

### **LISU Annual Library Statistics 2006: Featuring Trend Analysis of UK Public and Academic Libraries 1995-2005**

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Fortunately, LISU continues to produce their annual statistics with a ten-year trend analysis. As usual, the book is packed with tables and charts or figures together with informed and thought-provoking comments. Further, the text includes information on the information market, reviews of user studies, and comments on benchmarking and performance measurement.

This reviewer has, in previous reviews of the annual publication, stressed the quality of the publication and the quality of the text interpreting the many tables.

The 200 pages contain a wealth of information covering most of – but not all – important aspects of the library and information sector business.

The statistics document that situation for the British public libraries is rather sound, with a small increase in income, even corrected for inflation. The spending increases especially in relation to electronic resources. This goes together with another interesting figure – which is the number of visitors to the libraries. It continues to increase and many of the visitors use the IT equipment provided by the library system.

Overall, the situation for the libraries in the higher education sector continues to be positive with a high correlation between number of students and resources.

In the public library sector, we see the same trend as we see in many other countries. It is a decrease in issues especially concentrated on adult fiction. This is probably due to the increase in book sales and it is probably connected to the increased spending power in the population. It is probably also influenced by individualism, which in this context means that people do not find it acceptable to be in a waiting line for reading purposes.

The statistics are very detailed and useful especially in relation to traditional services. It must be mentioned that there is a marked gap between the presentation of numbers on traditional services and digital services. Apart from input figures, it is very difficult to estimate the use of digital resources. This is an area that needs to be remedied in the coming years for the single reason that these services become more and more important in the whole portfolio of service offers.

The strength of standardised surveys is underpinned in the chapter about user surveys. The measurement instrument named PLUS launched by CIPFA now produces interesting figures that can be used to compare and benchmark user behaviour. The survey includes satisfaction figures and it tends to increase.

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The most prominent feature in the higher education libraries is the increasing collection of electronic journals. The figure for loans are related to books and it is very strange that the collection of statistics does not cover downloads. It probably means that the single activity that increases most – both in numbers and in money terms – are undocumented.

As usual, the collection of library statistics supplemented by chapters on surveys, data from the book and periodical sector is a pleasure to peruse and the composition of the statistics could easily be an ideal for others to live up to. However, it must also be emphasised that an update of user activities in relation to the use of electronic services in particular is in dire need. Personally, I would also have liked to see a documentation of teaching activities in the different types of libraries. I am quite sure that issues such as these will be addressed in the coming years.

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