The Library Services for People with a Print Disability Survey

> *[The 'perfect library' would be] 'a library where I had the same access to literature that the rest of the public has, which is what I had before I was left for dead by a drunken driver.'*

The Services to People with Print Disabilities Working Group (SPPD) and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) jointly conducted this online survey to people with print disabilities through our networks using SurveyMonkey from November 2nd, 2011 to December 19th, 2011. An invitation to complete the survey was distributed through various librarians who provide services to people with print disabilities and the BCLA website. The purpose of this survey was to help us better understand the needs of people with print disabilities in regard to library services, so we can begin to build better provincial and federal supports.

We received 123 responses to the survey, and 101 people completed the entire survey. No questions were mandatory, and the survey was completely anonymous.

If you have questions about the survey, please contact Deb Thomas, Co-chair for the BCLA SPPD Working Group at (604) 436-5432 or deb.thomas@bpl.bc.ca.

This executive summary of results was put together by Lisa Snider, a MAS/MLIS student at UBC SLAIS, under the supervision of Deb Thomas, Co-chair for the BCLA SPPD Working Group.

Summary of Results

Who Answered the Survey
The majority of respondents were over 40, with half being in the 41 to 64 year old age bracket. The respondents primarily identified as visually disabled or blind.

> *'Collection serves everyone. Have lots of variety.'*

Collections and Accessible Formats
The great majority of respondents borrow books, over magazines and newspapers because of greater availability. Many respondents read an average of 1-5 books per month. The most popular genres for books were mysteries, historical fiction, history, biographies, romance, travel, self help, adventure and thrillers. Half felt that Canadian books were desirable, but not essential. For those who read magazines and newspapers, the majority read 0-5 magazines and/or newspapers on a regular basis. Half said that they would read more, but were limited by what is currently available. They would like more local and international newspapers and a selection of magazines to be available to them in accessible formats.

> *'I...feel that it is my right, as a Canadian who is blind, to have access to the same selection of books offered to all Canadians in their local library.'*

Ninety-four percent of respondents prefer to borrow reading material, and a great majority do so because they have limited funds due to their disability. When respondents borrow material, they go into the library, use online services and use the CNIB mail option.

Most respondents use CDs, although a large number of respondents use Daisy discs and downloadable audio books. Over a quarter of recipients can't afford audio book listening devices, and of those who could afford them a price of under $100 would be preferred.

> *'One that has access to materials in a variety of formats so that I can choose which format I want to use (print, ebook, audiobook, etc.).'*

Equipment and Services

One hundred percent of the respondents said that if they had access to the Internet at home that they would use it. As well, most of these respondents would be interested in a simple download device and in home training if it were offered to them. Respondents said that library services and materials for people with disabilities should be better advertised and more outreach should be done in order to get the word out on library resources to those who need them.

Promotion

Finally, when asked what the 'perfect library' would look like, respondents gave a variety of answers. Some felt that libraries were doing a great job:

> *'My library is great and has [a] good collection and the service is excellent'*

However, there are things that can be improved. There were six major areas that a majority of respondents mentioned:

- current and diverse collections
- knowledgeable staff
- online access to books
- accessible buildings
- accessible collections and formats
- accessible websites and catalogues

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> *'Every electronic book would be accessible to me. Each library building would have at least one computer terminal I could use with either speech or Braille. The library would be able to quickly scan and Braille documents I would either bring in or email. I would have telephone and on line access to the same range of newspapers, journals, and other magazines as other patrons, access I could achieve from my home phone or computer without necessarily visiting the library. The library would have inter library loan arrangements with other libraries around the world who produce material in alternate formats. This would all be available at the same public library my sighted children visit.'*

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'Completely accessible building. Electronic borrowing (both audiobook and print) is an immense gift to those who can't get out much. VPL Outreach is also an immense gift of delivery of CD's, DVD's, audiobooks, and books.'

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'[The] Perfect library would have the books that I want to read.......some titles still not available.'

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'That's a big question! Definitely one that met all my reading and listening needs, had a comprehensive collection, and with access to special-needs computers. I'd also like the staff to be at least as familiar as I am with special-needs equipment.'

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'The building would be close to public transit, the library would have an accessible public work station to look at what is in the library, the titles on the shelf would be marked in accessible formats so someone could retrieve the books or other materials themselves, the library's website would be fully accessible including the process for checking out material.'

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Results in Detail

1. Your age group:
- 50% 41-64 years old
- 33% 65+ years old

2. Do you prefer to read books/magazines in languages other than English?
- 93% preferred English language materials.
- .5% preferred French and Spanish language materials.

3. I use audio books because:
This question allowed for multiple choices.

- 66% visual disability (with 'other' added in)
- 42% blind
- 9% identified physical disabilities and 4% identified perceptual disabilities.

