

Intellectual Freedom Issues in Colorado Libraries: Concerns, Challenges, Resources, and Opinions

April 2004

Nicolle Steffen
Martin Garnar

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Commissioned by the Intellectual Freedom Committee
of the Colorado Association of Libraries (CAL)

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by

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Martin Garnar**

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**Intellectual Freedom Issues in Colorado Libraries:
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Introduction

This project was conceived by the Colorado Association of Libraries' (CAL) Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) to shed light on intellectual freedom issues in Colorado libraries. Of particular interest to the IFC were 'challenges to' versus 'concerns about' materials and the Internet in libraries. There was anecdotal evidence that there were far more concerns being raised by patrons about materials and the Internet than there were formal challenges. That is, a significant number of patrons were expressing concerns about materials and the Internet at their libraries, but they were not proceeding with formal challenges. In examining the issue of challenges versus concerns, this study examines the findings by type of library, community, and library personnel. In addition, this study investigates libraries' challenge policies and strategies, usage rates of CAL-IFC and American Library Association (ALA) Intellectual Freedom resources, the perceived influence of intellectual freedom issues in libraries, and the opinions of library personnel about these issues. All data was gathered using an online questionnaire.

Methodology

Administered from July 30 to September 13, 2003, the online questionnaire consisted of sixteen questions and a comment box. The survey had a total of 504 respondents with 496 usable Colorado responses. Because the study was limited to Colorado, out of state responses were eliminated from the analysis. The survey covered demographics, concerns about and challenges to library materials and the Internet, challenge policies and strategies, available resources, and personal perceptions

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about specific intellectual freedom issues. (See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire.)

The aim of the study was to survey the widest variety of people working in libraries. Personnel from all sizes and types of libraries participated, including public, school, academic, and special library staff. Library directors, administrators, librarians, and paraprofessionals with varying levels of experience were all represented and came from all types of communities – urban, suburban, rural, and resort. (See Appendix B for charts of individual question responses and survey respondent demographics.)

Survey Results

Concerns and Challenges

Over the years there has been anecdotal evidence that library patrons in Colorado were raising *concerns* much more frequently than they were registering formal *challenges*. There was also considerable discussion about the number of *concerns* being raised in connection with Internet access and policies. To investigate these issues, the survey asked three separate questions (see below). Because the three questions are so closely related, the words “*concerns*” and “*challenges*” are italicized in this section of the report. This helps distinguish the terms from each other and aids in readability.

1. On average, how frequently do you personally deal with patrons raising *concerns* (not formal *challenges*) about the content of library materials (e.g., books, magazines, movies, CDs, etc)?

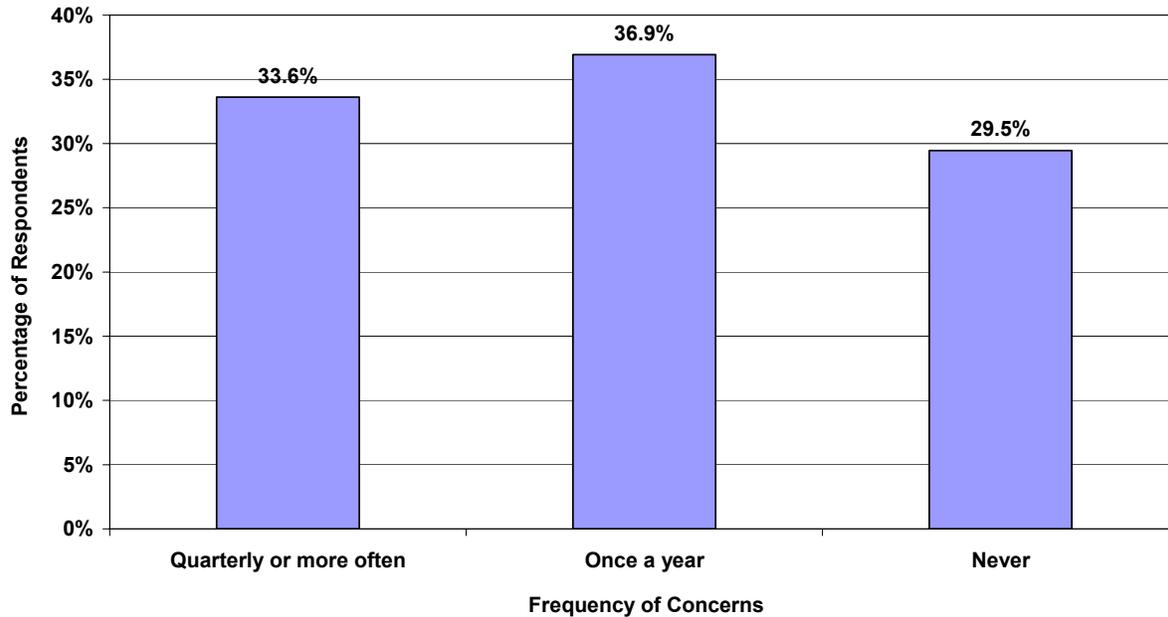
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2. On average, how frequently do you personally deal with patrons raising *concerns* (not formal *challenges*) about Internet policies or content at your library?
3. On average, how frequently do you personally deal with patrons making formal *challenges* to library materials or Internet policies/content?

To clarify for respondents what constitutes a challenge, the following statement appeared at the beginning of the questionnaire, “For the purposes of this questionnaire a challenge is defined as any attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group.” However, *concerns* are less formal in nature and do not involve a request for the removal or reclassification of materials or suspension of services. Note, although *concerns* were separated into library materials and Internet policies and content, only one question was asked regarding *challenges*. Library materials and Internet *challenges* were not separated, because detailed data about formal *challenges* already exists, i.e., data currently collected by other organizations distinguishes between *challenges* to library materials and Internet policies and content. *Concerns* and *challenges* were analyzed using the time intervals of quarterly or more often, yearly, and never.

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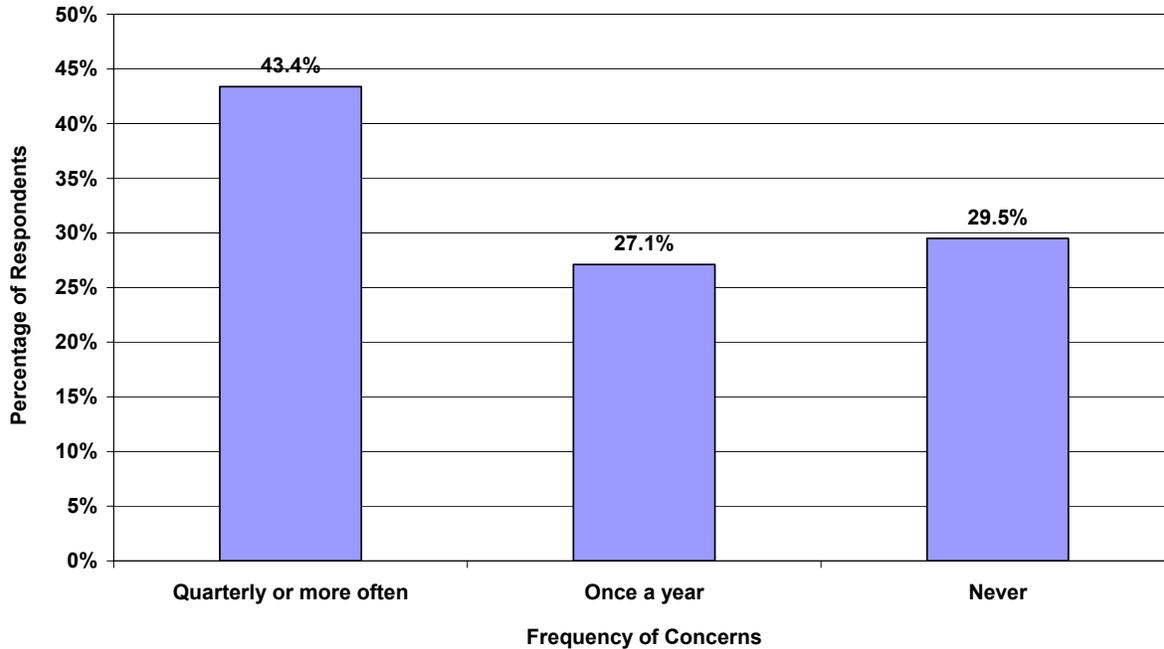
Chart 1
Frequency of Patrons Raising Concerns
About the Content of Library Materials



As seen in Chart 1, when all responses are analyzed, the frequency of *concerns* raised about library materials is fairly evenly distributed between the three time intervals – quarterly or more often (33.6%), once a year (36.9%), and never (29.5%). When responses are cross-tabulated with type of library, type of community, staff position, and level of experience significant differences become apparent.

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Chart 2
Frequency of Patrons Raising Concerns
About Internet Policies or Content

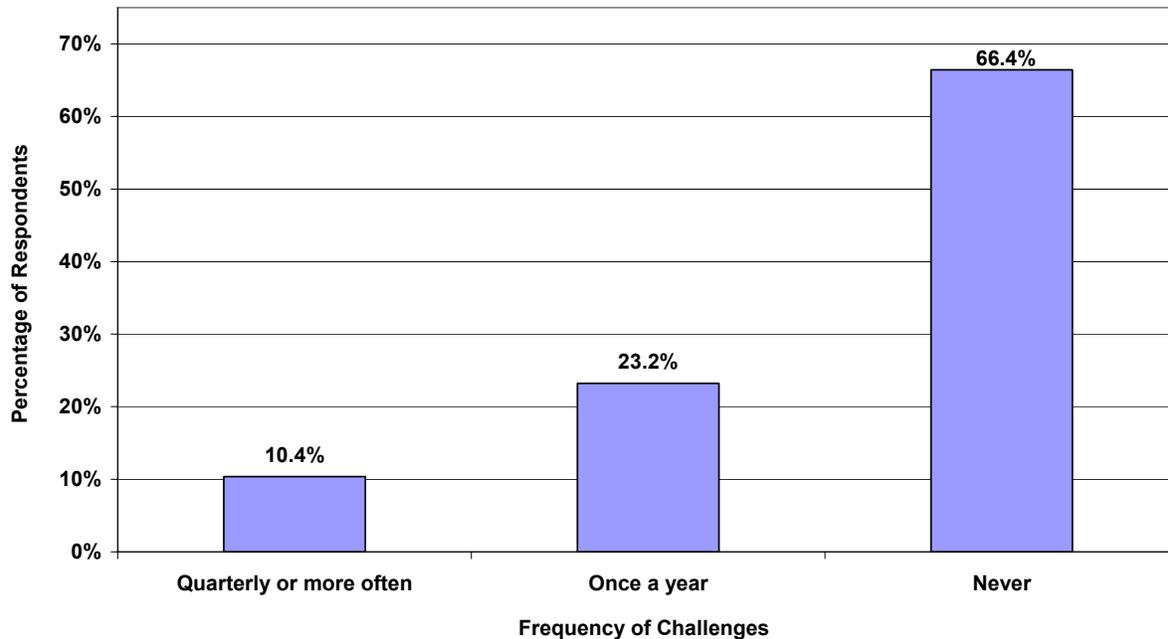


Internet *concerns* were reported quarterly or more often by 43.4 percent of all respondents. Whereas, considerably fewer respondents said they fielded *concerns* about the Internet once a year (27.1%) or never (29.5%). (See Chart 2.)

Concerns about the Internet were reported as occurring more frequently than *concerns* about library materials. For example, 43.4 percent of respondents heard *concerns* about the Internet quarterly or more often, but only 33.6 percent fielded *concerns* about library materials as often. However, *concerns* about library materials were more apt to occur once a year (36.9%), than were *concerns* about the Internet (27.1%). An equal percentage of respondents indicated they never fielded *concerns* about library materials or the Internet (29.5%).

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Chart 3
Frequency of Patrons Making Formal Challenges
To Library Materials or Internet Policies/Content



Two-thirds of all respondents said they never handled formal *challenges* to either library materials or the Internet. Of those indicating they handled *challenges*, only 1 in 10 respondents dealt with a challenge quarterly or more often. Most respondents dealing with *challenges* do so once a year (23.2%). (See Chart 3.)

Not surprisingly, respondents reported *challenges* occurring far less frequently than *concerns*. Three to four times as many respondents indicated they handled *concerns* quarterly or more often (library materials 33.6% and Internet 43.4%) than handled *challenges* that frequently (10.4%). Well over twice as many respondents indicated they never dealt with *challenges* (66.4%) compared to never dealing with *concerns*

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(29.5%). Thus the IFC's initial hypothesis that *concerns* are being handled far more frequently than *challenges* is supported by the findings of this study.

Concerns and Challenges by Type of Library

When asked how frequently they personally deal with patrons raising *concerns* about the content of library materials and the Internet, public library staff reported fielding these *concerns* more frequently than staff in other types of libraries. School library staff were the most apt to receive *concerns* an average of once a year.

Academic library staff reported *concerns* less

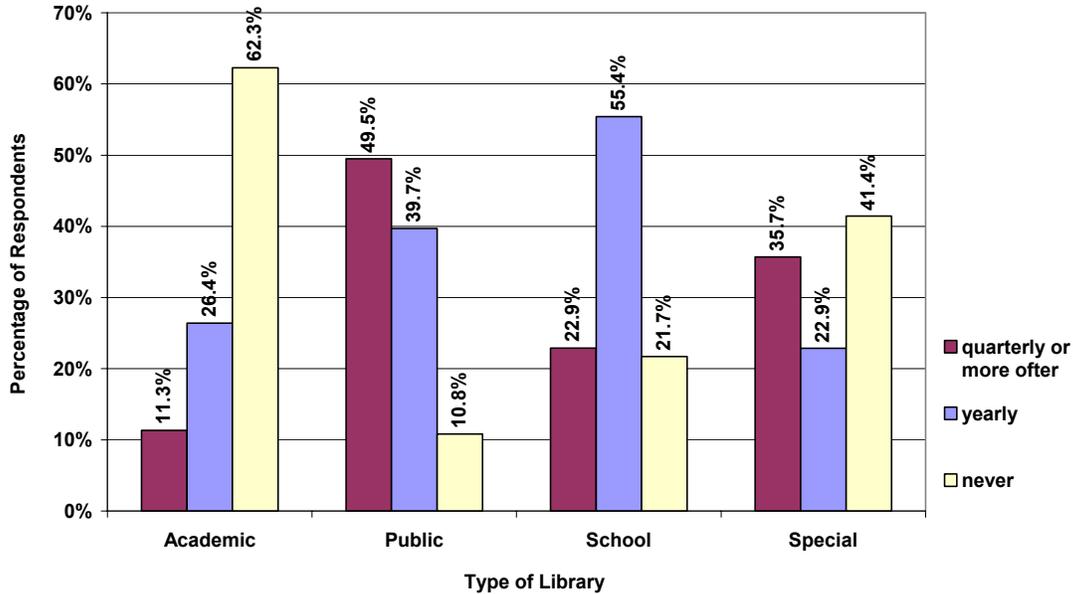
frequently than respondents from other types of libraries. Somewhere in the middle were the respondents from special libraries. All types of libraries experienced fewer *challenges* than *concerns*, with special and public libraries fielding *challenges* most frequently and academic libraries the least often.

"As an academic library, we would not withdraw any item based on a censorship request."

Director, Academic Library

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Chart 4
Frequency of Patrons Raising Concerns
About the Content of Library Materials
By Library Type



Compared to other types of libraries, respondents from public libraries reported receiving *concerns* about library materials most frequently with 49.5 percent indicating quarterly or more often.

However, school library staff were most apt to hear *concerns* annually (55.4%).

Academic staff were most likely to never hear *concerns* about library materials (62.3%). Interestingly, special library staff

were second most likely to indicate both

they never deal with *concerns* (41.4%) and they field *concerns* quarterly or more

often (35.7%). This seeming dichotomy undoubtedly reflects the catchall nature of the

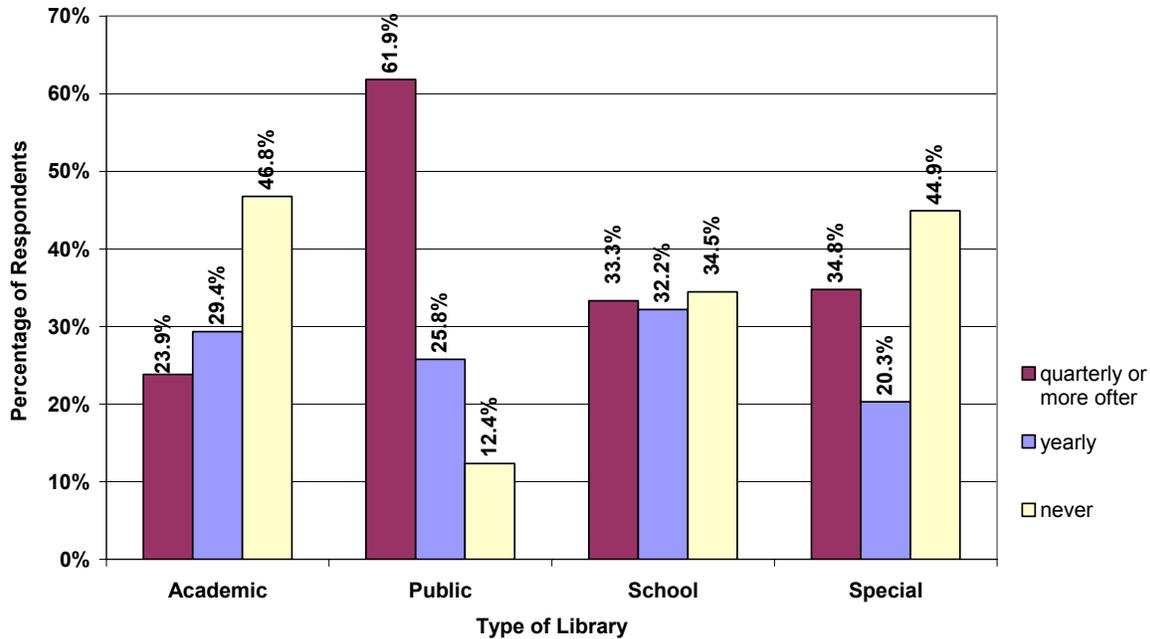
“While I believe in the right of a patron to privacy, working in a correctional facility I feel offenders should give up some of those rights naturally. In the instance of knowledge of an offender attempting to find information on weapons or other harmful situations that could endanger lives, library personnel should be able to reveal this information to those in authority. Currently, our rules are vague.”

