Editorial

Ron Jordahl
Southern Evangelical Seminary

The Christian Librarian is the official publication of the Association of Christian Librarians (ACL). To learn more about ACL and its products and services please visit //www.acl.org/

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

There are thousands of statistical reports proving that by next September we will be so computerized and digitized that we will not have to go to school or work anymore. Math, spelling, geography, shopping, banking—it's all in the computer and on the web. All that will be left to us is to eat pizza and watch DVDs. Well, maybe there aren't thousands of reports, but there are a lot, like, maybe three. OK, so I didn't actually see any reports myself, but the guys who hang at Harvey's Hardware know these things.

Until next September, though, we are pretty busy, what with waiting for traffic lights to change and waiting for the check-out clerk to figure out why you gave him five dollars and two cents when the cash register says you owe three dollars and seventy-seven cents. What it all comes down to is that we don't have time to read books, and come next September, we will spend all our time staring at computer monitors or big screen TVs.

The interesting thing is that the general public has not understood this trend; they are still reading books. Risk takers are opening mega-bookstores gambling on the public's ignorance of the times and hoping it will continue until next September, and perhaps longer. Perhaps there are a lot of people who agree with Groucho Marx, "I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set I go into the other room and read a book."

Libraries, obviously keenly interested in the future of information storage and retrieval, are doing their best to use the technologies available and to determine trends in order to better serve the needs of their clientele. An article in USAirways *Attache* (September 2001) (novel idea—read while waiting) finds the public library alive and well. The author cites Gallup statistics showing that between 1978 and 1998 the number of library visitors increased by thirteen percent. The popularity of book discussion groups in libraries is also seen as evidence that books are a continuing and valued medium.

I nterestingly, the research also discovered that among non-users of the Internet, 67.4 percent ranked books as an important or extremely important information source.

"*The UCLA Internet Report: Surveying the Digital Future*" (which I accessed via the Internet, by the way), declared that more than 100 million Americans are using the Internet and as many as 2,289 per hour are joining their ranks. Interestingly, the research also discovered that among non-users of the Internet, 67.4 percent ranked books as an important or extremely important information source. An even greater percentage of Internet users, 73.1 percent, rated books as important or extremely important.

Put all this together and what do you get? I don't know, but it should be an interesting future. I can't wait for next September.

May God bless you all with a wonderful new year in 2002.

Ron Jordahl
Consulting Editor