4. How many books, on average, do you read in a month?
- 46% 1-5
- 24% 6-10
- 24% 11-20

5. Of the total number of books you read in a month:
- 67% read fiction
- 30% read non fiction

6. What kinds of books do you read?
This question required comments rather than multiple choice answers, and the major trends in the replies have been noted below.

- Mysteries were the most popular, followed closely by historical fiction, history and biographies. After those choices, romance, travel, self-help/health, adventure and thriller were also popular.

7. What kinds of books would you like to have more access to?
This question required comments rather than multiple choice answers, and the major trends in the replies have been noted below.

- Respondents wanted current materials to read, such as best sellers, prize winners, etc. They also wanted more access to Canadian subjects/authors, biographies and mysteries.

8. How important is access to books written by and/or about Canada and Canadians to you?

- 48% desirable, but not essential

9. How many magazines and/or newspapers do you read on regular basis?

- 88% 0-5

10. Would you like to read more magazines/newspapers but are limited by what's available?

- 46% yes
- 54% no

11. If so, what magazines/newspapers would you like to read?
This question required comments rather than multiple choice answers, and the major trends in the replies have been noted below.

- Respondents wanted local newspapers in accessible formats, such as: the Victoria Colonist and the Vancouver Sun and Province. They also would like national and international newspapers such as The Globe & Mail and New York Times. There were a wide range of requests for magazines in accessible formats, although many respondents noted Canadian Living, National Geographic and magazines related to gardening as their preferences.

12. Which format(s) do you usually use for your reading material?
This question allowed for multiple choices.

- 63% CD
- 51% Daisy disc
- 43% downloadable audio books

13. What is your PREFERRED format for your reading material?
This question allowed for multiple choices.

- 36% CD
- 35% Daisy disc
- 33% downloadable audio books

14. Do you prefer to borrow or purchase your reading material? Why?
- 94% borrow
- Cost was the main reason for a vast majority of the respondents, as many were on fixed incomes due to disability. Other reasons include the fact that books are usually only read once and there was no need to keep them, space concerns and that the library was a convenient place to borrow materials.

15. What devices do you use to read with?
This question allowed for multiple choices.

- 50% CD player
- 53% Daisy players (with 'other' added in)

16. Do you have a preference for voice of the reader of audio books?
- 55% yes
- 45% no

17. My preference is:
Of those who said yes to Q16.

- 43% Accent: North America
- 42% Gender: Male
- However, 34% said no preference for gender and 30% said no preference for accent.

18. Do you borrow/receive books?
- 95% yes

19. How do you borrow/receive books?
This question allowed for multiple choices.

- 65% public library: in library visit
- 54% all online resources combined
- 42% CNIB: mail delivery

20. Do you borrow/receive magazines?
70% no

21. How do you borrow/ receive magazines?
Of the 30.2% that said yes to Q20.

- 53% CNIB: Mail delivery
- 33% public library: in library visit

22. Do you borrow/ receive newspapers?
- 79% no

23. How do you borrow/receive newspapers?
Of the 20.6% that said yes to Q22.

- 41% public library: in library visit
- 35% CNIB: download

24. How do you PREFER to borrow books, newspapers and/or magazines? Is it different than the way you specified?
- 84% no

25. How do you PREFER to borrow books, magazines and/or newspapers?
Of the 16% who said yes to Q24.

- Half of the respondents would prefer to download these materials, and almost one third prefer to borrow directly from the library.

26. How do you PREFER to contact your public library when making requests or asking for suggestions on titles and subjects to read?
- 54% in library visit
- 49% by email (with 'other' added in)
- 46% by phone

27. What would the perfect public library look like for you?
This question required comments rather than multiple choice answers, and the major trends in the replies have been noted below.

- Respondents answered with a variety of responses. However, there were six major trends noted. Respondents wanted a diverse selection of material that was popular and

current. They also wanted knowledgeable staff, online access to books and accessible buildings, collections and websites.

28. What experience do you have in using the Internet?

- 39% proficient

29. If you had access to the Internet, would you use it at:
This question allowed for multiple choices.

- 100% Home
- 28% Public Library
- 23% School

30. Would you be interested in personal training to assist you in becoming proficient at downloading your reading material onto your own equipment from the Internet?

- 55% no

31. Alternatively, if a simple download device and in-home training was available, would you be interested in downloading reading material from the Internet at home?

- 72% yes

32. What would you be willing to pay for an audio book listening device?

- 26% nothing, can't afford one
- 20% up to $99

33. Do you know other people with print disabilities who aren't using library services? How could we expand our services to serve them?
This question required comments rather than multiple choice answers, and the major trends in the replies have been noted below.

- Respondents answered with a variety of responses. However, there were trends noted. A quarter of them noted that advertising and outreach would help and fewer said that going to facilities and other organizations to educate people would be useful.