Paraprofessional, Institutional Library

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special library category, i.e., it includes a wide variety of libraries, from private industry to institutional, serving a diverse patron base. (See Chart 4.)

Chart 5
Frequency of Patrons Raising Concerns
About Internet Policies or Content at the Library
By Library Type



As illustrated in Chart 5, almost two-thirds of public library staff (61.9%) reported hearing *concerns* from patrons about Internet policies or content at least quarterly, almost twice as often as school or special library personnel and three times as often as those in academic libraries. Internet *concerns* occurring annually were reported most often by school library personnel (32.2%). Special and academic library personnel were about equally likely to indicate they never heard *concerns* about the internet (44.9% and 46.8% respectively). This means, over half of all library staff said they dealt with *concerns* about the Internet at least annually.

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According to respondents, three of the four types of libraries – academic, public, and school – received *concerns* significantly more frequently (quarterly or more often) about the Internet than library materials.

Academics more than doubled the number of *concerns* about the Internet (23.9%)

compared to library materials (11.3%). Public and school libraries had a more modest, but

significant difference. Special libraries showed little difference between the two types of *concerns*.

“I work in a special library in the aerospace/defense industry. As this is a commercial setting, these issues rarely apply. However, interest is high among library staff and we do follow it, forwarding various news items to each other.”

Librarian, Special Library

Examining the affirmative responses to handling *concerns* among school library respondents (i.e., combining the concern frequencies of “quarterly or more often” and “yearly”) shows a higher percentage of *concerns* about library materials (78.3%) than the Internet (65.5%). Conversely, over a third reported “never” receiving *concerns* about the Internet, 12.8 percent higher than library materials. In addition, the

“Elementary school libraries DO act ‘in loco parentis’ and we are very aware that ‘selection’ can lead to ‘censorship.’ While we are committed to freedom to read, we are sensitive to parental involvement, and this has led to very good community relationships. No parent has requested an entire ban on any book, as we will respect their wishes regarding their child(ren).”

Librarian, School Library

frequency among Internet *concerns* is split evenly between quarterly (33.3%), yearly (32.2%), and never (34.5%). This trend could be explained by the

presence of strict Internet usage policies and filters on many school library computers, making *concerns* about Internet access a settled issue at many schools.

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Chart 6
Frequency of Patrons Making Formal Challenges
to Library Materials or Internet Policies/Content
By Library Type

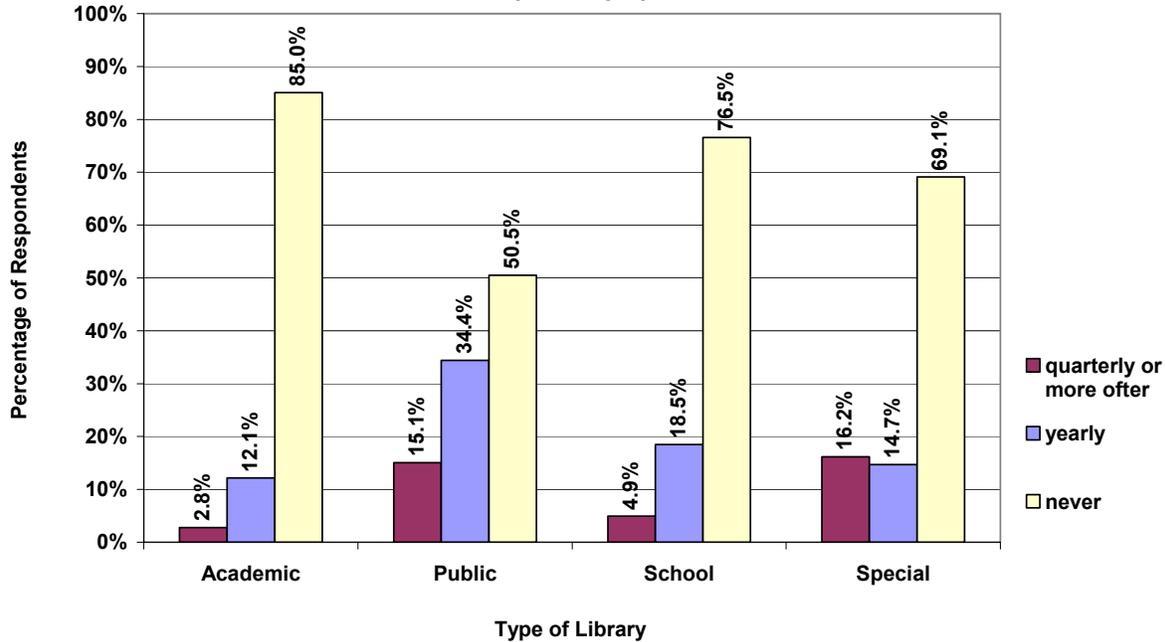


Chart 6 shows, of the four library types, special (16.2%) and public library (15.1%) respondents reported *challenges* occurring most frequently, that is, quarterly or more often. While academic and school respondents reported *challenges* happening less frequently (2.8% and 4.9% respectively). Over one-third of public library staff (34.4%) reported *challenges* happening yearly. A significant percentage of library staff in all types of organizations never deal with *challenges*, including over half of public library staff. Once again academic staff reported never handling *challenges* in the greatest numbers with 85.0 percent.

“My professional opinion working in a high school environment differs from my personal preferences and opinions. I need to take two sides for some of these issues. I can supervise my own children but feel the heady responsibility of working within a large high school setting and dealing with the lack of staffing for adequate supervision.”

Paraprofessional, School Library

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Across all library types, staff reported handling *challenges* far less frequently than *concerns*. For example, half of public library staff reported hearing *concerns* about library materials at least four times a year, but only 15 percent reported dealing with formal *challenges* as often. Similarly, one-third of school and special library staff indicated patrons had voiced *concerns* about Internet policies or content four or more times a year, but only 4.9 percent of school and 16.2 percent of special library staff reported dealing with *challenges* that frequently.

Concerns by Library Size and Type of Community

Respondents were asked the number of people their libraries serve, as well as to classify the type of community in which their library was located as urban, suburban, rural, or resort. Cross-tabulation of data about *concerns* and *challenges* by the number of people the library served was not statistically significant, nor was the cross-tabulation of the type of community and Internet *concerns*.

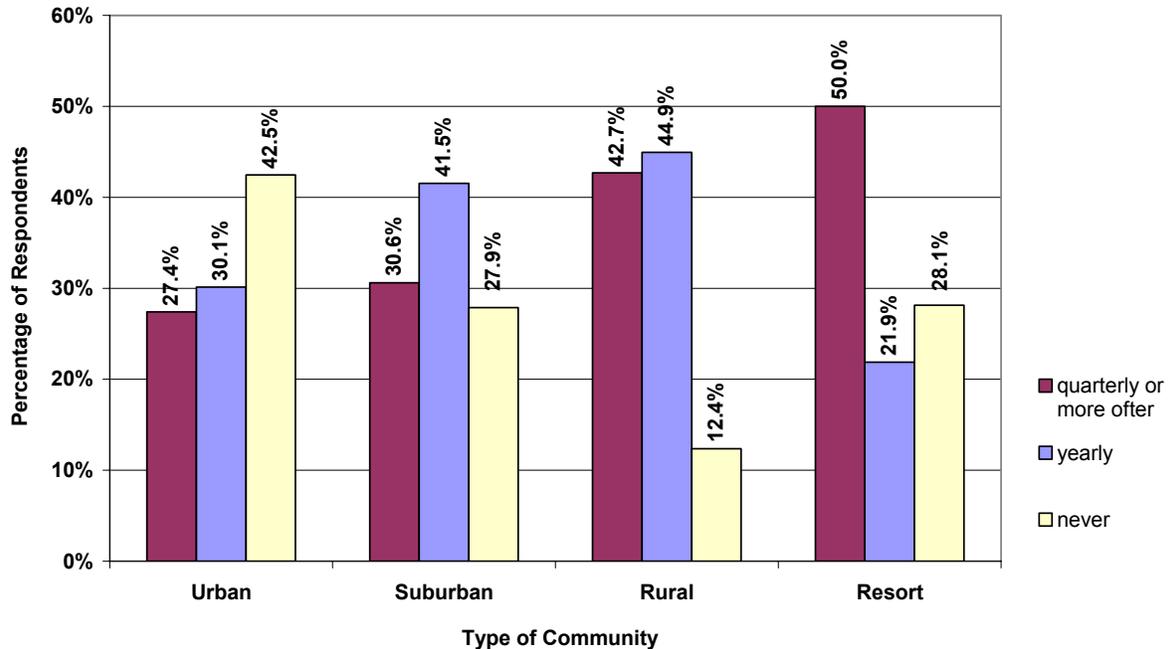
“Our local town board has been aching for a reason to force the library to filter and feels they can now because of CIPA (even though we receive no federal funds). Instead of commending the community for responsible Internet use (which is the real story), they want to think that many people are ‘accessing smut’ so in their small brained capacity as government officials, they decide to become the moral dictators of the people. They will probably force this library to filter.”

Director, Pubic Library

However, *concerns* about library materials and *challenges* did produce significant differences between community types.

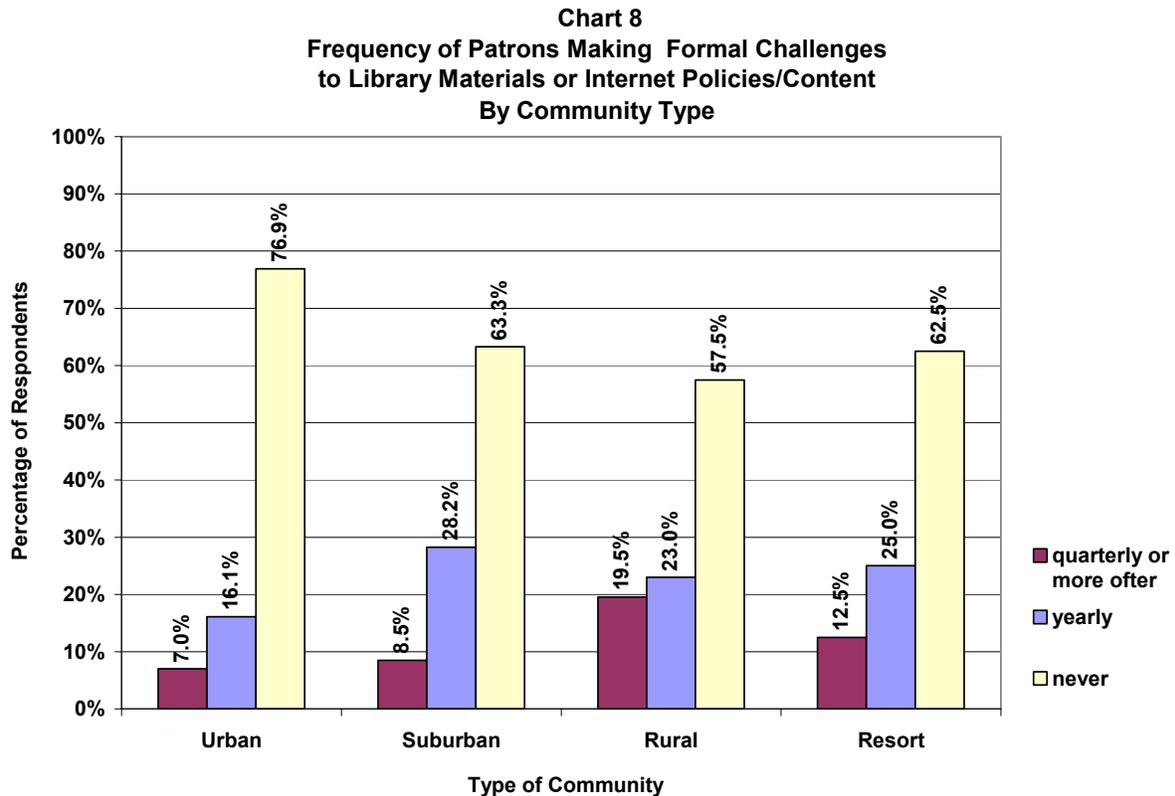
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Chart 7
Frequency of Patrons Raising Concerns
About the Content of Library Materials
By Community Type



As seen in Chart 7, respondents from libraries in resort communities were almost twice as likely as those in urban communities to indicate they fielded *concerns* about library materials quarterly or more often. Whether it is the diversity of the population, the mix of residents and non-residents, or some other factor, it is unclear why resort libraries have more *concerns* about library materials than libraries in other types of communities. On an annual basis, rural library staff received *concerns* (44.9%) more frequently than libraries in other communities. Staff members in urban libraries were more likely to say they never dealt with *concerns* about library materials as library staff at other types of libraries.

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Urban libraries handled *challenges* less frequently than the libraries in other communities. For instance, 20 percent of staff at rural libraries, the highest of all four community types, handled *challenges* at least quarterly, but only 7 percent of urban library staff reported handling *challenges* that frequently. Additionally, urban library respondents were less likely to indicate they dealt with *challenges* yearly and more likely to say they never dealt with *challenges* than were library staff in other communities. (See Chart 8.)

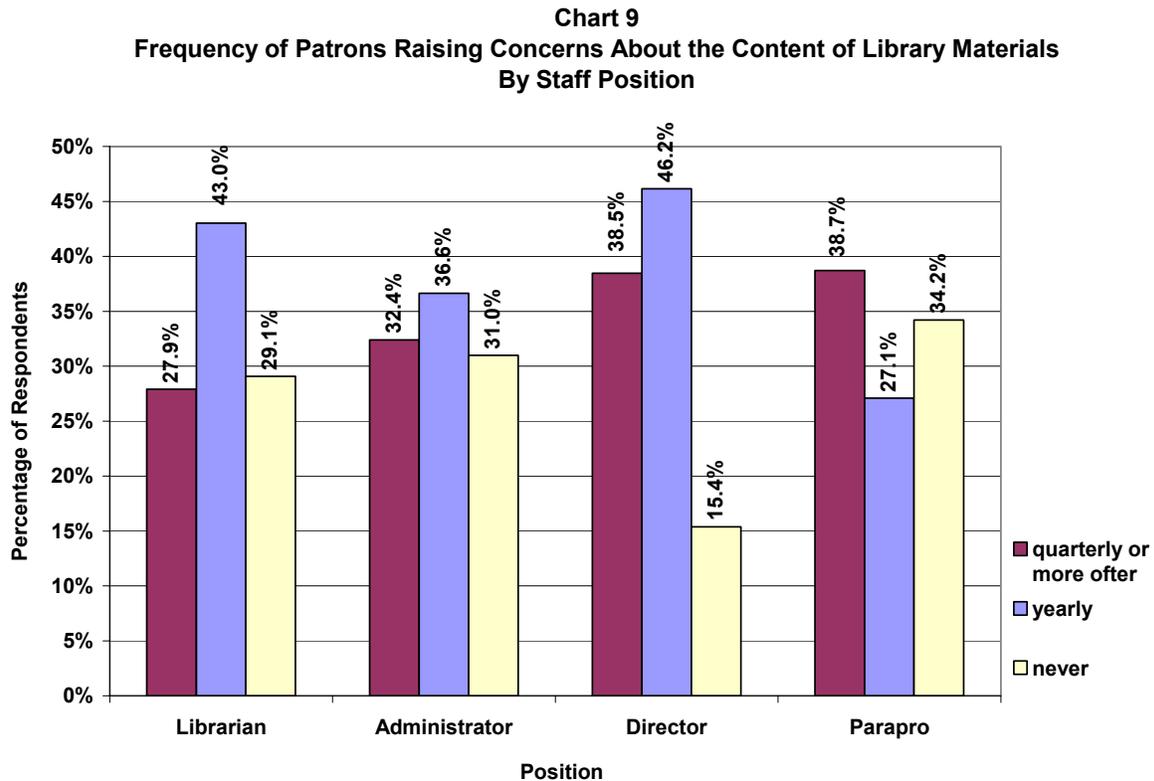
Overall, respondents from non-urban libraries, that is suburban, rural, and resort libraries, were more likely to field both *concerns* about library materials and formal *challenges*.

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Concerns and Challenges by Personnel Position

Respondents were asked to identify their position at the library as a librarian, administrator/manager, director, paraprofessional, independent researcher, or other.

