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A SURVEY OF THE AVAILABILITY OF SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER  
CATALOGS ON THE WEB

by  
Matthew James DiBella Jr.

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts in Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
at  
Rowan University  
May 1, 2006

Approved by  
Professor

Date Approved May 1, 2006

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## ABSTRACT

Matt DiBella

### A SURVEY OF THE AVAILABILITY OF SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER CATALOGS ON THE WEB

2005/06

Dr. Marilyn Shontz

Master of Arts in School and Public Librarianship

An important tool of a school library media center is the automation system. The media specialist uses this tool to manage the media center's collection and ensure that students have access to the best and most up to date accurate information. The purpose of having an automation system was to improve student access to the media center collection. The advancement in technology in the past three decades has expanded the role of school media specialists.

This survey of the number of school media centers that have their catalog available on the Web was analytical. It was conducted with the use of an online questionnaire, which was administered through the Web site SurveyMonkey.com. New Jersey high school media specialists were able to access this online survey from a link that was placed in an email message. Out of the 522 public and private secondary schools in New Jersey, 63 secondary schools participated in the online survey conducted through SurveyMonkey.com. The results from this survey study showed that New Jersey high school media centers located further north and with a larger annual budget were more likely to allow Internet access to its catalog.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Heather Lynn DiBella, whose love, support, and encouragement has made me a better person.

I would also like to thank my friend Melissa M. Price, the DiBella Family, and the McCrary Family, who have supported me during my academic years.

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## CHAPTER 1

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

#### Problem Statement

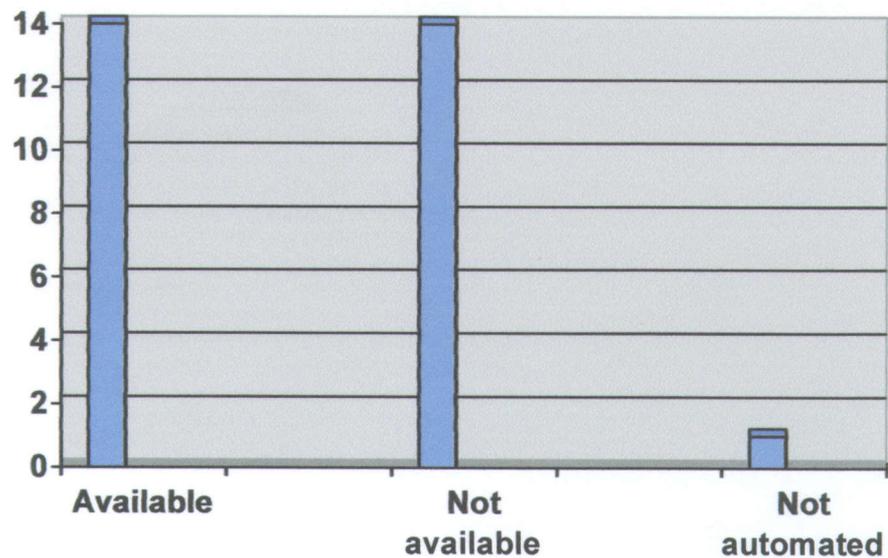
An important tool of a school library media center is the automation system. The media specialist uses this tool to manage the media center's collection and ensure that students have access to the best and most up to date accurate information. However, a preliminary survey conducted by the researcher of New Jersey media specialists showed that only half of the media centers surveyed had their library catalog available through the Internet on a Web site (see Figure 1). This meant that the students who attended schools that did not have their library catalog available online could only search for materials while physically in the media center. In contrast, students that attended schools with media center library catalogs available online could access the collection remotely from home or a public library. Educational Librarian Donald Hamilton from the University of Victoria stated, "I cannot understand why we would even consider a new library system without specifying that Web delivery and integration is pivotal to our decision" (Hamilton, 2000, p. 40). The preliminary email survey results showed that at least half of the media specialists who responded were not equipped with adequate funds or technology from their school district for full Internet access of their library catalogs.

Previous research demonstrated that school districts have been automating their media center for over twenty-five years (Caffarella, 1996, p. 33). Yet, fifteen years since

the Internet went public many high schools in New Jersey still did not have access to their library catalog available through the Internet on a Web site (Columbia Encyclopedia, 2005).

