Results of the 2009 LTAIG Salary Survey
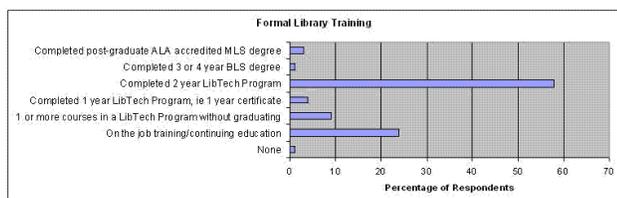
By the Library Technicians and Assistants Interest Group.

Respondents

There were 309 respondents from 8 provinces. 201 (65%) from British Columbia, with over 20 responses each from Nova Scotia, Ontario and Alberta. Not every question was answered and other questions allowed for multiple answers, so the number of responses per question varied.

Formal Library Training

Of the 301 responses to this question, most (58%) of the respondents had completed a 2 year Library Technician program. 24% of respondents indicated that they had received on the job training or continuing education.

54 respondents had completed a combination of formal education and on the job training or continuing education, and 5 other respondents had a combination of formal training types. Some of the other formal library training received included: MLS in progress, CLTP certificate and some MLS and BLS from outside of Canada, or training that was not ALA certified.

Location of Training

There were 258 responses to this question, with 24 respondents indicating that they had attended more than one of the listed programs.

41% of respondents had attended Langara College, followed by 14% having attended the University of the Fraser Valley.
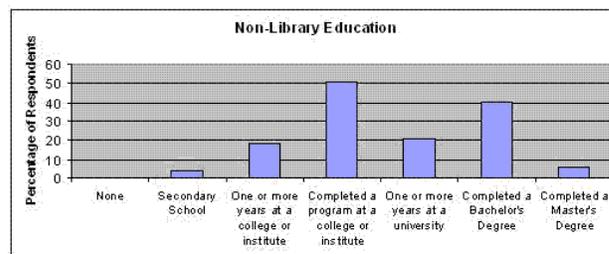
Other programs attended include: Nova Scotia Community College (9%), Ontario's Mowhawk College (7%) and Seneca College of Applied Arts & Technology (3.5%), Alberta's Grant MacEwan College (4%) and Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (7%), Manitoba's Red River College (3%), and

Newfoundland's Memorial University of Newfoundland (4.5 %). There were also respondents from John Abbott College, Algonquin College and the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology.

Other training locations included Iran, Brazil, Japan and several Canadian universities that offer MLS/MILS programs.

Non-library Education

40% of the 308 respondents indicated that they had completed a Bachelor's Degree. Also, 6% had completed Master's Degrees, 21% had completed one or more years at a university, and 19% had completed one or more years at a college or institute.
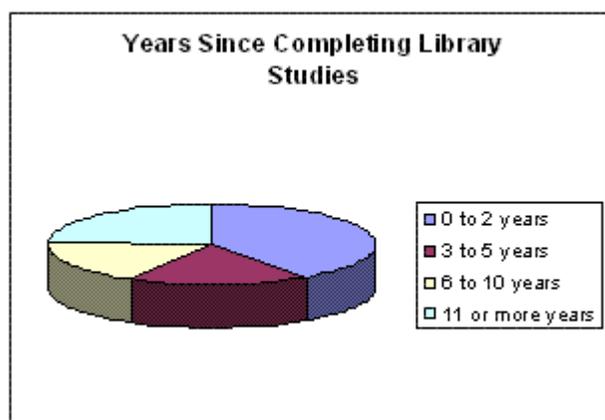

51% of respondents indicated that they had completed a program at a college or institute. Without further information, we're not sure if this was indicating completion of their Library Technician program, or if it indicated completing additional programs. Less than 1% indicated that they had no additional formal education, and 4% indicated that they had completed secondary school.