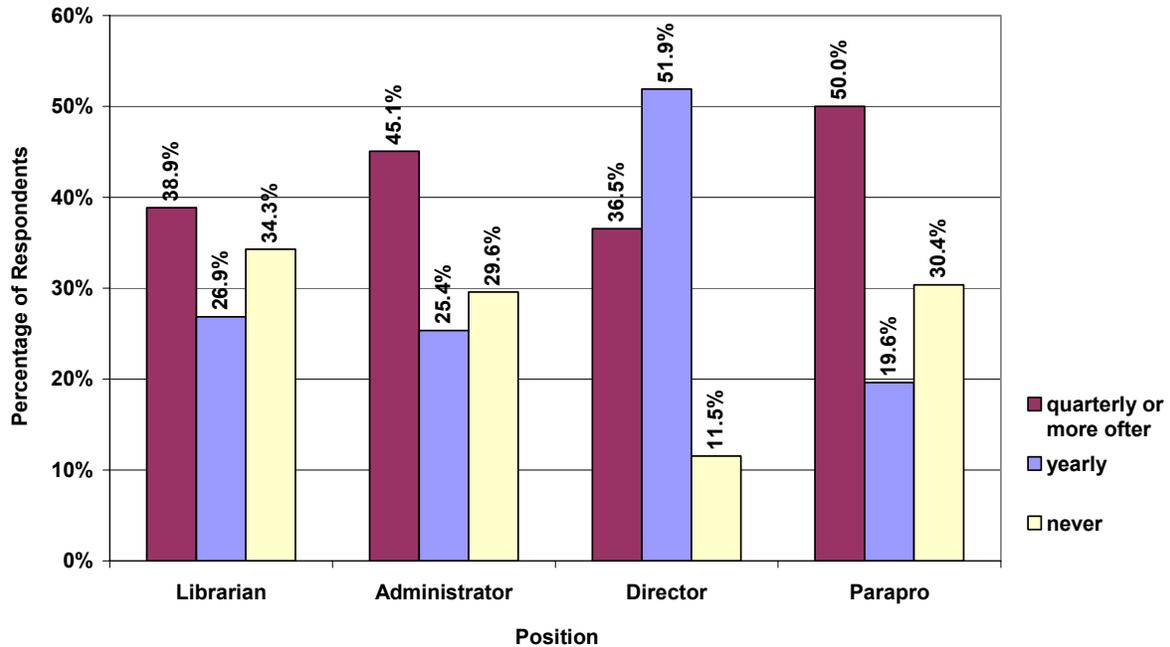
Note, in the following analysis the “paraprofessional” category incorporates “other” and “librarian” includes the one “independent researcher.”



Library paraprofessionals (38.7%) and directors (38.5%) indicated they handled *concerns* about library materials more frequently than other groups. In addition, directors dealt with library material *concerns* yearly more often (46.2%). The percentage of directors (15.4%) indicating they never heard *concerns* about library materials is half that of other personnel positions. (See Chart 9.)

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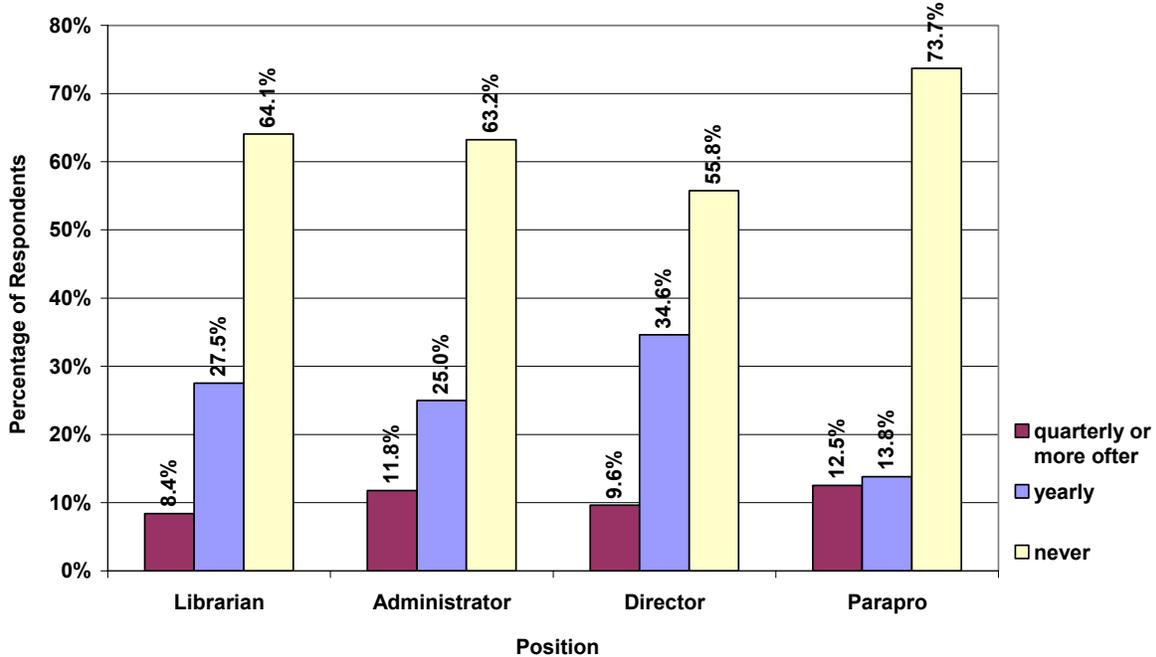
Chart 10
Frequency of Patrons Raising Concerns
About Internet Policies or Content at the Library
By Staff Position



Concerns about Internet policies or content were fielded most frequently by paraprofessionals (50.0%), followed closely by administrators (45.1%). Directors were most apt to hear concerns about the Internet yearly (51.9%) and were least likely to never handled one (11.5%) compared to other staff positions. (See Chart 10.)

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Chart 11
Frequency of Patrons Making Formal Challenges
to Library Materials or Internet Policies/Content
By Staff Position



Formal *challenges* were heard most frequently by library paraprofessionals (12.5%) and administrators (11.8%). Compared to other staff positions, directors were most likely to say they handled a challenge yearly (34.6%). A majority of all respondents indicated they never handled *challenges*, with paraprofessionals leading other staff positions with 73.7 percent. (See Chart 11.)

One of the key findings of this study was the frequency with which paraprofessionals indicated they were dealing with both *concerns* and *challenges*. A higher percentage of those indicating they were library paraprofessionals responded that they dealt with patron *concerns* and *challenges* “quarterly or more

“Without trained media specialists in school libraries, these issues are daily being compromised. Paraprofessionals are being paid to run most of the libraries in my school district, and have neither the training or the inclination to worry about censorship.”

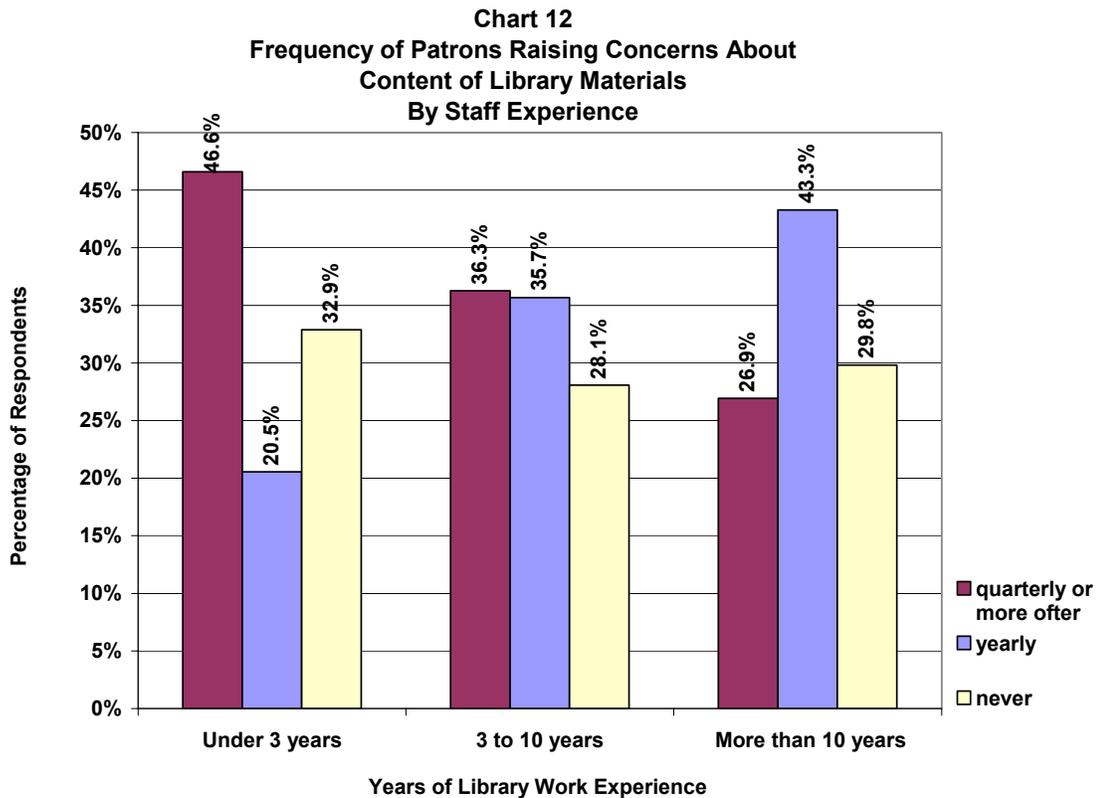
Librarian, School Library

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often” compared to other personnel positions. For example, half of paraprofessionals said they had patrons raising *concerns* about the Internet at least four times a year, compared to 38.9 percent of librarians, 45.1 percent of administrators, and 36.5 percent of directors.

Concerns and Challenges by Staff Experience

Respondents were asked to identify their level of library work experience as “less than three years,” “three to ten years,” or “more than ten years.” Cross-tabulating experience with *concerns* and *challenges*, only *concerns* about library materials was found to be statistically significant.



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As seen in Chart 12, library personnel with the least library work experience indicated they handled *concerns* about library materials more often than those with more experience. In fact, 46.9 percent of those with under three years experience handled *concerns* quarterly or more often, 10 percent more often than those with 3 to 10 years experience (36.3%) and 20 percent more frequently than those with 10 years experience (26.9%). In addition, one-third of library staff with less than three years in a library indicated they never dealt with *concerns* about library materials (32.9%). Personnel with more experience were the most apt to indicate they handled *concerns* about library materials yearly. Presumably, less experienced staff are handling *concerns* more frequently because they are more likely to be working directly with patrons and less likely to be in management, that is, they are more apt to be on the ‘frontlines’ than their more experienced colleagues.

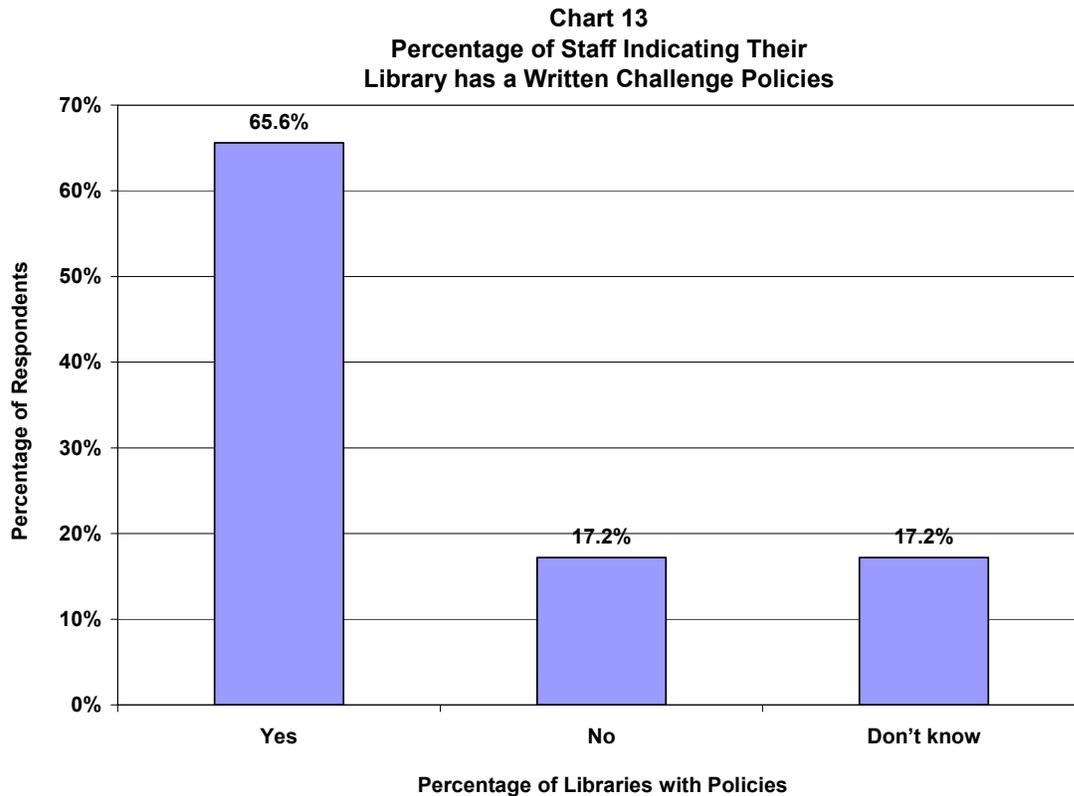
Challenge Policies in Libraries

In order to better understand challenges and policies in Colorado libraries, the survey asked respondents several questions about challenge policies at their libraries. The first question was, “Does your library have a written policy for handling challenges?”

“Because we have policies and procedures...challenges resulted in materials still being retained for students.”

Librarian, School Library

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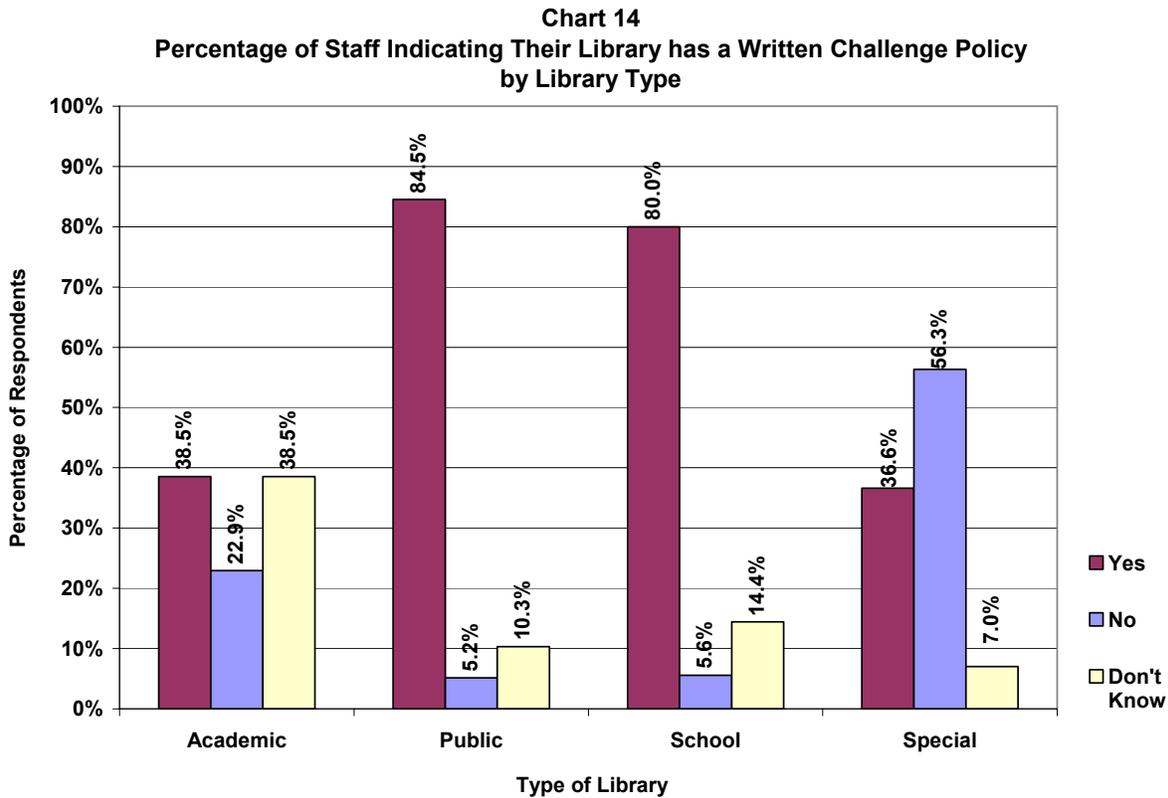


As Chart 13 shows, approximately two-thirds of respondents indicated they did have a challenge policy in place at their libraries (65.6%). Whereas, an equal percentage (17.2% each) of library staff indicated their library did not have a challenge policy or they didn't know if their library had a policy. (See Chart 13.)

“The tradition of public librarianship is very strongly allied to First Amendment rights and privacy. However, more and more librarians function in venues which are not public/democracies (i.e. schools, corporations, etc) and this needs to be considered...”

Librarian, Academic Library

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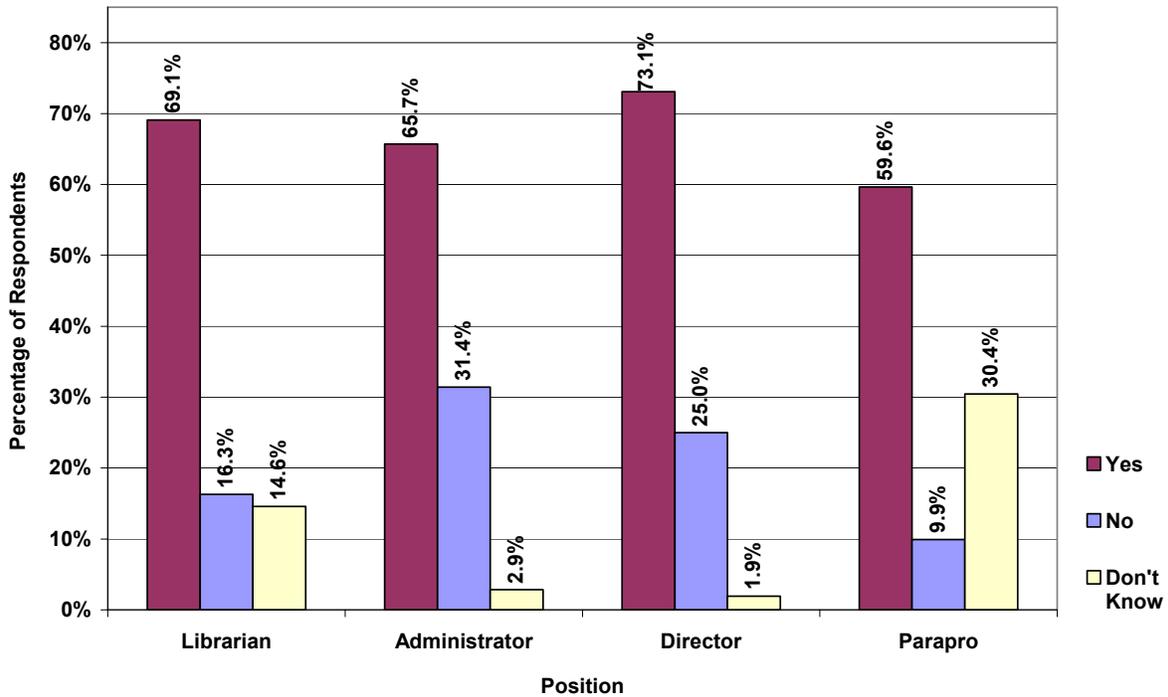
Looking at challenge policies by library type, the majority of public (84.5%) and school (80.0%) respondents indicated their libraries' had challenge policies. Notably, over a third of academic staff said they didn't know if their library had a policy, a much higher percentage than other types of libraries. Once again special libraries showed significant differences compared to other types of libraries. Undoubtedly as a function of their diversity, they were least likely to indicate they had a challenge policy with over half saying "no" (56.3%). (See Chart 14.)