The purpose of having an automation system was to improve student access to the media center collection. It also taught students important researching skills that were needed for using public and university libraries. For most students the average school day includes five academic classes, a gym period, lunch, and after school activities. This left little time for the average student to do research in the school media center. By limiting access to the school media center's catalog, media specialists were left with an expensive tool that was not used to its fullest educational capabilities.

Figure 1 – Preliminary Survey Results



## Rationale

It is important for school administrators and media specialists to understand that by not having the library media center's catalog available online they are limiting their students' opportunities to utilize the library's collection. They are also allowing their school district to fall behind technologically, a poor model for students who are entering into the information age. It is therefore important to understand why some school districts are not utilizing their investment in a school library media center to its fullest capability. It is equally important to observe regional and economic differences among these school districts. Any data collected from a survey could be used for additional research by current and future school administrations and media specialists in evaluating the equality of technology and education in New Jersey's secondary schools. The results from this survey are an important piece in measuring the quality of technology in school library media centers in New Jersey secondary schools.

## Purpose

The purpose of this survey research was to determine whether high school media center library catalogs were available on the Internet and therefore for home use on the Web; the economic and geographic differences among these school districts; and the impact of the online library catalog on student use of the media center. Questions addressed included:

- 1) Why were some school library media center catalogs available/not available on the Web?
- 2) What were the regional differences among these school districts?
- 3) What were the economic differences among these school districts?

4) How did this impact circulation statistics in the media center?

This study surveyed New Jersey public and private secondary schools. The dependent variable was whether the school library media centers had or did not have their library catalog available on the Web. Other variables that may have affected existence were the regional, economic, and circulation figures.

#### Definitions of Terms

**Library catalog:** A comprehensive list of the books, periodicals, maps, and other materials in a given collection, arranged in systematic order to facilitate retrieval (usually alphabetically by author, title, and/or subject). In most modern libraries, the card catalog has been converted to machine-readable bibliographic records and is available online (Reitz, 2004).

**High school:** For purpose of this study a high school is defined as a public or private learning institution for students in any grades seven through twelve.

**Library automation system:** For purpose of this study the library automation system is defined as a tool used for the core library functions of acquisitions, cataloging and authority control, serials control, circulation and inventory, and interlibrary loan and document delivery (Reitz, 2004). It is also used by students and patrons to locate materials in library within the facility or remotely at home through the Internet.

**Media specialists:** A librarian or other individual with specialized training in the creation, selection, organization, maintenance, and provision of access to media of all kinds, who may also be responsible for supervising a media center or the media department of a library, including collections, equipment, and facilities for listening and/or viewing, and any service personnel (Reitz, 2004).

Online: A computer connected to the Internet, an intranet, or some other network via telecommunication links, as opposed to a stand-alone system. Also refers to computer accessories or devices physically separate from, but directly connected to and under the control of, a central processing unit (CPU) and ready for interactive use in real time (Reitz, 2004).

School library media center: A facility within an educational institution responsible for providing a full-range of media resources, equipment, and services, staffed to assist students and instructors in utilizing its collections, usually supervised by a media specialist (Reitz, 2004).

Student: For purpose of this study a student is defined as one who attends a high school grades seven through twelve.

Web access: A students' privilege of using a computer system or online resource usually controlled by the issuance of access codes to authorized users. In a more general sense, the ability of a user to reach data stored on a computer or computer system (Reitz, 2004).

Web page: An electronic document written in HTML script, stored on a Web server and accessible using Web browser software at a unique Internet address (URL), usually one of a group of related, interlinked files that together comprise a Web site. A Web page may include formatted text, graphic material, audio and/or video elements, and links to other files on the Internet (Reitz, 2004).

Wide Area Network: A communication network covering an extensive geographic area, such as a country, region, province, or state. Compare with local area network (Reitz, 2004).

## Assumptions and Limitations

It is assumed that the responses from the school media specialists to the survey were true and valid. Some responses were checked for validity through the Internet by visiting the school library Web page of the media specialists who responded. The reasons why catalogs were not available on the Web cannot be checked for validity. This included the differences in use reported by the school library media specialists. This research survey was limited to New Jersey high schools (both public and private) to allow for the optimum amount of data to be studied.

