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Research You Can Use

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The motivation behind this issue's theme was to highlight research that we might not encounter in our usual professional reading. We all know (or at least *suspect*) that there is research and publication going on outside the library world that is relevant to our work—but how many of us have time to go looking for it? Assembled here are three original articles by Oregon librarians who have taken the time to investigate, and two reprinted articles of high potential interest to OLAQ readers who may not have seen the original publications in which they appeared.

While articles on a variety of topics were solicited, readers probably will not be too surprised to find that four of the five articles included in this issue have something to do with technology. These articles bring you research information "you can use" on: the OpenURL, Internet demographics, finding and using census information, the preliminary results of a national survey on Internet use and libraries, and the management of change. I learned something from all of them.

Mark Dahl's article provides an excellent introduction to the OpenURL—what it is, how it works, how libraries can use it, and the first wave of commercial products using this new technology. It should rapidly become apparent to any reader of this article that the OpenURL has significant implications for how libraries will provide access to online resources in the future.

A preliminary report on the results of a national survey of Internet and library use at universities and liberal arts colleges, carried out by the Digital Library Foundation and Outsell, Inc., may confirm many librarians' suspicions, but also may hold a few surprises. The reader's appetite will be whetted for the full report, scheduled to be released later this year. Further insight and food for thought will be gained from Ted Smith's article on trends in Internet use in the population as a whole, with particular attention to the state of Oregon.

In a more practical vein, Craig Smith offers help (served up with a dose of humor) to anyone who has ever struggled with tracking down census information. The surge of census and other statistical information on the World Wide Web has made it possible—but not necessarily easy—to mine these data for research purposes even when far from a regional de-pository or research library. Without neglecting print sources, the author provides a roadmap for navigating the plethora of often-confusing federal and state Web sites.

A common thread throughout these articles is change: how libraries must anticipate, adapt to, and manage technological change and its effect on information-seeking behavior and the nature of libraries themselves. The short piece by Susan Jurow offers succinct insight and advice on the *process* of change in an organization. Any kind of change within, or to, an organization is a management issue, and the people involved and affected always must be of prime consideration. As we embark on projects to develop new services, or reorganize whole operations, or as we simply strive—in Ted Smith's words—to "stay ahead of the technological curve," our chances of success will only improve if we keep that truth in mind.

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