"I will be doing my third Banned Books promotion at our small college and it gets bigger every year. The students love it. I also get quite a few comments on my ALA banned book T-shirt that I bought last year. It promotes education on the issue."

Paraprofessional, Academic Library

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Chart 15
Percentage of Staff Indicating Their Library has a Written Challenge Policy
By Staff Position

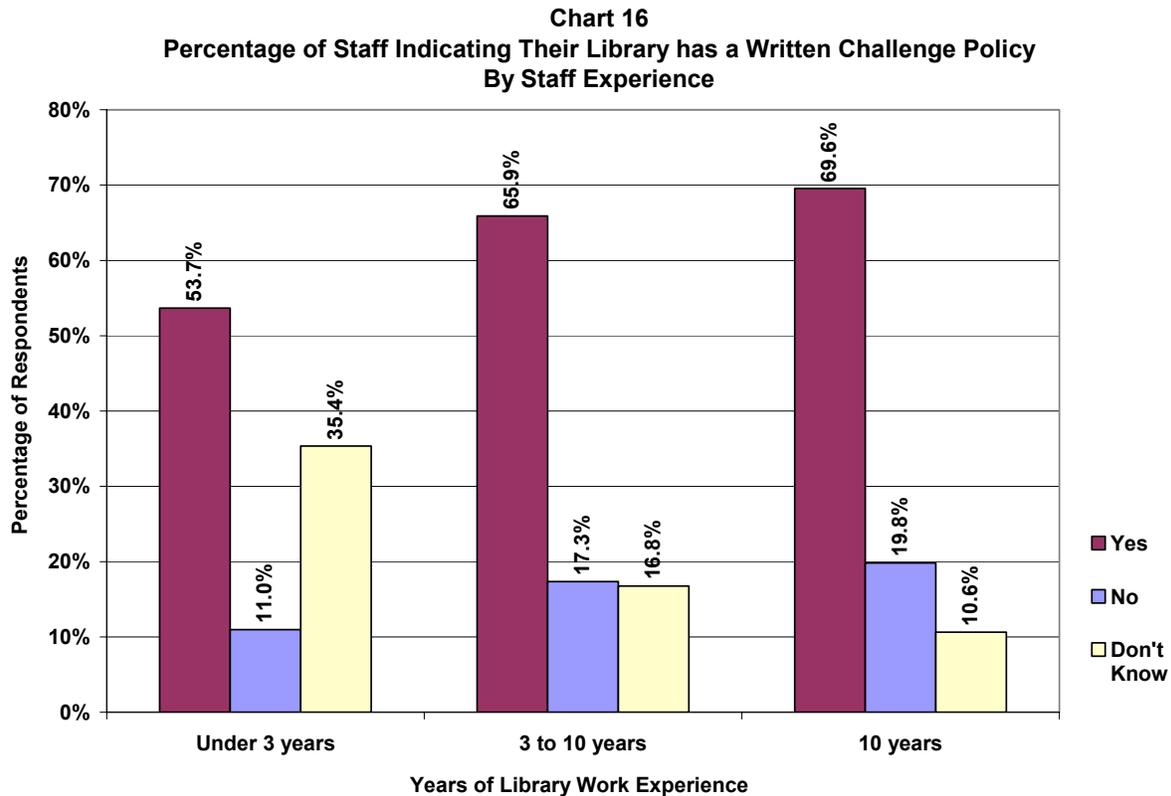


Looking at challenge policies by personnel position sheds light on awareness of such policies within the library. Not surprisingly, directors and administrators seemed most aware of their libraries' challenge policy with only a small percentage indicating they "don't know" (1.9% and 2.9% respectively). However, more librarians (14.6%) and a staggering percentage of paraprofessionals (30.4%) indicated they "don't know" if their library has a challenge policy. (See Chart 15.)

"Censorship needs to be discussed with staff, students, and administration throughout the year."

Librarian, School Library

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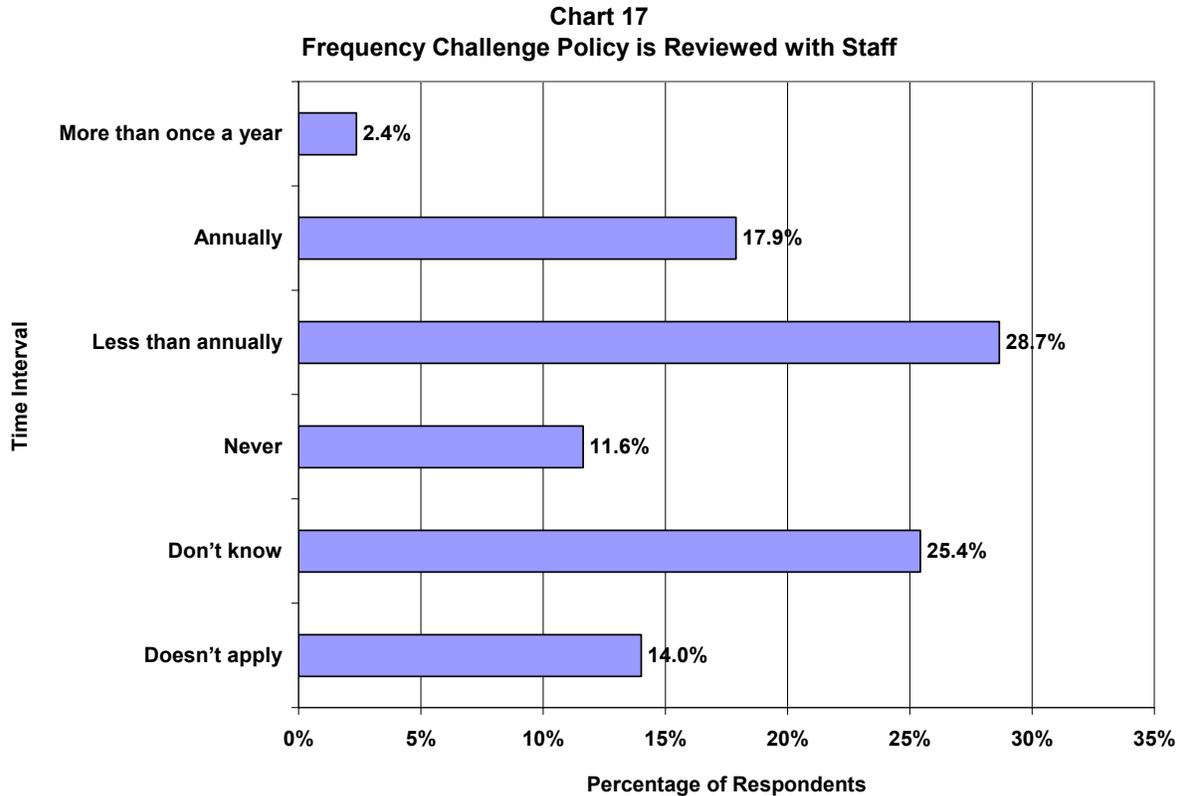
Staff with the least experience – under three years – were twice as likely as those with 3 to 10 years experience and three times as likely as those with 10 years experience to indicate they didn't know if their library had a challenge policy in place. (See Chart 16.)

Looking at staff experience and personnel position with challenge policy awareness, indicates that less experienced, paraprofessionals are not as well informed about their libraries' challenge policy as those with more experience in professional positions.

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Reviewing Challenge Policies with Library Personnel

When asked how frequently the challenge policy was reviewed with staff at their library, respondents could indicate more than once a year, annually, less than annually, never, don't know, or doesn't apply.

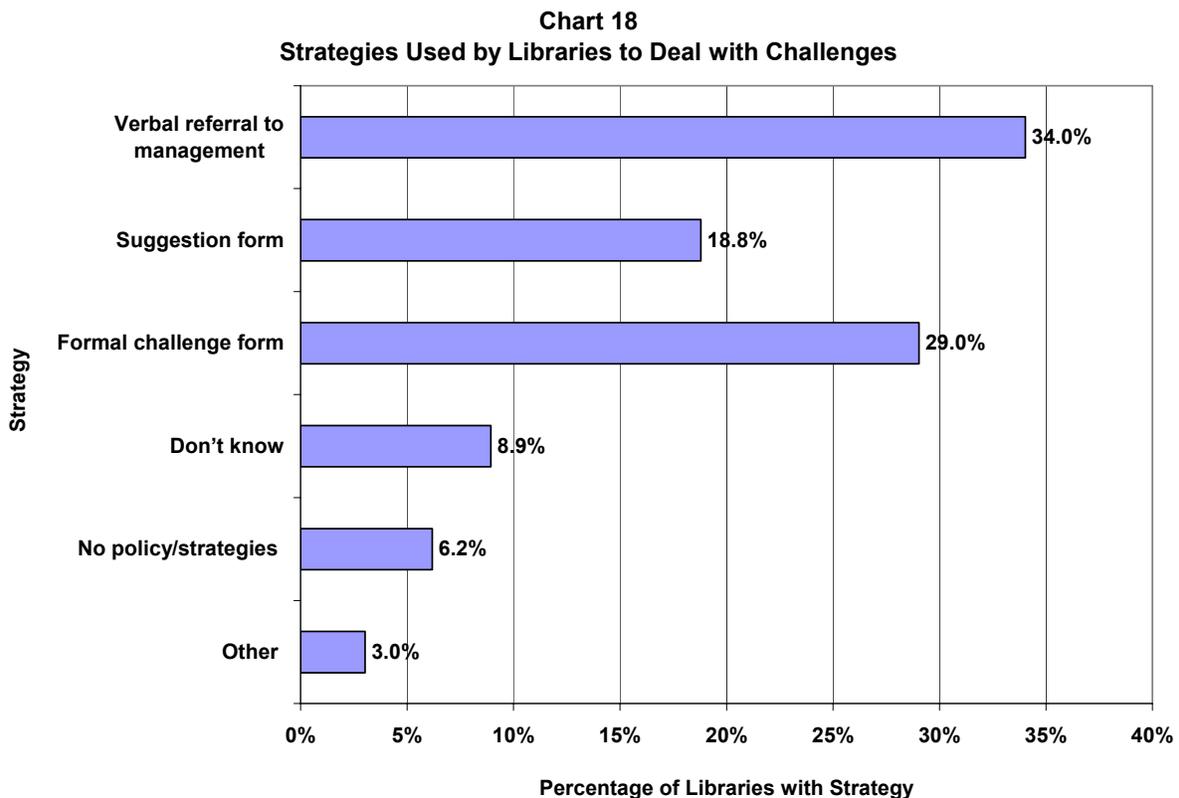


As illustrated in Chart 17, “less than annually” was the most frequently indicated interval for reviewing the library’s challenge policy with staff (28.7%) and “annually” was the second most popular interval (17.9%). More than one in ten respondents either “never” (11.6%) review the challenge policy or indicated it “doesn’t apply” (14.0%) in their library. One in four respondents indicated they “don’t know” how often their library reviews such policies with staff.

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Challenge Strategies in Libraries

Respondents were asked to identify strategies used in their libraries to deal with challenges to library resources. As listed in the question, strategies included verbal referral to management, suggestion form, formal challenge form, don't know, no policy/strategies, and other/please specify.

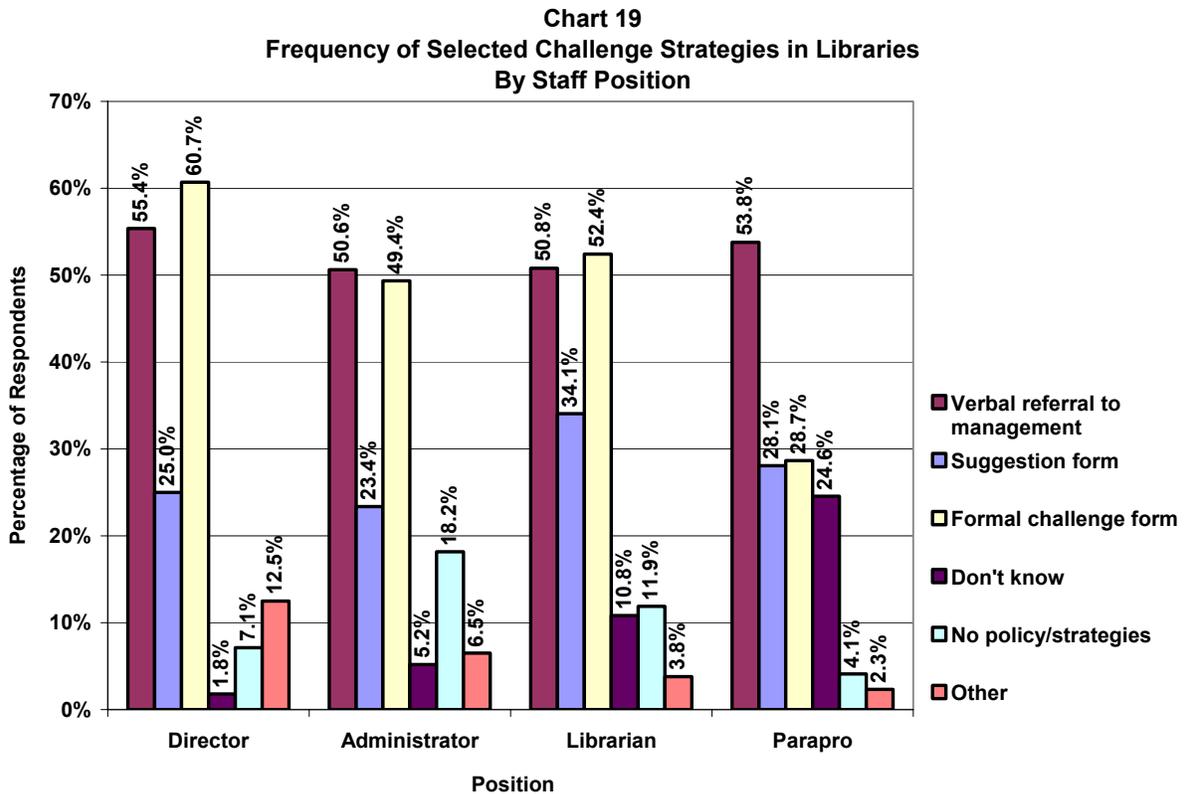


Overall, one-third of respondents indicated their libraries' challenge strategies included "verbal referral to management," the most frequently used strategy.

According to respondents, a "formal challenge form" (29.0%) was used by more libraries than a "suggestion form" (18.8%). Only 3 percent of libraries had challenge strategies other than those listed in the question. By far the most frequently specified "other" strategies were referral to a review committee and discussing the issue with

Intellectual Freedom Issues in Colorado Libraries: Concerns, Challenges, Resources, and Opinions

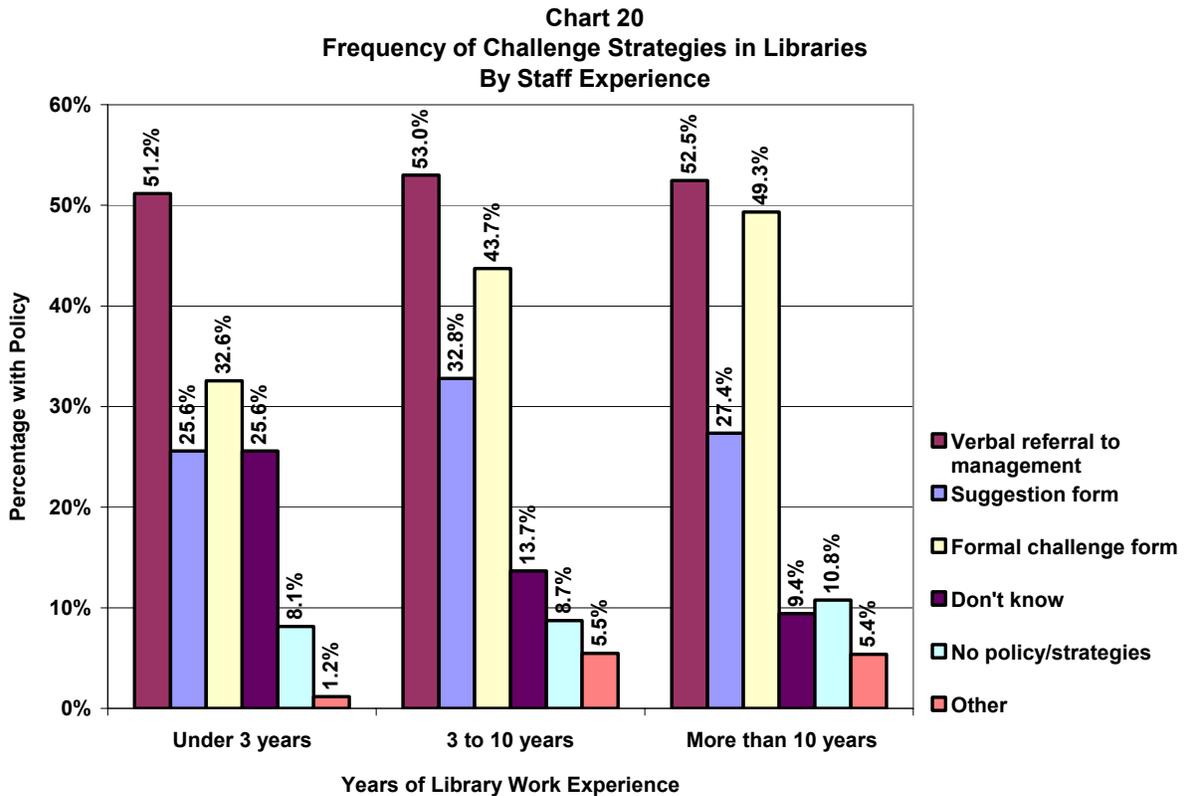
the patron or parent. Under 10 percent of respondents said their library had “no policy/strategies” (6.2%) or they “don’t know” (8.9%) which strategies their library used to handle challenges. (See Chart 18.)



