

On Average:

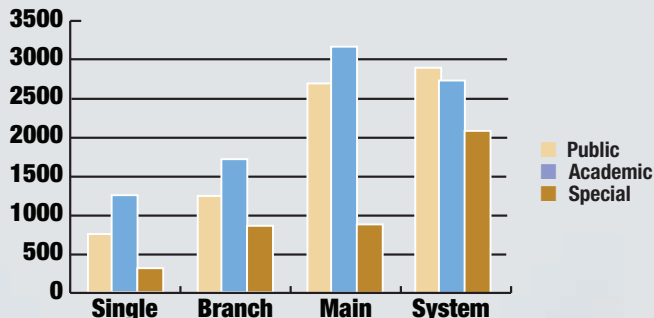
# HOW YOUR LIBRARY BUDGET STACKS UP

By Dick Kaser

**L**ast fall, Information Today, Inc.'s research division, Unisphere Research, conducted a survey of more than 1,200 public, academic, government, and special librarians with budget authority in North America. The study determined that after a couple of devastating years, most libraries are projecting budget stabilization in 2011. Naturally, conditions vary by library type and size, but on average here's what they reported.

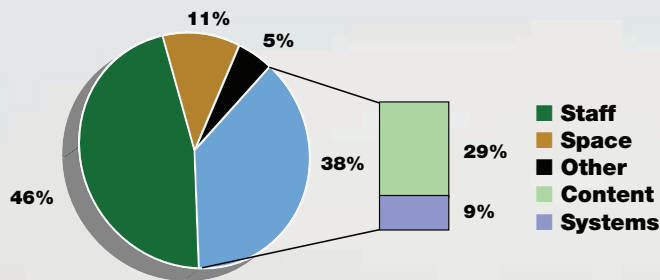


### Average Annual Library Budgets (\$000 omitted)



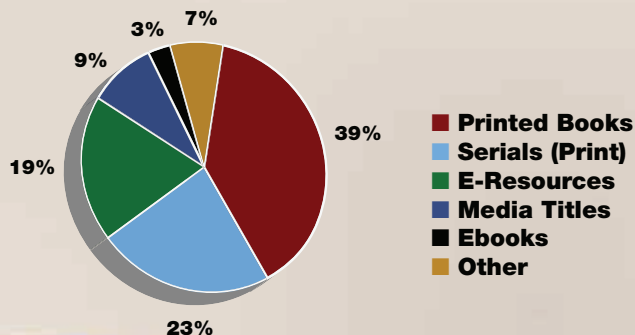
At the 1,200 libraries surveyed, budgets ranged from \$315,000 to \$3.15 million. The size of the budget varied not only by library type (public, academic, or special) but by whether the library was a single, independent unit or part of a larger system (and whether it was a branch or the main library in the larger system).

### Where the Money Goes



Across the board, all libraries reported spending more than half (57%) of their budgets on staff and facilities and only 38% on content collections and patron-facing systems

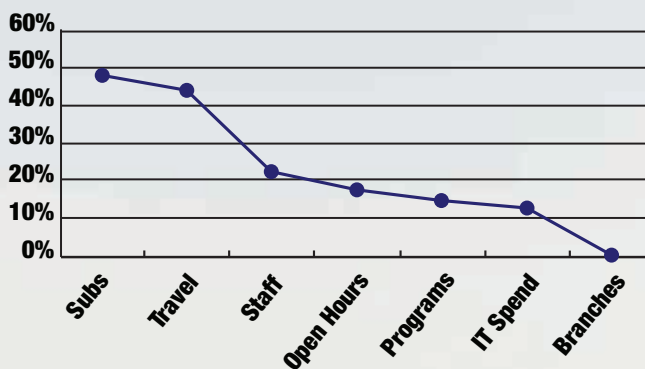
### Spending on Acquisitions



such as OPACs. Reports varied dramatically by sector. Due to the need to operate public facilities, public libraries reported spending the most on staff and facilities (72%) and only 23% on collections, catalogs, and systems. Academic and special libraries reported numbers approximating a 50/50 split, while government libraries as a whole reported spending two-thirds of their budgets on content, systems, and user-facing equipment.