Other answers included completing teaching certificates and completing programs in special education and graphic design.
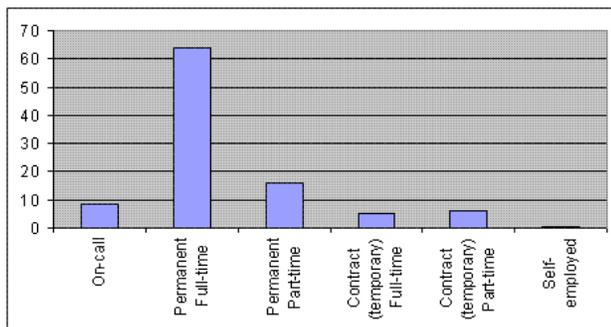
Years Since Completing Library Studies

There were 291 responses to this question. Most of them, 40%, were recent graduates (0-2 years ago). 18% graduated 3 to 5 years ago, 18% graduated 6 to 10 years ago, and 24% of respondents graduated 11 or more years ago.

Employment Status

Of the 284 responses of this question, 64% are working in permanent full-time positions.
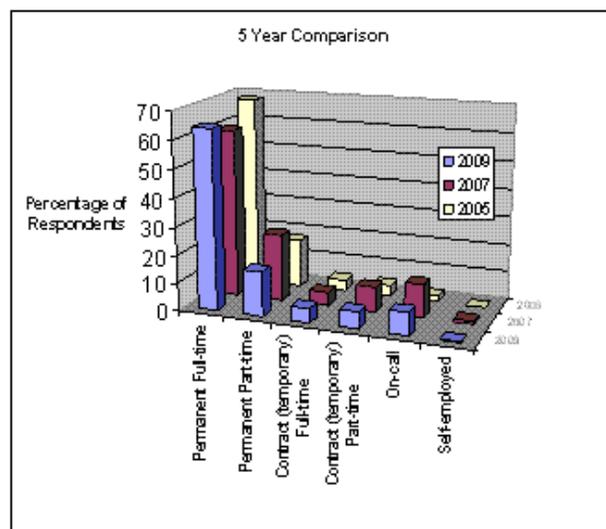This was followed by 16% in permanent part-time positions, and 8% on-call.

There were 22 multiple responses to this question and of these responses there were mostly an on-call position to another type of position. There were only 2 respondents who indicated that they were self-employed.

Other answers included: retired, on maternity leave, and in a volunteer position.

Comparison to previous surveys

Keeping in mind that the 2007 survey did not include the responses of respondents from outside of British Columbia, we can complete a minor comparison from the past 3 surveys (a 5 year period). Over this time, we can see that the number of on-call positions has increased from 2% to 8%.

The 2007 survey had 60% permanent full-time, 24% permanent part-time and 12% on-call.
The 2005 survey had 68% permanent full-time, 17% permanent part-time and 2% on-call.
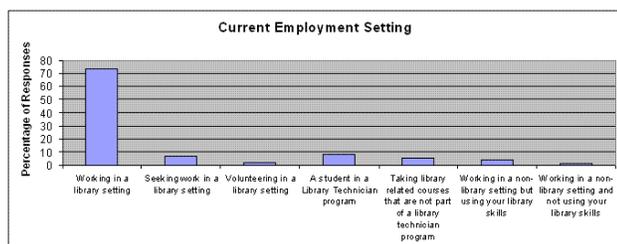

Work Experience

All survey respondents answered this question. Most of the survey respondents have been working either 1 to 5 years (28%) or 6 to 10 years (23%). 13% have been working 11-15 years, 10% have been working 16-30 years and 10% have been working for a year or less.

Current Employment Setting

73% responded that they are currently working in a library setting, and 8% are students in a library technician program.
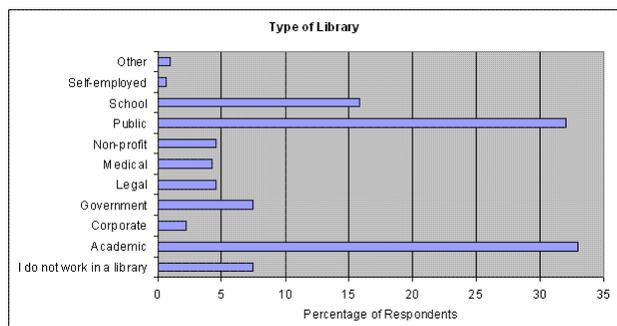

It is interesting to note that 46 people responded that they are currently taking courses and working at the same time. Also, 26 respondents indicated that they are seeking work in a library setting.