The perception of challenge strategies varies significantly among staff positions, especially between paraprofessionals and other staff. Paraprofessionals (28.7%) stated their libraries’ had a “formal challenge form” less than half as often as directors (60.7%), and significantly less than administrators (49.4%) and librarians (52.4%). Also, a quarter of paraprofessionals said they “don’t know” their libraries challenge strategies, a much high percentage than other groups. Interestingly, approximately

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the same percentage of all staff positions indicated their library had a “verbal referral to management” strategy in place. (See Chart 19.)



Comparing staff with varying levels of library work experience, the less experienced staff – under three years – were less likely to indicate their libraries’ had a “formal challenge form” (32.6%) or a “suggestion form” (25.6%) than staff with more experience. In addition, one in four of the less experienced staff indicated they didn’t know their libraries’ challenge policy. Predictably, approximately half of each group indicated their libraries’ strategies included “verbal referral to management.” (See Chart 20.)

“I need to find out more about library policy and challenge-response strategy here where I work.”

Paraprofessional,
Academic Library

Intellectual Freedom Issues in Colorado Libraries: Concerns, Challenges, Resources, and Opinions

The findings of this study suggest that less experienced paraprofessionals are not well informed about their libraries' challenge policies and strategies, yet they are handling a significant number of challenges and concerns. In other words, they are on the front lines dealing with patrons' complaints more frequently than their more experienced, professional colleagues, but they "don't know" their libraries' challenge policies or strategies. This gap in knowledge would indicate an area where some libraries need to bring staff training more inline with staff responsibility.

"All staff at libraries should be educated re: the USA PATRIOT Act etc., whether or not they deal with the public directly. Professional librarians have access to this information through ALA, but library staff often are neglected."

Paraprofessional,
Academic Library

Usage Rates of Intellectual Freedom Resources

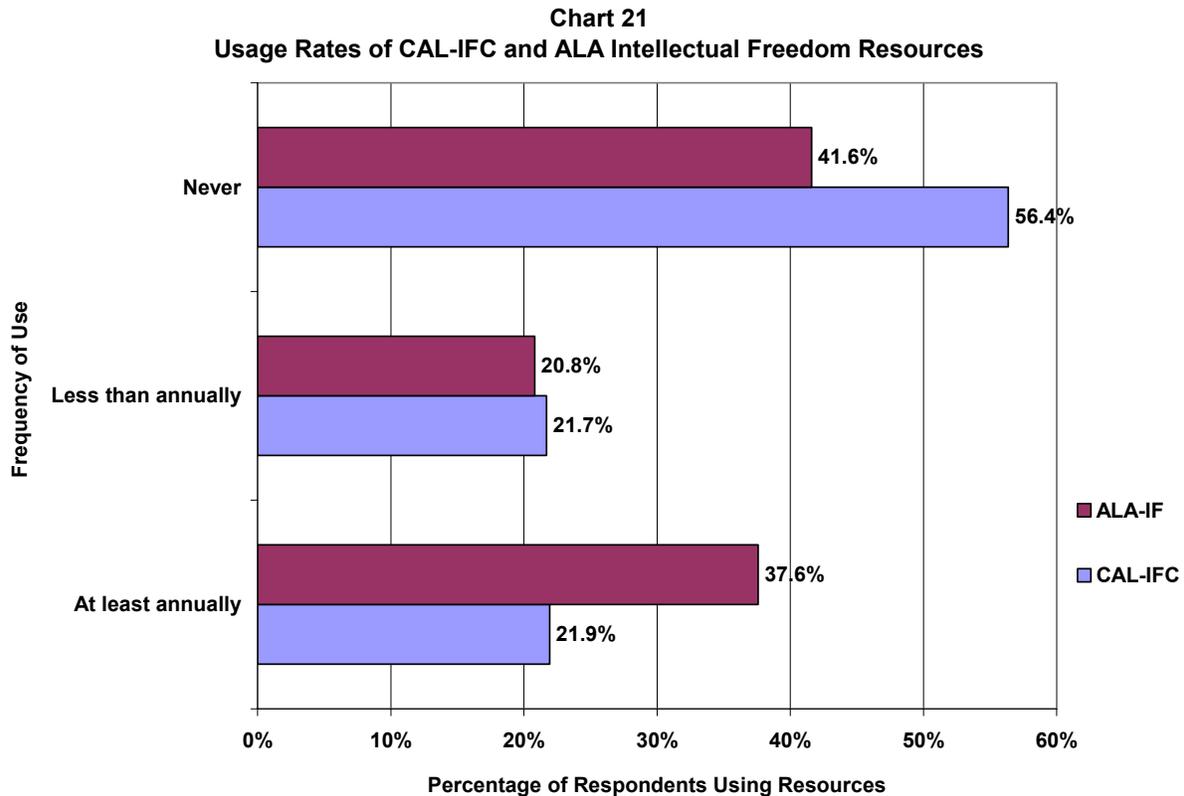
To help determine the usage rates of the CAL-IFC and ALA Intellectual Freedom

"The CAL Intellectual Freedom Committee resources are very practical and useful to Colorado librarians."

System Director

(ALA-IF) resources, the survey asked respondents how often they used the two sets of resources. Responses have been consolidated into three time intervals: never, less than annually, and at least annually.

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Over one-third of library staff are using ALA-IF resources “at least annually” and one-fifth are using CAL-IFC resources that often. Approximately one in five respondents indicated they used these resources “less than yearly.” Two out of five respondents indicated that they never use the ALA-IF resources and over half never use the CAL-

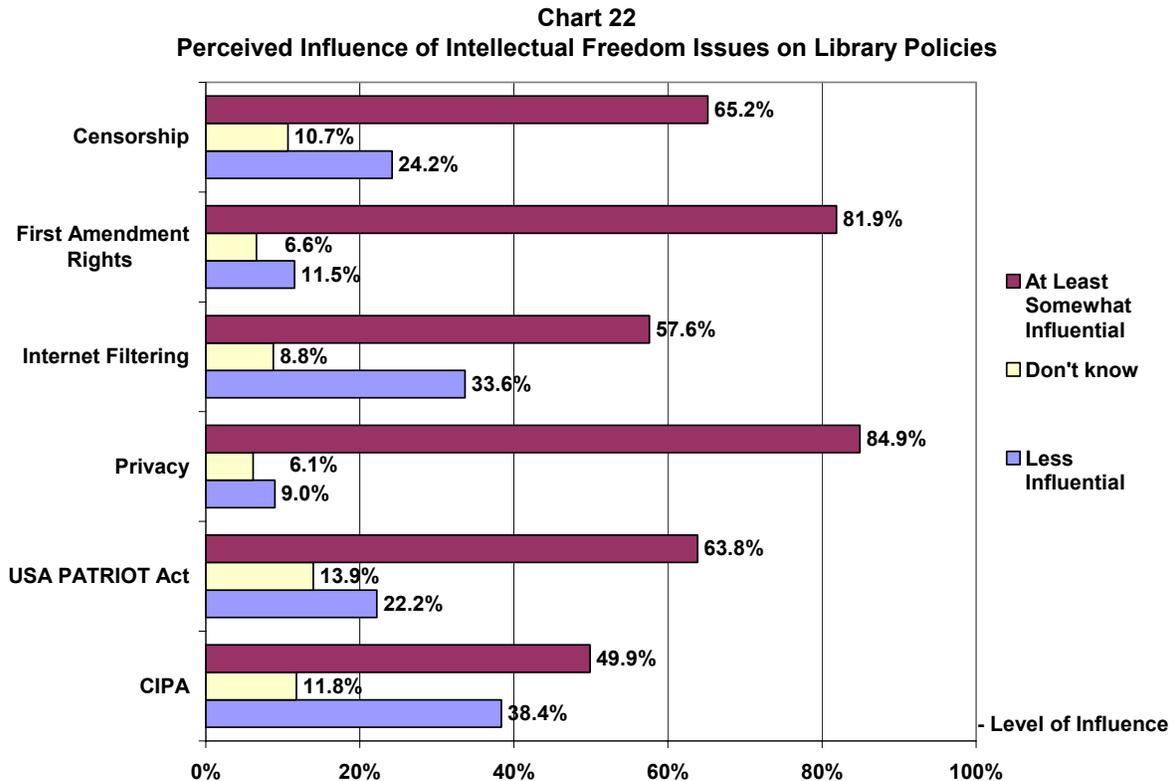
“I am not aware of CAL's resource materials...but I will check them out.”
Paraprofessional, Public Library

IFC resources. Although some library personnel may not have a reason to use IFC resources in the course of their work, it seems likely that there are at least some who could be using these resources who are unaware of them. (See Chart 21.)

Intellectual Freedom Issues in Colorado Libraries: Concerns, Challenges, Resources, and Opinions

Intellectual Freedom Issues in Libraries

To gauge the impact of intellectual freedom issues in libraries, the survey asked respondents to rate the influence of specific legislation and issues on their libraries' policies. The question had a five-point scale that ranged from "not influential" to "very influential," as well as "don't know." Intellectual freedom issues addressed included the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), USA PATRIOT Act, privacy, Internet filtering, First Amendment rights, and censorship.



As seen in Chart 22, at least half of respondents felt all the issues listed in the question influenced their libraries' policies at least somewhat. CIPA was cited by the fewest people (49.9%), presumably because this federal legislation limiting children's

Intellectual Freedom Issues in Colorado Libraries: Concerns, Challenges, Resources, and Opinions

access to the Internet applies only to school and public libraries. Four out of five respondents indicated that privacy (84.9%) and First Amendment rights (81.9%) had at least somewhat of an influence in their library. Internet filtering (57.6%) and the USA PATRIOT Act (63.8%) were influential in fewer libraries according to respondents. Those indicating they “don’t know” about the influence in their libraries’ hovered around 10 percent.

Intellectual Freedom Issues Get

Personal

In the final question of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with seven statements about intellectual freedom issues. The survey used a five-point rating scale, with one being “strongly disagree” and five being “strongly agree.”

In addition, the option of “unfamiliar with issue” was used to eliminate uninformed and/or uninterested respondents.

“We monitor challenges to the First Amendment locally and nationally. We have policies and procedures in place to deal with legal issues and challenges to our patron's privacy. Staff have been educated on our policies and trained on our procedures. Our legal counsel is informed. Every effort is made to protect our patron's privacy.”

Director, Public Library

“The US PATRIOT Act really sickens me--particularly the gag order. It's bad enough that they want to invade patron records but it's even worse that librarians who have to turn over those records are ordered to not say a word.”

Librarian, Public Library

“The USA Patriot Act is a necessary policy...we are at war and this requires more stringent measures regarding patron privacy...I believe librarians around the country are over-reacting to perceived 'abuses'.”

Paraprofessional, Academic/Public Library

“Homeland security concerns should not compromise privacy as described in Section 215 of the so-called PATRIOT act and related legislation, regulations, and government procedures. Section 215 should be repealed or extensively changed to protect privacy of US citizens.”

Administrator, Special Library

Intellectual Freedom Issues in Colorado Libraries: Concerns, Challenges, Resources, and Opinions

The responses were averaged and can be seen in Chart 23 below. Demonstrating strong support for some of the basic tenets of librarianship, respondents most strongly agreed with the statements, “First Amendment rights are the cornerstone of good libraries” (4.59 average rating), and “Librarians should be proud of ALA’s categorical opposition to censorship” (4.45). Respondents also showed concern for privacy and the impact of current laws by disagreeing with the statement, “Homeland security concerns may justify compromising patron privacy” (2.17), and agreeing with the statement, “The USA PATRIOT Act unnecessarily compromises the privacy of library patrons” (4.34).

The Internet filtering issue, on the other hand, had a more mixed reaction. In response to the statement, “CIPA is an

effective law for protecting children from pornography on the Internet” the majority disagreed (2.28). However, they agreed with the statement, “Internet filters should be

“CIPA is a lousy law and should have never been passed and violates first amendment rights and doesn’t really protect children. However, it’s still the law right now and to oppose it vehemently is spitting in the wind and possibly damaging the ability of Colorado libraries to get funding.”

Library Administrator

“Public libraries are designed to be used by the public. If there are censorship and filtering concerns these should be dealt with at home by adults and parents not by librarians in a library.”

Librarian, Public Library

“A colleague who works in a public library in Colorado has related to me his frustration over adult male patrons using library PCs to surf the Web for pornography... Library managers have got to get some backbone and support their staff who are begging for policies that will let them ban pornography viewers from the library.”

Librarian, Special Library

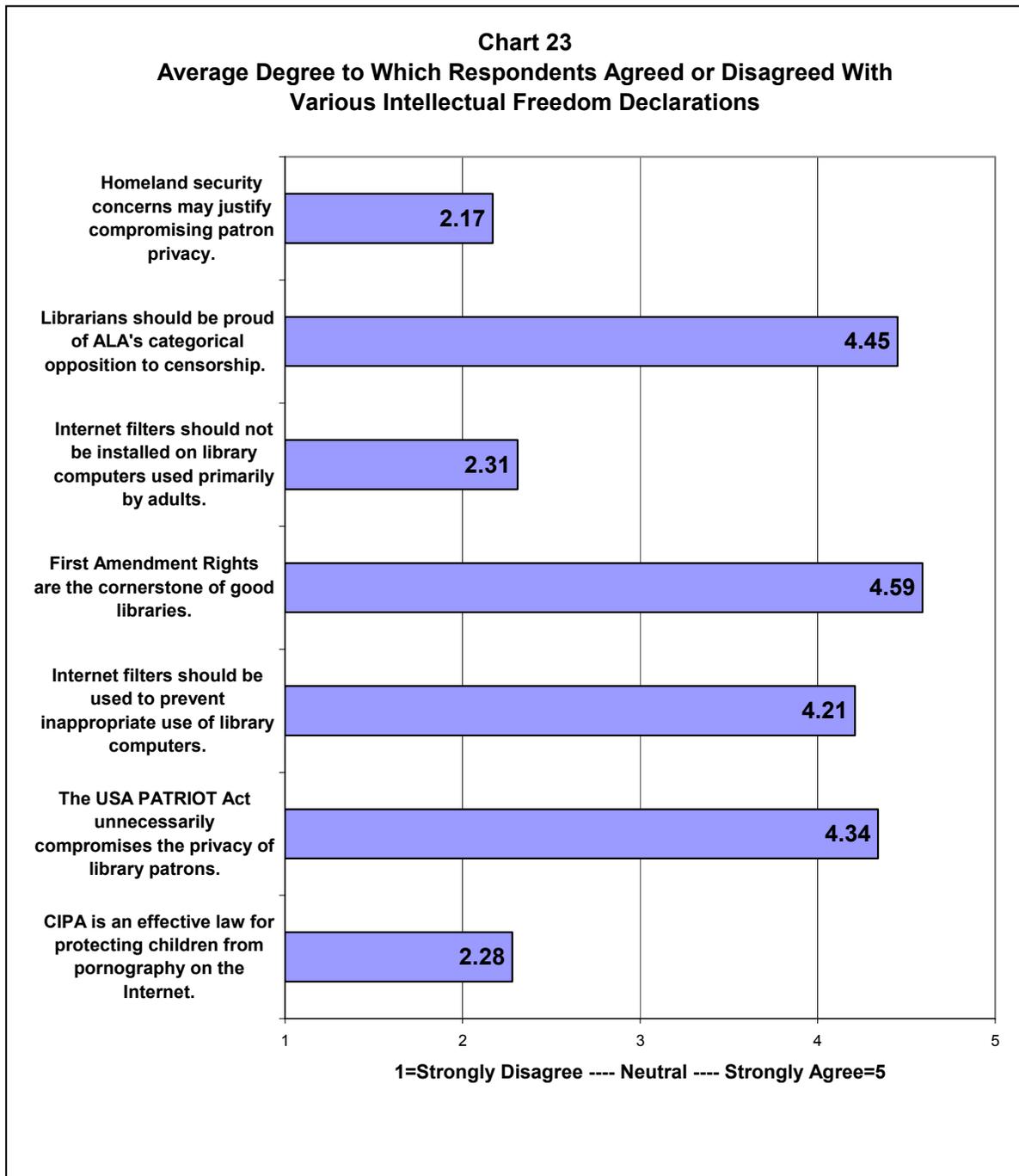
“The Children’s Internet Protection Act is probably somewhat effective to protect children on the internet but internet filters should not be installed on library computers used primarily by adults. Adults in libraries should have full access to the internet due to First Amendment rights.”