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## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The advancement in technology in the past three decades has expanded the role of school media specialists. No longer are they focused on collecting books that support the school curriculum and promote literature. The advancement in technology created new library automation systems that could keep inventory, patron, and circulation records. However, improvements in library automation systems required media specialists to become knowledgeable about advances in technology. Media specialists were expected by both automation system vendors and school administration to be aware of new computer operating systems, software, and hardware. This knowledge required research, which could be found in literature. In recent decades, numerous professional journals have been published that focus specifically on advancements in library and education technology such as *Multimedia Schools*, *Tech Trends*, *Learning and Leading with Technology*, *Computers in Libraries*, and *Online Information Review*. Traditional professional librarian and school media specialists' journals such as *American Libraries*, *School Libraries in Canada*, and *Book Report* have also published articles on improvements in library technology.

For the purpose of this survey, the literature reviewed were recent journal articles on school library automation systems and Web-based technology. The ten professional

journal articles reviewed were published after 1996 and were located through researching professional library and educational databases. For the purpose of this discussion these journal articles were reviewed chronologically and placed into two groups. The first group dealt with studies published before 2003. The second group dealt with studies published since 2003. Because of tremendous advancements in technology in the past ten years, journal articles published before 1996 were deemed not relevant for this survey.

#### Review of the Literature Published Before 2003

In an October 1996 journal article in *Tech Trends*, Edward P. Caffarella discussed the three important aspects in researching for an automation system for a school library media center. According to Caffarella, these three aspects were circulation control, online public access, and database searching. He believed that an online public access catalog provided patrons with a wider range of searches than traditional card catalogs through Boolean operators (Caffarella, 1996, p. 34). Materials in a media center that was automated could be accessed by students through title, author, subject, keyword, and ISBN. The traditional card catalog limited students to searching by title and author. The author concluded this article by stating that, “automation systems will contribute to a more successful school library media center program” (Caffarella, 1996, p. 37). Almost ten years since this article was published an overwhelming majority of New Jersey high schools in the preliminary survey claimed to have their school media centers automated (see Figure 1). However, this current survey focused on why half of schools surveyed still did not offer full Internet access to their collection.

“The Online Catalog on the Way to the Millennium,” written by Catherine Murphy appeared in May/June 1998 issue of *Multimedia Schools*. In this journal article,

the author described the development of the OPAC in the past two decades. She described the development of connectivity and usability of online catalogs. Catherine Murphy also mentioned how an OPAC system can improve education in school by providing full MARC records that have specific fields related to curriculum objectives (Murphy, 1998, p. 3). Murphy believed that in the new millennium OPACs have the potential for improvement with growth in technology and feedback from librarians. The journal articles written before 2000 stated the potential educational benefits of online catalogs in library media centers. Six years later there were still high schools in New Jersey that did not fully recognize this potential.

Entering into the new millennium, people in the school library media specialist profession continued to press the importance of online catalogs. In 2000, Donald Hamilton wrote "Stop the Miracles," which was published in *School Libraries in Canada*. In this journal article, Donald Hamilton stressed the educational importance of having online catalogs in the media center. He believed that without an online catalog students would look elsewhere for information for school projects; preferably, browsing the Internet on their home computers (Hamilton, 2000, p. 2). Donald Hamilton challenged school media specialists by asking them:

- Are journal articles included in your OPAC?
- Are all the materials in your school library media center included in your OPAC?
- Are their links to important Web sites included in your OPAC?

The author understood that these were great demands on an already overworked profession. However, he believed that school media centers cannot be left behind in the growing technological world; they should be a reflection of it. This survey asked the very

same question, “Do New Jersey high school library media centers reflect the growing technology of today?”

Public librarians have also advocated the importance of Internet access to online catalogs. In May of 2001, a journal article titled “Access, Access, Access”, appeared in *American Libraries*. The author, Jane E. Hughes, stressed the importance of designing Web pages that provide greater access to library collections. She felt that there was a generation of children that did not have enough exposure to online catalogs. The author believed that this lack of exposure would cause children to under appreciate libraries as adults (Hughes, 2001, p. 1). In order to prevent this possibility, the author wrote that all libraries must design their Web sites with full access to the libraries’ collections. She believed that students would appreciate libraries more if they had better access to collections. This journal article related well to this survey of Internet access to school library media center collections. Similar to the previous article it asked another question “Does the lack of Internet access cause students to less appreciate their school library media centers?”