Of the respondents that answered the question, 86% (284) indicated that they are part of a union. Unfortunately, the data for the question regarding the receipt of benefits was unavailable.

78% of respondents indicated that there are positions in their library that require a library technician diploma.
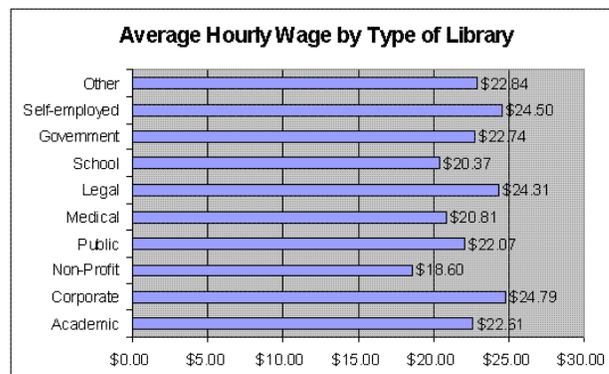
Type of Library

There were 39 multiple responses to this question, with up to three libraries included at a time in some responses. 33% of respondents work in an academic library and 32% work in a public library.

16% of respondents work in a school library, while 23% work in either government (7%), corporate (2%), medical (4%), legal (5%) or non-profit libraries (5%). 2 respondents are self-employed. 7% of respondents do not work in a library. Other libraries that

respondents work at include archives, a police library, and a media library.

Average Hourly Wage by Library Type

The library type with the highest average pay is corporate libraries at $24.79, followed closely by legal libraries ($24.31) and those who are self-employed ($24.50). The libraries with the lowest hourly wage are non-profits at $18.60, with school and medical libraries filling out the bottom three.

Comparison to previous surveys

If we look at the salary data from the last two surveys, 2005 & 2007, we can see a small increase in the average wage. In 2005 the average wage was $20.03 an hour, and in 2007 it was $21.80. The average hourly wage overall from this survey is $22.36.

Average Hourly Wage by Years of Experience

The highest wage earners by years experience are those with 36 to 40 years experience, at an average of $28.00. They are followed by those with 26 to 30 years experience ($24.60) and those with 21 to 25 years experience ($24.27).

Those with 11 to 15 years experience earned the next highest at $23.78, followed by 16 to 20 years experience at an average of $23.20 per hour. The next highest earners are those with 41 or more years of experience ($23.00), 31 to 35 years experience ($22.74), 6 to 10 years experience ($22.52) and 1 to 5 years experience ($20.95).

The lowest wage earners by years experience are those with less than one year of experience, at an average of $18.59 per hour.

Duties Performed

Survey respondents perform a wide variety of duties in their jobs; below are the most common duties.

Technical & Administrative Duties

- Filing/Shelving/Shelf-reading (57%)
- Cataloguing/Classification (52%)
- Training Staff or Volunteers (48%)
- Supervising Staff or Volunteers (47%)
- Collection Development/Management (44%)
- Acquisitions (41%)
- Serials Processing/Management (38%)
- Computer Systems/Support (38%)
- Records Management (28%)
- Invoicing (27%)
- Database Design/Maintenance (20%)
- Website Design/Maintenance (19%)
- Archives/Conservation/Preservation (18%)
- Intranet Design/Maintenance (10%)

Public Service & Job Responsibilities

- Reference/Research (73%)
- Circulation (73%)
- Computer or Technical Assistance (68%)
- Staff or Patron Training (56%)
- Displays (49%)
- Interlibrary Loan/Document Delivery (48%)
- Orientation/Library tours (45%)
- Adult or Reader's Advisory Services (35%)
- Event Planning/Programming (31%)
- Retrieval Services (27%)
- Children's Services (22%)
- YA Services (19%)
- Outreach Services (15%)

Other answers included: graphic design, public communications, advocacy, marketing, publicity, access services, management, outreach, liaising, licensing and distributing, and binding.

Comparison to previous surveys

"Computer or Technical Assistance" has increased as a job duty by 10% since the 2005 survey, and most tasks have remained within 5% (such as Circulation & Reference). The top tasks have remained the same.