Paraprofessional, Academic Library

Intellectual Freedom Issues in Colorado Libraries: Concerns, Challenges, Resources, and Opinions

used to prevent inappropriate use of library computers” (4.21) and disagreed with “Internet filters should not be installed on library computers used primarily by adults” (2.31). The conclusion being that when it comes to the Internet, the respondents were willing to risk filtering materials that might be protected by the First Amendment when they were characterized as “inappropriate.” The apparently mixed responses to questions regarding adults and children, and materials branded “inappropriate” may indicate that the concept of inappropriateness is a blurry one. As a result, it may become a point of contention in judicial tests of state and federal laws that mandate or encourage filtering.

Intellectual Freedom Issues in Colorado Libraries: Concerns, Challenges, Resources, and Opinions



Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that there are issues in the Colorado library community that need to be addressed and resources that are being underutilized.

Intellectual Freedom Issues in Colorado Libraries: Concerns, Challenges, Resources, and Opinions

- More libraries need to establish written challenge policies and develop strategies for handling challenges.
- Challenge policies and strategies should be reviewed regularly with *all* library personnel.
- Because they frequently deal with patrons on the front lines, less experienced staff, paraprofessionals, and librarians need special attention when reviewing policies and strategies for handling concerns about and challenges to library resources.
- The CAL Intellectual Freedom Committee needs to raise awareness about intellectual freedom resources within the Colorado library community.

Intellectual freedom is a guiding principle for libraries and an awareness of issues and resources can help library staff meet the concerns and challenges of their patrons with a well-informed, compassionate, and consistent message.

“Liberty has never come from the government. Liberty has always come from the subjects of government. The history of liberty is the history of resistance. The history of liberty is a history of the limitation of governmental power not the increase of it.”
—Woodrow Wilson

Courtesy of
Administrator, Career College Library

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Colorado Librarians and Intellectual Freedom

For the purposes of this questionnaire a challenge is defined as any attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group.

1) Where do you live?

- Colorado
- Other U.S. state
- Outside U.S.A

2) In what type of library do you work? Mark one.

- Academic
- Public
- School
- Special
- Self-employed information professional
- Other

3) How many people does your library serve? Mark one.

- Large
(university / public serving 25,001+ / school serving 1,001+ / special with 5+ librarians)
- Medium
(college / public serving 10,000-25,000 / school serving 300-1,000/ special with 2-5 librarians)
- Small
(community college / public serving <10,000 / school serving < 300 / special with 1 librarian)

4) What best describes the community in which your library is located? Mark one.

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- Resort

5) What best describes your position at the library? Mark one.

- Librarian
- Administrator/Manager
- Director
- Paraprofessional
- Independent Researcher
- Other

Appendix A: Questionnaire

6) How long have you been working in a library? Mark one.

- Less than 3 years
- 3 to 10 years
- More than 10 years
- Retired
- Don't work in a library

7) On average, how frequently do you personally deal with patrons raising concerns (not formal challenges) about the content of library materials (e.g., books, magazines, movies, CDs, etc)?

Mark one.

- 1 or more times per week
- Once a month
- Once a quarter
- Once a year
- Never
- Don't know

8) On average, how frequently do you personally deal with patrons raising concerns (not formal challenges) about Internet policies or content at your library? Mark one.

- 1 or more times per week
- Once a month
- Once a quarter
- Once a year
- Never
- Don't know

9) On average, how frequently do you personally deal with patrons making formal challenges to library materials or Internet policies/content? Mark one.

- 1 or more times per week
- Once a month
- Once a quarter
- Once a year
- Never
- Don't know

10) Does your library have a written policy for handling challenges? Mark one.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Appendix A: Questionnaire

11) How frequently is the challenge policy reviewed with staff? Mark one.

- More than once a year
- Annually
- Less than annually
- Never
- Don't know
- Doesn't apply

12) What are the strategies your library uses to deal with challenges to library resources (including Internet, displays, books, and other materials)? Mark all that apply.

- Verbal referral to management
- Suggestion form
- Formal challenge form
- Don't know
- No policy/strategies
- Other

13) Do you use the Colorado Association of Libraries' Intellectual Freedom Committee resource materials (e.g. USA PATRIOT Act Information, Intellectual Freedom Handbook, & Facilitator's Manual for Intellectual Freedom Training)? Mark one.

- Yes, weekly
- Yes, monthly
- Yes, yearly
- Yes, but less than yearly
- No, never

14) Do you use ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee or Office of Intellectual Freedom resource materials (e.g., Banned Books Week resources, Intellectual Freedom Toolkits, Challenge Support, etc)? Mark one.

- Yes, weekly
- Yes, monthly
- Yes, yearly
- Yes, but less than yearly
- No, never

Appendix A: Questionnaire

15) In your opinion, to what extent do these issues influence policies at your library? Mark one for each factor.

	Not Influential	Somewhat Influential	Very Influential	Don't Know
Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
USA PATRIOT Act	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Privacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet Filtering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Amendment Rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Censorship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Questions 16 & 17 on following page.

**Appendix A:
Questionnaire**

16) Please tell us the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree	Unfamiliar with Issue
The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) is an effective law for protecting children from pornography on the Internet.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The USA PATRIOT Act unnecessarily compromises the privacy of library patrons.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Internet filters should be used to prevent inappropriate use of library computers.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
First Amendment Rights are the cornerstone of good libraries.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Internet filters should not be installed on library computers used primarily by adults.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Librarians should be proud of ALA's categorical opposition to censorship.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Homeland security concerns may justify compromising patron privacy.	<input type="checkbox"/>					

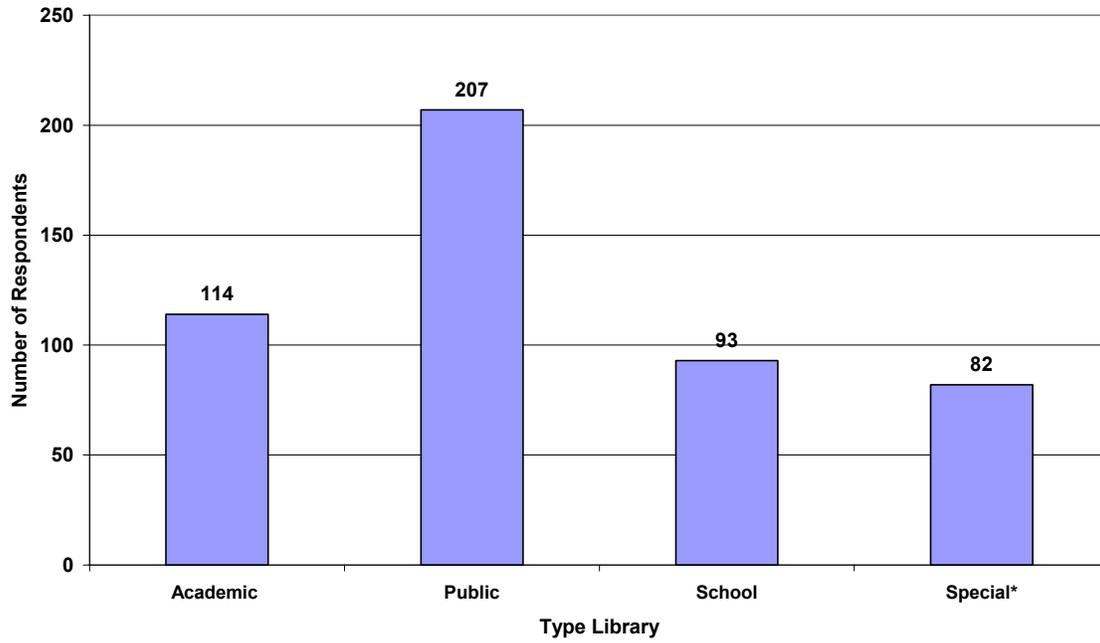
17) Comments and insights:

Thank you for participating in the Colorado Association of Libraries' Intellectual Freedom Committee's (IFC) survey of Colorado librarians. Survey results will be available this fall on the IFC web page at <http://www.cal-webs.org/if.html>

Appendix B: Individual Question Responses

Note: Only responses from Colorado residents were used, therefore no chart was produced for the first question, "Where do you live?"

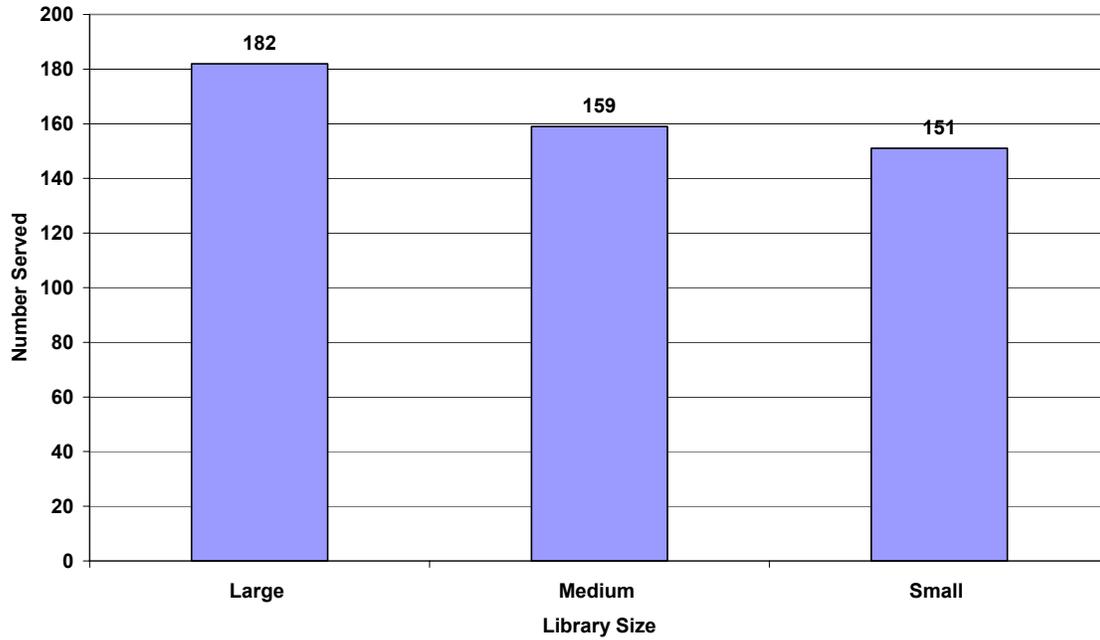
**Question 2:
In what type of library do you work?**



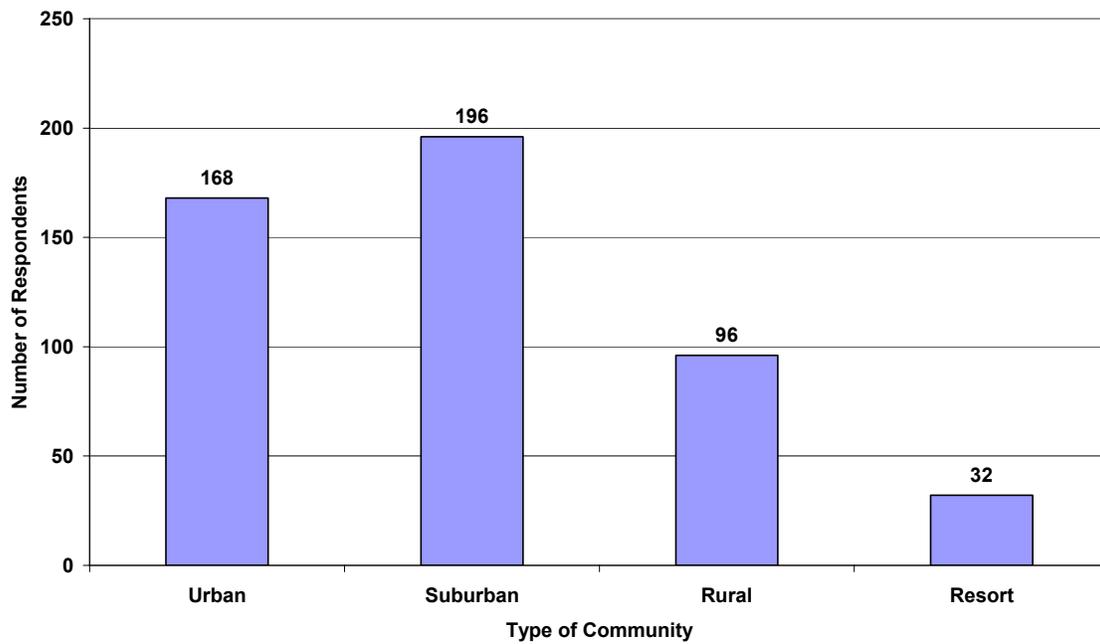
* Special library includes self-employed and other.

Appendix B: Individual Question Responses

Question 3:
How many people does your library serve?

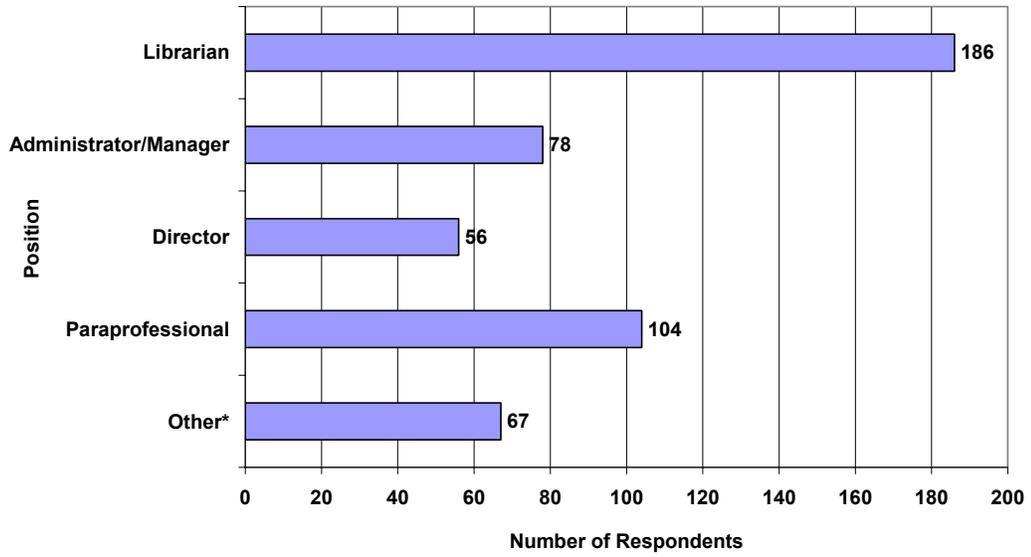


Question 4:
What best describes the community in which your library is located?



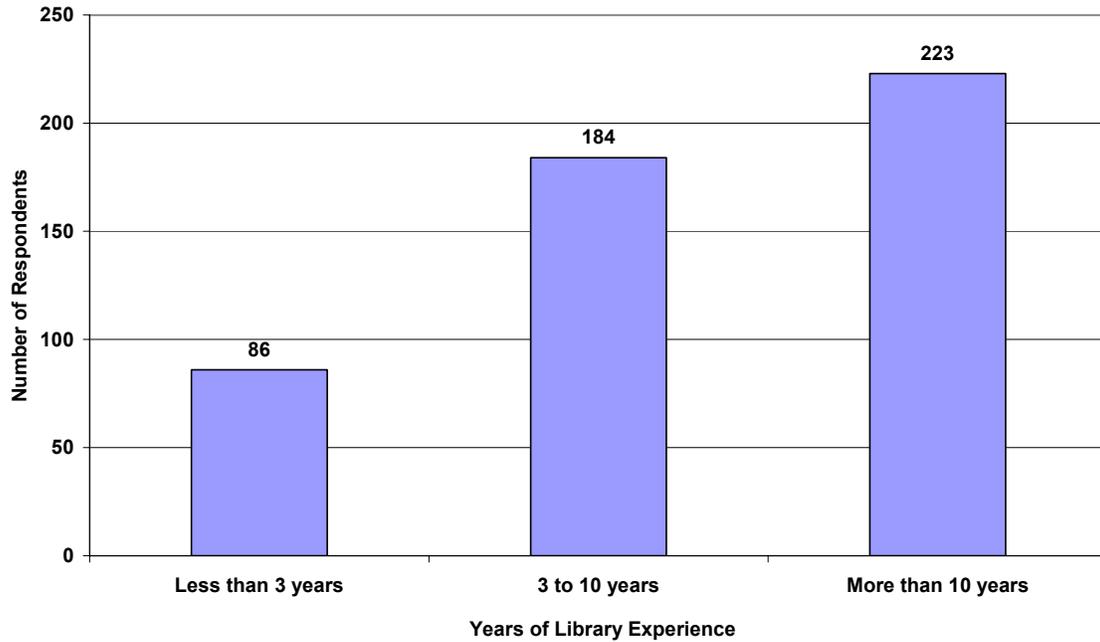
Appendix B: Individual Question Responses

Question 5:
What best describes your position at the library?



* Includes independent researcher.