Improved access to the school library media center’s collection would also force school media specialists to manage their records better. Terrance E. Young wrote “The Weakest Link: Library Catalog,” which appeared in the January/February edition of *Book Report*. In this journal article, the author stated that access to online catalogs was futile if the MARC records were poorly managed (Young, 2002, p. 2). School library media center catalogs filled with errors would cause student searches to produce fewer hits. He felt that this would frustrate students and lower circulation statistics for the school library media center. The author believed that with numerous vendor services that assist in

proofreading library catalogs, there was no excuse for school media specialists to have errors in their MARC records (Young, 2002, p. 2). This journal article supported this survey in the importance of Internet access to the school library media centers collection. No Internet access diminished the possibility for students and parents to become aware of problems with their school library media center's records. This would also hinder the media specialists' awareness of potential errors in their MARC records.

#### Review of the Literature Published After 2003

Since 2003, numerous journal articles have been published advocating the importance of remote Internet access of school library media center collections. *Tech Trends* published an article in January/February of 2003 by Susan Schrader that reported on the improvements and benefits of improved Internet access to school library media center collections. The article discussed how budget problems have plagued Iowa schools and hindered improvement in technology. However, collaboration between Iowa State Legislators and a state organization called the AEA (Area Education Agency) helped create a new state organization called ACEM (AEA Collaborative for Education Media). This new organization was created as a subcommittee of the AEA that focused on improved resources and funding for school library media centers in the state of Iowa. This organization purchased EBSCO databases and set up a statewide online union catalog for all Iowa school library media centers (Schrader, 2003, p 1). This allowed parents and students around the clock access to the school library media center collection seven days a week. The union catalog also provided an additional service by allowing students to search for materials at other school library media centers in Iowa. Through cooperation between media specialists, books were sent to different school library media

centers through interlibrary loan (Young, 2003, p. 2). In the state of New Jersey, Jersey Cat and EBSCO are provided to all school library media centers. However, some school districts are still behind in granting full Internet access to their collections.

A second article published after 2003 also focused on collaboration in improving student access to school library media centers' collections. In 2003, Sandra L. Hudock wrote a journal article published in *College and Undergraduate Libraries* called, "Authentication Integration: Extending Remote Database Access and Web Catalog to High Schools and Distance Learners." In this journal article, Hudock discussed how librarians at the University of Colorado collaborated with local high school media specialists to create a union catalog of their collections. The librarians at the University of Colorado also assisted high school media specialists in designing Web pages for their school media centers (Hudock, 2003, p. 69). These Web pages included a link to a union catalog that contained the holdings of local Colorado high school media centers and the collections at the University of Colorado. The intention of the union catalogs was to allow students to search for materials outside of their school media center's collection (Hudock, 2003, p. 68). Desired materials could be sent to student's home library media centers through interlibrary loan. This article was another example of how collaboration can improve high school library media centers. The basis of this collaboration was remote Internet access to the high school library media center's online catalog. Improvement on Web design and union catalog Internet access provided the students with greater educational opportunities.

A common theme to the literature reviewed for this survey study was for school library media centers to continue to keep current with the advancements of technology. In

a 2004 journal article published in *Information Services & Use*, author Mark Carden discussed the need for libraries to improve library portals and develop enterprise portals. These “enterprise portals” were Web pages with broader capabilities than traditional library automation systems and Web pages (Carden, 2003, p. 172). He believed that the portal concept was critical in the next generation of library Web pages and automation systems (Carden, 2003, p. 174). The author suggested that librarians take an active role in designing the “enterprise portal” concept for their libraries. This journal article was important for this survey because it provided recent advancements of the concepts of future library automation system and Web pages. This concept of having librarians design these “enterprising portals” could also be used by school media specialists in designing improved automaton systems and Web pages.

The last two articles reviewed for this survey were very similar. They both discussed what should be on a library Web page and advocated for online catalogs that could be accessed at home through the Internet. The first article titled “What Should Be on a School Library Web Page?” published in September of 2004 in *Learning and Leading with Technology* focused on creating the ideal school library media center Web page. The second article called “Delivering Access to Library Materials and Services” was published in October of 2004 in *Computers in Libraries* and focused on how a team of computer technicians improved the Northern University’s Library Web page. Both of these journal articles stated that Internet access to the library’s collection was an essential part of the Web page. In the first article the authors stressed that not only should the school library media center’s catalog be available, but other local online catalogs as well (Baumbach, 2004, p. 1). In the second article the author stated that a quality Web-based

online catalog was the starting point in designing a successful library Web page (Clumper, 2004, p. 2). These two journal articles also supported the purpose of this survey. Lack of Internet access to a school library media center's collection greatly inhibits its educational capabilities.