Job Titles

Library Technician was the most frequent job title at 57%, followed by Library Assistant (29%), Librarian (7%), and Library Clerk (7%).

Other job titles provided: Acquisitions Assistant, Administrative Assistant, Archives technician, Assistant Community Librarian, Audiovisual Circulation Technician, Branch Supervisor, Cataloguer, Cataloguing Technician, Chief Librarian, Circulation Assistant, Circulation Coordinator, Circulation Services Coordinator, Circulation Supervisor, Client Services Assistant, Community Librarian, Coordinator, Director of Knowledge Management and Libraries, District Library Technician, Graphic Designer, Head of Children's Services, Educational Assistant, Information Services Coordinator, Information Services Technician, Information Specialist, Instructional Assistant, Instructor of Computer Studies in library lab support role, Learning Commons Specialist, Legal Research Library Technician, Library & Information Technologist, Library Director, Library Support Specialist, Library Support Technician, Manager, Access Services, Media Librarian/Archivist, Operations Supervisor, Page, Production Assistant, Program Head/Instructor, Public Services Assistant, Reference Assistant, Research Assistant, Reference Services Technician, Senior Cataloguing Technician, Senior Library Technician, Shelf Reader, Shelver, Student Library Assistant, Supervisor, Tax Information Manager, Team Lead, Technical Services Technician, Webmaster, Youth Services Assistant and Youth Services Technician.

Volunteering

48% of respondents indicated that they are currently volunteering, or have previously volunteered, at a library. Most volunteered at a school library but many also volunteered at church, non-profit, special, public, medical, legal and government libraries.

Duties preformed included (but weren't limited to): shelving, processing, circulation, computer training, story-times, shelf-reading, book sales, weeding, acquisitions, repairs, promotion and advocacy, filing, and outreach.

Most found that volunteering at a library did help them obtain work at a later date, and many felt that it helped confirm their love for libraries.

Summary of Comments

This question looked for comments regarding aspects of employment or education that respondents felt were not addressed by the survey. We received a wide variety of comments, below are a small sample. **Please note that these comments reflect the opinions of individual respondents, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Library Technicians & Assistants Interest Group or the British Columbia Library Association.*

"Networking and mentoring has been important. The librarian I worked with on a student practicum suggested I apply and then recommended me for the two positions I currently hold. She was also a great source of informal, on the job training."

"It's important to get as much experience as possible working in libraries, so you can determine where you fit. Both jobs I have had since graduation have been special libraries, and I love the fact that I get to do everything. That's not for everybody though."

"I have a bachelor in computer and science and Archives and record management certificate"

"Attending library conferences, holding committee positions within the community for literacy groups"

"Placements are vital to understanding the different kinds of work and environments available to work in. More emphasis on placements is necessary. Most jobs ask for experience - how does one gain experience if employers want experience before they will hire you."

"Library techs are expected to know about literacy (early years/family and adult) but this area was not covered in my education. Should be a component of any library course."

"Supervisory and communication skills are very important in my work."

"Part of the reason I was hired for my current position was that I have a BA majoring in music, which was a specific qualification for the position."

"I am one of the very few full-time cataloguers in the Greater Vancouver area that is a Tech and not a Librarian. The Tech program at Sheridan College was very good."

"Although I don't have a lot of formal education related to library work, a few well chosen courses on electronic research as well as a good grasp of general knowledge and the willingness to take workshops and courses to increase my knowledge has always worked in my favour. Sometimes education is not the most important factor; attitude is far more important."

"My first employment in a library setting was a five month contract as a digitization assistant as part of a team working on a grant special project. I believe this experience helped me get my current position at the circulation desk."

"I have a medical secretarial diploma, as well as a bachelors degree. Having a medical background helped more me and allowed me to be hired in my job, long before there were library technician programs."

"Accounting Certificate - aided in getting my current position in Acquisitions (Invoicing)"

"I found this survey concentrated on public libraries and traditional library 'duties'. I think you will find that many library technicians are now being employed in non-traditional library settings...this should be considered in your next survey."

"I also have a BA (& so did many of my fellow LibTech classmates); plus other related & transferable experience & soft skills that mesh well in the special library setting. ie. Customer service & marketing skills."

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