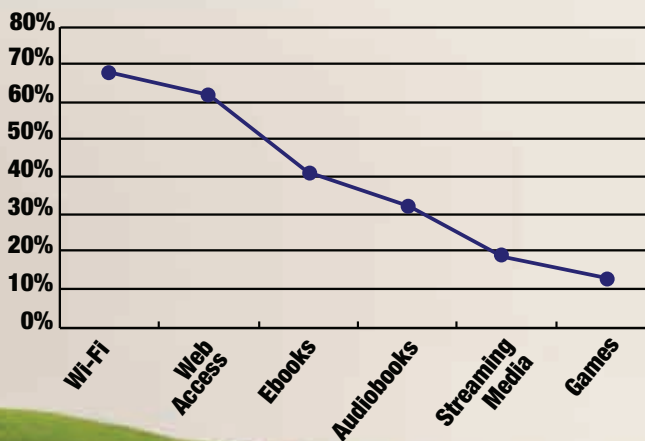
Of the money all libraries spend on their collections, 62% is being spent on print resources, including books, serials, and other printed materials. Electronic databases, digital content collections, ebooks, and other media currently represent only 31% of the spend. The remainder goes for microforms, manuscripts, special collections, and so on.

### What Got Cut in 2010



Faced with economic challenges, most libraries were forced to cut spending in 2010. In fact, of the 1,200 libraries responding to our survey, only 19% said they experienced neither a spending cutback nor a spending freeze last year.

### What Patrons Want



Of those who made cuts, most cut subscriptions (cited by 48% of respondents) or staff travel (44%). Staffing cutbacks (either in the form of layoffs or work hour reductions) were reported by 22% of the reporting libraries. Hours of operation were reduced by 18% of the libraries. Programs were cut by 15%, and branches were closed by 1%. Another area prone for cuts was IT spending, which was reduced by 13% of the libraries.

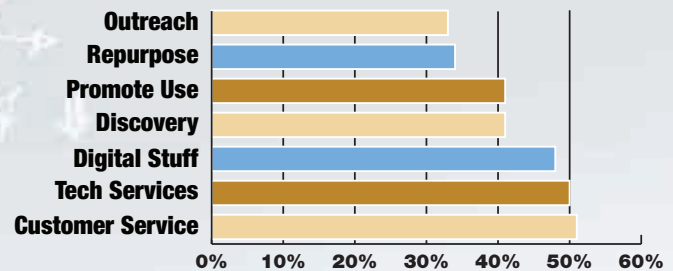
While library budgets shrank, demand for library services increased, with many of the survey respondents reporting an increased demand from patrons for career-related information and skills training, including English-language instruction. At the same time, patrons also showed an increased demand for technology services, including Wi-Fi facilities (reported by 67% of the libraries) and web access (reported by 62%). Demand was also up for digital resources, including ebooks (in 41% of the libraries), audiobooks (32%), and computer games (13%).

## A Techno Wish List for 2011

PCs/Kiosks/Laptops/Mobile Devices .....	25%
Ebook Readers .....	22%
OPAC, New or Improved .....	20%
ILS .....	19%
Website .....	12%
Networking (LAN or Wi-Fi) .....	11%
Discovery Services .....	10%
Virtual Reference (Web-Based IM or Email) .....	9%
RFID Check-In, Checkout, Inventory Control .....	8%
Electronic Resource Management (ERM) System.....	8%
Teleconferencing (Audio/Video) .....	7%
Link Resolvers .....	4%
Authentication Solutions .....	4%

Even when the going got tough in 2010, librarians reported that in many cases they increased spending for certain products and services in order to continue delivering services while making ends meet. Winning services last year included online collections and other digital content, including ebooks. Now, as library budgets stabilize this year or even start to improve, librarians are on the lookout for technology to meet increased demand and deliver new services. Topping their wish lists is computer equipment, including mobile devices (cited by 25% of the libraries in our study as a spending priority), ebook readers, and anything that will improve front-facing services (OPAC, ILS, web content management, networking, and discovery platforms and solutions).

## Priorities for 2011



Going forward, the librarians surveyed told us that they will be placing an emphasis on front-facing services this year, including offering programs to assist patrons in accessing and effectively using information services (cited by more than half the respondents as being a top priority). They will also be looking to expand and improve access to digital collections (48%) and helping patrons discover existing materials in their collections (41%). Also near the top of the priority list are efforts to bring in new users. A third of them said they will be repurposing their facilities in some way in order to appeal to new groups or to better meet the needs of existing library users.



### Get Your FREE Copy of the Summary Results



A full summary report, including many more details on the differences among public, academic, special, and government libraries, is available for free at [libraryresource.com](http://libraryresource.com) (LRG Downloads). Results will also be presented at a special session at our Computers in Libraries conference in Washington, D.C., March 21-23.