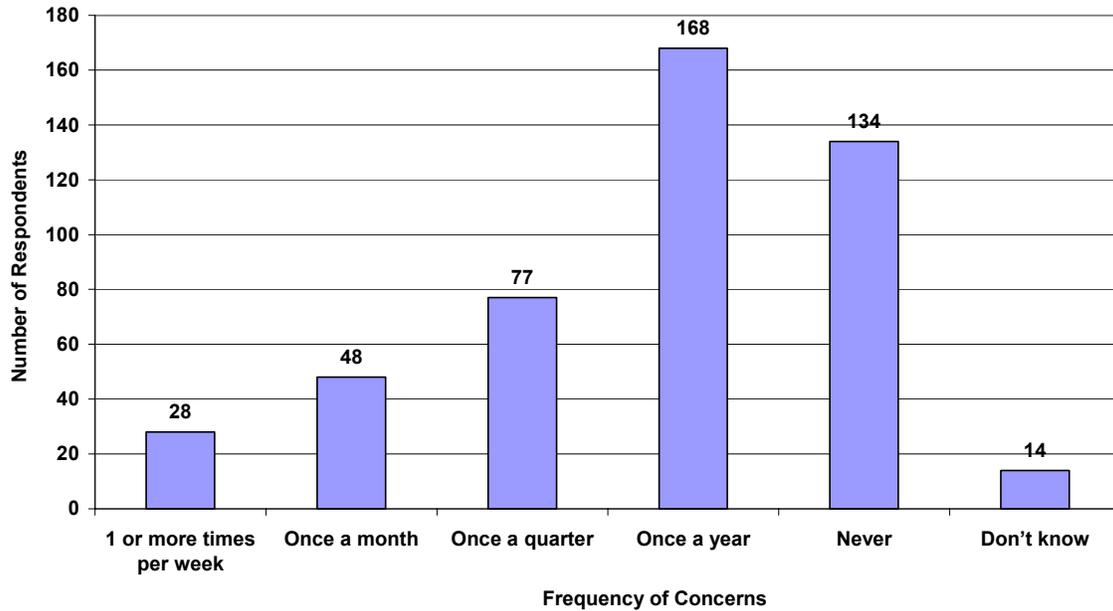
Question 6:
How long have you been working in a library?



Appendix B: Individual Question Responses

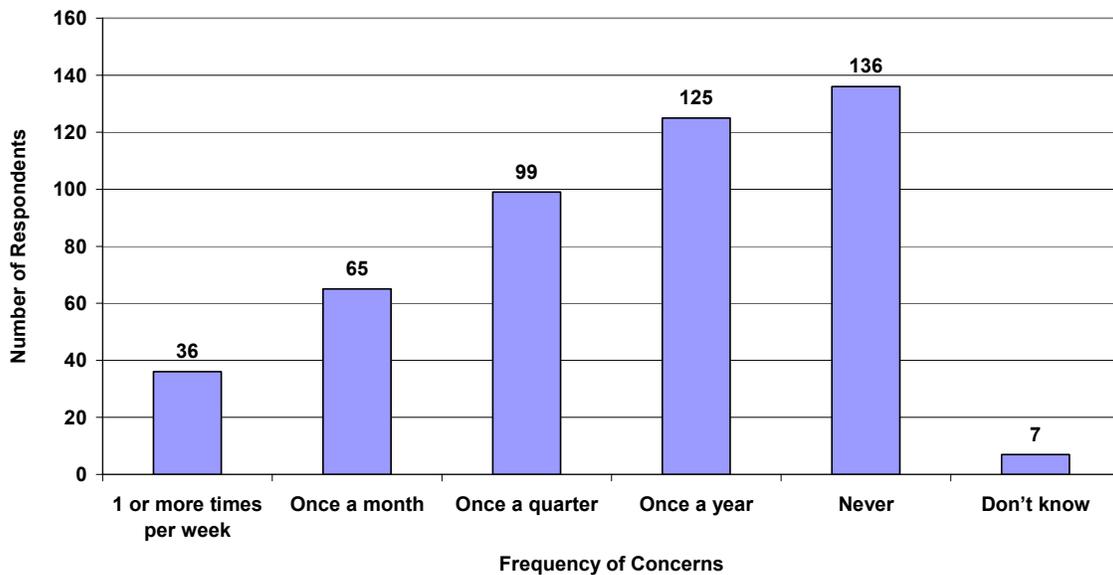
Question 7:

On average how frequently do you personally deal with patrons raising concerns (not formal challenges) about the content of library materials (e.g. books, magazines, movies, CDs, etc)?



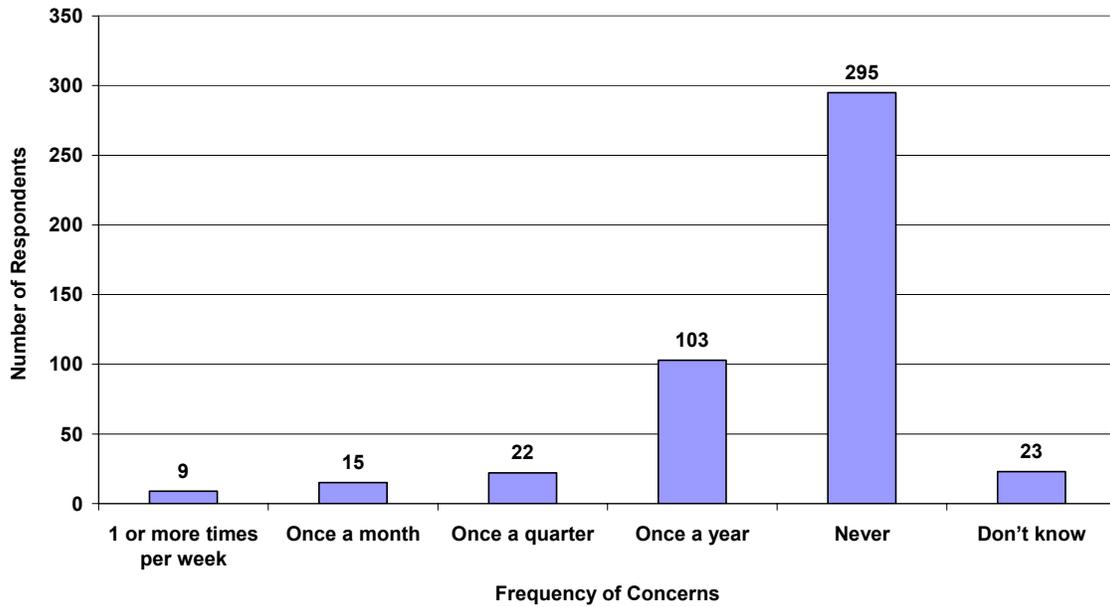
Question 8:

On average how frequently do you personally deal with patrons raising concerns (not formal challenges) about Internet policies or content at your library?

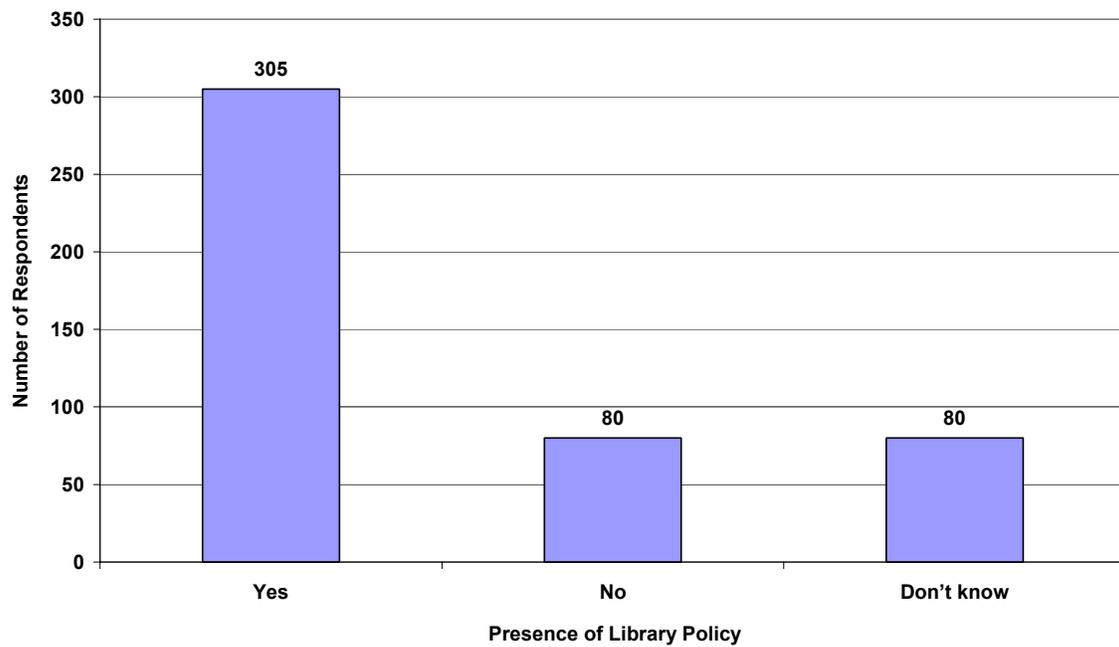


Appendix B: Individual Question Responses

Question 9:
On average how frequently do you personally deal with patrons making formal challenges to library materials or Internet policies/content?

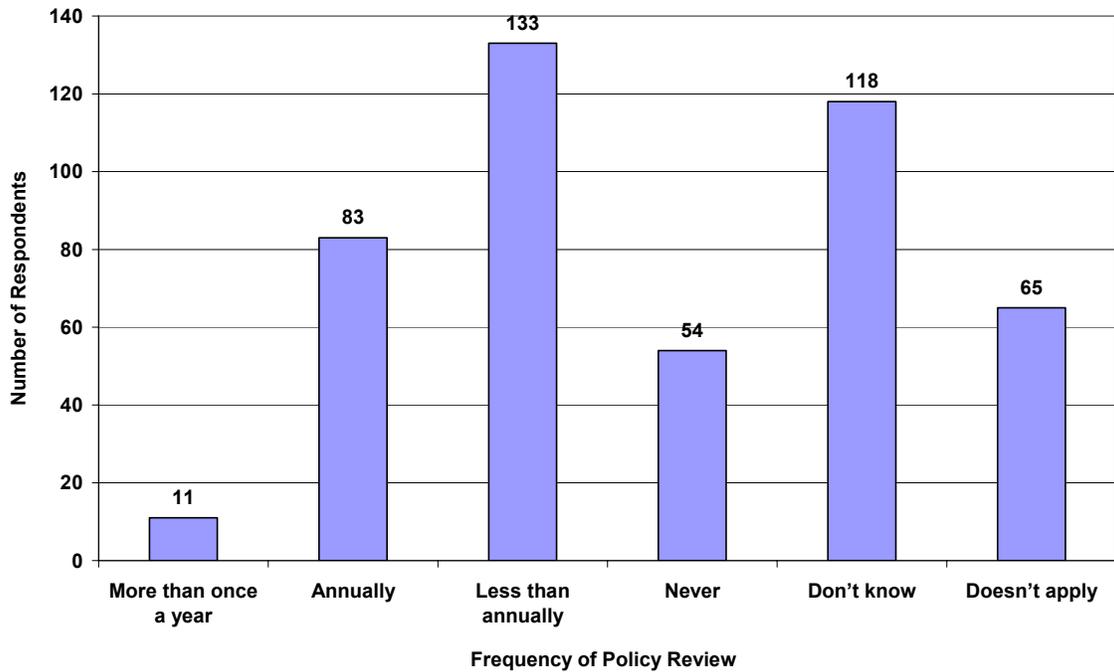


Question 10:
Does your library have a written policy for handling challenges?

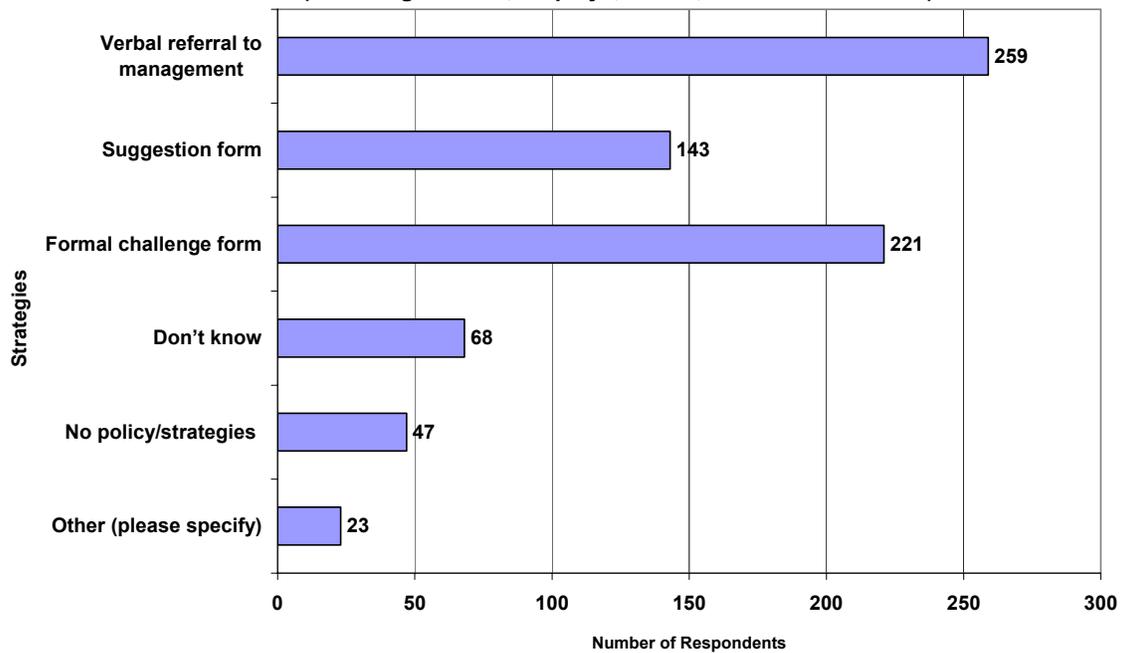


Appendix B: Individual Question Responses

Question 11:
How frequently is the challenge policy reviewed with staff?



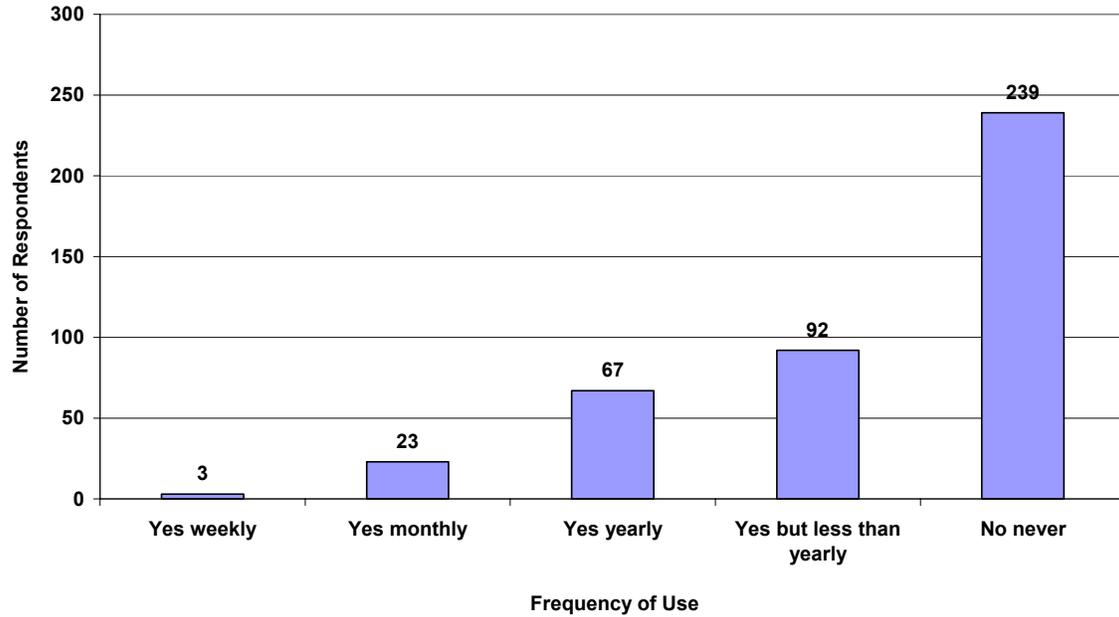
Question 12:
What are the strategies your library uses to deal with challenges to library resources (including Internet, displays, books, and other materials)?



Appendix B: Individual Question Responses

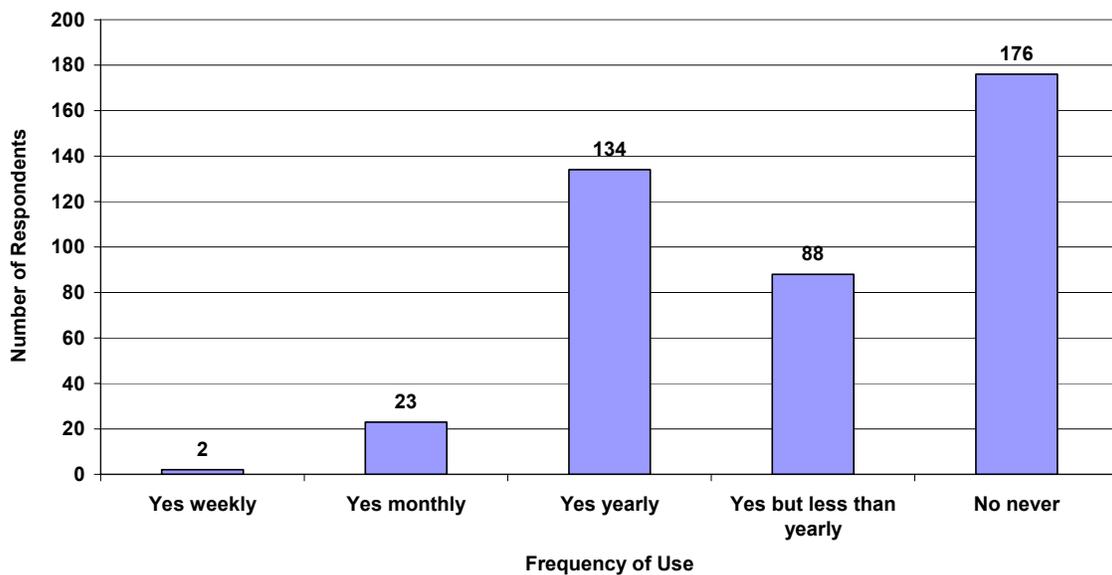
Question 13:

Do you use the Colorado Association of Libraries' Intellectual Freedom Committee resource materials (e.g. USA PATRIOT Act Information, Intellectual Freedom Handbook, & Facilitator's Manual for Intellectual Freedom Training)?



