If you answered "no," could you explain why not?
55. What circulation system do you use?
56. Are you happy with it? yes; please state why: no; please state why:
AUTOMATION FOR MANAGING THE MEDIA CENTER:
57. Is there a computer to which you have access for administrative tasks? yes; kind: no
58. What tasks do you perform on your computer? Check as many as apply. 1 compiling bibliographies 2 printing overdue notices 3 word processing 4 publishing library newsletter 5 keeping track of budget 6 collection mapping 7 previewing software 8 consideration file 9 ordering 10 printing catalog cards 11 other:
59. Does your staff 1 share the same computer terminal you use? What "brand" is it? Apple,
Macintosh, IBM, etc.? 2 use a different computer station; it is (what brand): 3 use no computer
60. What tasks does your staff perform on a computer? Check as many as apply. 1 compiling bibliographies 2 printing overdue notices 3 word processing 4 publishing library newsletter 5 keeping track of budget 6 collection mapping 7 previewing software 8 consideration file 9 ordering 10 printing catalog cards 11. other:



AL MOITAMOTUL	REFERENCE	SERVICES:
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61.	Do you have any automated systems in reference?
	yes no (skip to question 63)
62.	What automated system(s) do you have? 1 online database searching What database(s) do you access?
	2 CD-ROM database(s) What database(s) do you use?
	3 CD-ROM products Which one(s)?
СО	MPUTER LAB:
63.	Do you have a computer lab in your school? yes no (skip to question 66)
64.	Are you or your staff in charge of the computer lab in your building? 1 yes, totally 2 yes, with help 3 no
65.	How many computers of each kind does your lab have (whether you're involved with the lab or not)? 1 Apple lie 2 Apple lic 3 Apple li GS 4 Macintosh 5 IBM or IBM-compatible 6 other:
66	 If you do not have a computer lab but have computers in the classrooms, what kind are these computers? Write on the line next to the brand the number of each in your school 1 Apple IIe 2 Apple II GS 3 Apple II GS 4 Macintosh 5 IBM or IBM-compatible 6 other:



8

67. I	40000			nputer system within th	
	yes; plea you wil	ase describe your I add:	plans briefly and st	ate possible brands an	d numbers
	no				
68.	What kind of state or does the late	ffing does your co depend on the c	emputer lab have? F lassroom teacher or	or example, is there a volunteers, etc.	full-time aide,
69.	staffe time?			n that will decrease yo	
	ves (V	Which position, mo percent of time w	edia specialist or aid ill be cut?)	le, has been or will be	cut? What
70.	Will your library	budget for purc	hasing materials be	cut?	
71.	Will district bud	dget cuts affect y	our library in other	ways?	
72.	How would you somewhere a	rate your principalong this line:	oal's support for you	ır library programs? P	lease mark
bek	ow average	sò⊹\$0	average	pretty good	excellent
	If you've automa	ated recently, coul as far along as you	u? Any tips on how t	strategies for media spoor present your needs to	pecialists to use

Please use this space to make any other comments on these topics:

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS FORM!

Please return the completed form by May 11 in the enclosed addressed, stamped envelope to: Doreen Keable; CIM - Centennial Hall 214; St. Cloud State University; St. Cloud, MN 56301