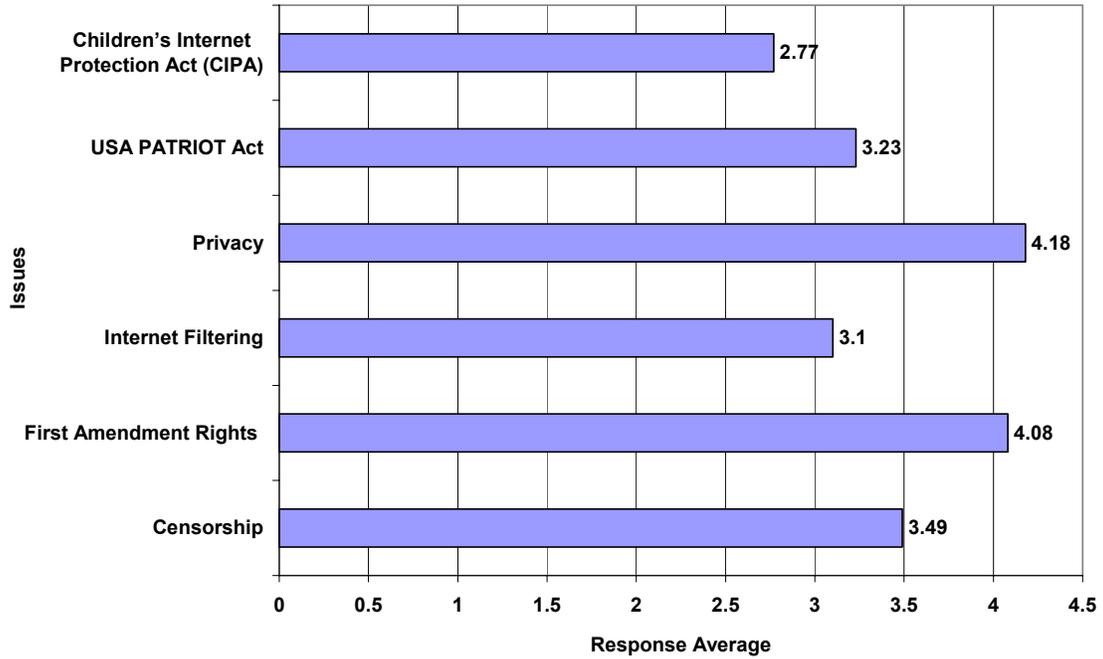
Question 14:

Do you use ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee or Office of Intellectual Freedom resource materials (e.g. Banned Books Week resources, Intellectual Freedom Toolkits, Challenge Support, etc)?



Appendix B: Individual Question Responses

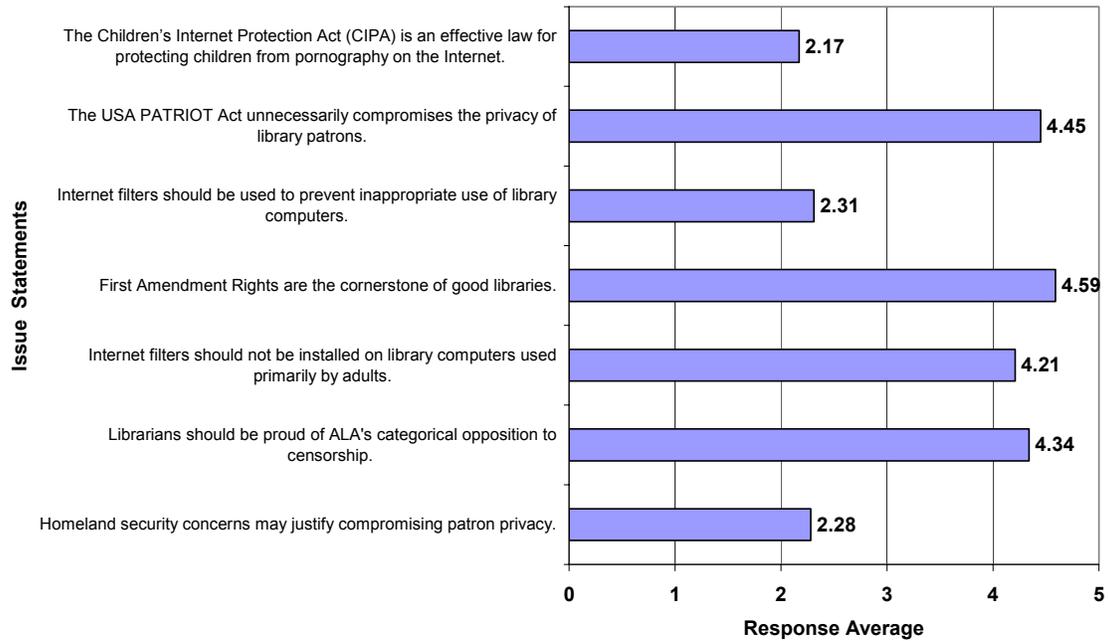
Question 15:
In your opinion to what extent do these issues influence policies at your library?



Note: 1=not influential; 3=somewhat influential; 5=very influential

Appendix B: Individual Question Responses

Question 16:
Please tell us the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.



Note: 1=strongly disagree; 3=neutral; 5=strongly agree

See Appendix C for question 17, "Comments and Insights."

Appendix C: Comments and Insights

At the end of the survey respondents were asked to share their comments and insights. The following is a complete report of those remarks.

I need to find out more about library policy and challenge-response strategy here where I work.

Internet filters should be turned off on adult computers unless requested otherwise by the patron or guardian. I believe this is the reverse of CIPA requirements. Homeland security should have defined limits to reduce abuse of power.

Liberty has never come from the government. Liberty has always come from the subjects of government. The history of liberty is the history of resistance. The history of liberty is a history of the limitation of governmental power not the increase of it —Woodrow Wilson

Our corporate office has a filter on its employees Internet access. From time to time an appropriate sight is blocked which is bound to happen in a medical library when people are looking for info on breast cancer for instance. Once I was blocked from going to a sight re: banned books ironically.

My objection to Judith Krug's historic stance is that it is predicated on opposition to your community. One may declare core library principles without appearing to be a zealot. We have to talk about intellectual freedom as something that allows you TO find something not opposition to people who want to STOP you.

I believe that the crackdown via the USA Patriot Act is an attempt to compensate for poor gathering and sharing of intelligence information by agencies such as the FBI the CIA and other groups concerned with the collection of such information. Shortly after 9/11 our library received a call from an FBI agent in Boulder who was going through the phone book calling college and university media centers to find out whether or not we/they owned a specific videotape (he had the title wrong). This was a question answered via OCLC in a matter of minutes but the agent had absolutely no idea where or how to begin his search...and no awareness of library capabilities. IMHO the FBI would be better off to hire some/more librarians and leave library patrons alone! Some restrictions on Internet use for children might be acceptable-such as written parental permission some filtering only on youth access terminals etc. More concerned with violent web sites and harmful information than anything else.

Child-lock filters interfere with other sites which are or should be without any kind of filtering. It the Child-Lock causes more complaints by patrons than anything else! I do not think it necessary to have installed.

It often occurs to me to wonder how long it's possible to live in a police state without realizing it and whether we are already.

I work in a special library in the aerospace/defense industry. As this is a commercial setting these issues rarely apply. However interest is high among library staff and we do follow it forwarding various news items to each other. Just purge the darn circ files once the item is returned.

I also have a concern about government agencies self-censoring by not publishing certain information or by changing technical publications to leave out or re-word parts that are not politically popular or that might embarrass a politician or agency official.

I wish that I could correctly remember the quote... but here's a VERY rough paraphrase: Those who are willing to sacrifice their freedom to obtain security will find that they have neither (and deserve neither)

Appendix C: Comments and Insights

I know we don't live in a perfect world but I really feel that if more parents took an interest in their children's Internet use and educated them about age appropriate behavior there would be no need for filtering laws. The US PATRIOT Act really sickens me--particularly the gag order. It's bad enough that they want to invade patron records but it's even worse that librarians who have to turn over those records are ordered to not say a word. I am a *STRONG* believer in free reading without government observation.

Internet filters courtesy of city and county of Denver have been our primary issue. In one recent case a police detective was seeking information on a plant newly in vogue among head shops for its purported hallucinogenic properties. The library was blocked for some time in researching the plant by filters on drug websites.

In my library the filtering imposed by my agency is more of a hindrance to my research needs than vice versa. I think that we still need to find that fine line between freedom and loss of personal liberty. The pendulum has swung too far to the right at this point in time. Hopefully the efforts and attention made to challenge currently imposed restrictions will help find that balance.

In special libraries especially business libraries the corporation can determine the use of their resources (computers books subscriptions phones etc). There is NO privacy if using business resources and that is accepted by all. Although I do not deal with those issues I do not believe that a general statement should be made stating all libraries position on such matters. These issues as well as most ethical issues that arise are actually situational and best dealt with that way.

My professional opinion working in a high school environment differs from my personal preferences and opinions. I need to take two sides for some of these issues. I can supervise my own children but feel the heady responsibility of working within a large high school setting and dealing with the lack of staffing for adequate supervision.

I am not aware of CAL's resource materials as referenced in question 13 but I will check them out.

Privacy seems to be a small issue for elementary school patrons.

I really appreciate your continued support for free speech and opposition to the Patriot Act provisions that compromise it.

I deeply appreciate the support of the library community for opposing restrictive and unconstitutional laws re privacy and freedom of information. To clarify question 15 answers our library is committed to maintaining patron privacy and access to information actively; our system does not retain patron history. Our library is not dependent for funding on compliance with CIPA.

We have a written notice near our Internet computers that they are to be used for research purposes only and not for chat games e-mail or inappropriate websites. Sometimes we observe someone breaking one of these rules and tell them about the notice. Many people ask where else on campus they can go to use computers for e-mail and chat and we will direct them to other locations. I have intervened on a few occasions (two or three times over the last two years) with persons I observed viewing pornographic sites on the library computers. A few years ago one man was often printing out objectionable material but this was when the printer was near the computers and not behind the desk as it is now. (He had left a picture by the printer which a staffer found and was shocked by or we wouldn't have known about his activity.) Once a young lady objected verbally to the website which had been left up on the screen of the computer she chose to sit at. We do not have privacy screens or filters on our library computers.

Appendix C: Comments and Insights

I will be doing my third Banned Books promotion at our small college and it gets bigger every year. The students love it. I also get quite a few comments on my ALA banned book T-shirt that I bought last year. It promotes education on the issue :)

I also want to comment on the inclusion of college transcripts (not just degree verification) in the hiring process. I feel that this is one more way for administrators to have access to private information which could be used against individuals. Very invasive and an infringement on personal privacy.

We monitor challenges to the First Amendment locally and nationally. We have policies and procedures in place to deal with legal issues and challenges to our patron's privacy. Staff have been educated on our policies and trained on our procedures. Our legal counsel is informed. Every effort is made to protect our patron's privacy.

I've been following the issues of filters etc. on libnet. I'm very concerned with the restrictions of our freedoms in the Patriot I and II Acts. A Democracy is by nature vulnerable to terrorist acts. By putting restrictive laws in place we become NOT a democracy but a police state. I'm absolutely against the Acts the Bush administration and all that it stands for. I'm not proud to be an American anymore.

Question 9 was difficult to answer because I have dealt with 2 formal challenges in an over 20 year career so responding once a year or never are both misleading. Because we have policies and procedures both challenges resulted in materials still being retained for students.

THIS IS A COMPLEX AREA. THE QUESTIONNAIRE LEAVES GAPS.

Public library are designed to be used by the public. If there are censorship and filtering concerns these should be dealt with at home by adults and parents not by librarians in a library. In time we will look back at the Patriot Act and similar Gov. actions and realize how we have over reacted. Publicly questioning the Patriot act in today's post Sept 11th USA is tantamount to being labeled anti-American or unpatriotic. I prefer to speak the truth today knowing that I was never silent during dark times and darker deeds by those who claim to be upholding the US Constitution.

Categorical opposition to anything sounds unthinking...so the statement above about categorical opposition to censorship is hard to agree with. Likewise I have to be neutral on patron privacy IF there is a clear and direct need established related to security (I consider this similar to patron privacy related to a subpoena for stalking or such - a clear and direct established need for specific information on a specific person for a specific situation then maybe. Just because they have a different name look different come from a certain place etc - that's not good enough.

Elementary school libraries DO act in loco parentis and we are very aware that selection can lead to censorship. While we are committed to freedom to read we are sensitive to parental involvement and this has led to very good community relationships. No parent has requested an entire ban on any book as we will respect their wishes regarding their child(ren).

Our local town board has been aching for a reason to force the library to filter and feels they can now because of CIPA (even though we receive no fed. funds). Instead of commending the community for responsible internet use (which is the real story) they want to think that many people are accessing smut so in their small brained capacity as government officials they decide to become the moral dictators of the people. They will probably force this library to filter.

A colleague who works in a public library in Colorado has related to me his frustration over adult male patrons using library PCs to surf the Web for pornography. His Mgr. won't do anything about it. The PCs are just outside the children's section of the Library and kids can see what this guy is looking at as they walk by to enter the children's section. I know filters don't work and I don't see

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the point of using them on adult computers but would you put Hustler magazine on a serials rack in full view of the children's section? Library managers have got to get some backbone and support their staff who are begging for policies that will let them ban pornography viewers from the Library. Let these sleazy types go back to the porno arcades on Broadway!

The term First Amendment Rights is not specific enough. Many claims to First Amendment Rights are not strictly so. You might summarize them. What we feel is our right is not necessarily protected by the Constitution or law.

The tradition of public librarianship is very strongly allied to First Amendment rights and privacy. However more and more librarians function in venues which are not public/democracies (i.e. schools corporations etc) and this needs to be considered in surveys.

I am disappointed that more libraries are not following the UC Santa Cruz or the Boulder Public Library examples. EVERY library should be discussing this with staff and with their public.

While I believe in the right of a patron to privacy working in a correctional facility I feel offenders should give up some of those rights naturally. In the instance of knowledge of an offender attempting to find information on weapons or other harmful situations that could endanger lives a library personnel should be able to reveal this information to those in authority. Currently our rules are vague.

Homeland security concerns should not compromise privacy as described in Section 215 of the so-called PATRIOT act and related legislation regulations and government procedures. Section 215 should be repealed or extensively changed to protect privacy of US citizens.

The right and freedom to read materials of an individual's choice should be the primary consideration. Filters may be needed in school districts; though an educated librarian and school staff can make justification for materials to be kept in a library collection. Censorship needs to be discussed with staff students and administration throughout the year.

As an academic library we would not withdraw any item based on a censorship request. So in effect our policy is 'no we don't censor'.

All staff at libraries should be educated re: the USA PATRIOT act etc. whether or not they deal with the public directly. Professional librarians have access to this information through ALA but library staff often are neglected.

Homeland security concerns are sometimes relevant to compromising patron privacy but may be used inappropriately by those seeking information or by poor policies.

The CAL Intellectual Freedom Committee resources are very practical and useful to Colorado librarians.

Unfortunately the last question should have included: Filtering does not work but it's currently the law and Colorado libraries should comply if it applies to them. CIPA is a lousy law and should have never been passed and violates first amendment rights and doesn't really protect children. However it's still the law right now and to oppose it vehemently is spitting in the wind and possibly damaging the ability of Colorado libraries to get funding.

I don't think we yet know to what extent the USA Patriot Act unnecessarily compromises the privacy of library patrons. It needs to be tested and I think we can fight when we need to. It is my opinion that homeland security concerns may justify compromising ONLY the privacy of those patrons who have been judged as having links to terrorist activities according to the legal principles of probable cause.

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The Patriot Act shouldn't allow the government to know what a patron's checkout history is but there needs to be accountability for the use of computers on the internet. I'm not talking about monitoring content but who is using the computer at a given time to provide some kind of accountability.

Stop John Ashcroft! He's turning the US into Hitler's Germany Franco's Spain Amin's Uganda Suharto's Indonesia...and it sucks. Big time.

I am amazed at the number of children's books and books written by minorities (Maya Angelou Luis Rodriguez) make the ALA Most Frequently Challenged Books list each year.

The USA Patriot Act is a necessary policy. For those who have not been on planet for the last two years we are at war and this requires more stringent measures regarding patron privacy. Record access still requires a court order and I believe librarians around the country are over-reacting to perceived 'abuses'.

Homeland security concerns should be authorized by court order only.

The Children's Internet Protection Act is probably somewhat effective to protect children on the internet but internet filters should not be installed on library computers used primarily by adults. Adults in libraries should have full access to the internet due to First Amendment rights. In some cases Homeland security concerns may justify compromising patron privacy if security believes there is a true threat and the investigations is carried out discreetly.

I work as a contract employee in several law firms. Used a hypothetical conglomerate of them when asked about my library.

There is no necessary correlation between the books checked out of the library and terrorist acts. A patron is innocent until proven guilty and evidence must be substantive not circumstantial. In the area of challenges I have personally dealt with the answers I wanted to give were once every 5 years but that was not one of my choices. Also question 15 is very difficult for me to know how to answer since censorship is important to us however it is very rarely that we let a call to censorship influence us to remove the item. Also true of Patriot Act and other listings- it is crucial that we keep up with the issues and have safeguards in place and staff awareness of how to deal with a challenge- however the Patriot Act has not influenced us to roll over. I believe others will not know how to approach this question either.

Without trained media specialists in school libraries these issues are daily being compromised. Paraprofessionals are being paid to run most of the libraries in my school district and have neither the training or the inclination to worry about censorship. Allowing principals to decide whether or not to have a full time media specialist has been the ruin of my profession!!!!!!!!!!!!

My recent transfer to a public-service position (six months of a five-year service term) means I've had less chance to hear a concern or challenge so that part of my response is less significant on a statistical level. My feelings about privacy censorship and government interference with the constitution however are not a function of my area of employment. Without strong opposition Homeland Security will merrily strip the nation of the freedoms conservative lawmakers claim so much to honor.