#### Summary

In conclusion, a review of recent journal articles that discussed the development and use of online catalogs indicated that it was an essential part in developing a successful school library media center program. Many of these articles discussed the recent developments of technology and collaborative support of school library media center programs. After reviewing the literature it raised many questions as to why half of the school media specialists in the preliminary survey were not providing Internet access to their library media center catalog.

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## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Overall Design and Justification

This survey of the number of school media centers that have their catalog available on the Web was analytical (Powell & Connaway, 2004, p. 86). It was conducted with the use of an online questionnaire, which was administered through the Web site SurveyMonkey.com. New Jersey high school media specialists were able to access this online survey from a link that was placed in an email message. As each high school library media specialist completed the survey, their responses were recorded and calculated by SurveyMonkey.com. This method of data collection was chosen for the following reasons:

- Distributing the questionnaire through the Internet via NJASL Yahoo.com listserv allowed for a wider geographic range of responses.
- Additional distribution of the questionnaire through the Internet via personal Verizon email account was available
- The questionnaire was designed through SurveyMonkey.com because of its interactive template that created comprehensive questions.
- The questionnaire was pre-tested for accuracy and bias using the responses of three middle school media specialists, a library science graduate student, and a library science professor.

- The SurveyMonkey.com account was open for a six week period to allow ample time for responses.
- SurveyMonkey.com provided services that recorded and calculated questionnaire responses.
- The convenience of administering the questionnaire through the Internet eliminated the time and cost of mailing the surveys.
- The calculations provided by SurveyMonkey.com were able to be evaluated for valid conclusions.

#### Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this survey research was to determine whether high school media center library catalogs were available on the Internet and therefore for home use on the Web; the economic and geographic differences among these school districts; and the impact of the online library catalog on student use of the media center. Questions addressed included:

- 1) Why were some school library media center catalogs available/not available on the Web?
- 2) What were the regional differences among these school districts?
- 3) What were the economic differences among these school districts?
- 4) How did the availability of an online catalog impact circulation statistics in the media center?

#### Population and Sample

According to the State Department of Education there were 522 public and private secondary schools in New Jersey (New Jersey Department of Education, 2005; New

Jersey Department of Education 2003). Since there were only three hundred and sixty people registered to the NJASL listserv; additional emails were sent using school library media specialists' email addresses in bulk format from a personal Verizon account. The individual school library media specialists' email addresses were located from the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative and Central Jersey Regional Library Cooperative Web sites. Unfortunately, the Highlands Regional Library Cooperative Web site did not provide email addresses for media specialists working in the Northern Jersey counties.

This population was selected because national accreditation standards require secondary schools to have a certified media specialist. This increased the probability that the school media center would include an automation system with an online catalog. Middle/junior high schools and elementary schools were not required to have a certified school media specialist and received less funding for school library media centers. Because of this potential lack of funding and qualified staff, there was less probability of an automation system with an online catalog present in a middle/junior high school or an elementary school. It was also a more reasonable number of schools to survey for the purpose of this study.

### Variables

This study surveyed public and private high schools in New Jersey. The dependent variable was whether the school library media centers had or did not have their library catalog available on the Web. Other variables that were studied included the regional differences, economic differences, and circulation figures.

## Method of Data Collection

Data for this survey were collected electronically. A survey created in SurveyMonkey.com was linked through an email sent to New Jersey media specialists' listserv on Yahoo.com. Additional emails were sent by the researcher through a personal Verizon email account. The email requested that all media specialists working in public high schools complete the survey using the URL link provided (see Appendix B). As each media specialist completed the survey, the data were recorded and calculated by SurveyMonkey.com. The results were acquired electronically after a six week period through a SurveyMonkey.com account.

## Questionnaire Design and Electronic Services Used

The instrument used to acquire data was a questionnaire designed by the researcher based on the research questions (see Appendix C). The electronic services used to acquire the data for this survey were SurveyMonkey.com and the Yahoo.com NJASL (New Jersey Association of School Librarians) listserv and a personal Verizon email account. SurveyMonkey.com provided its data on validity and reliability through a sample survey on its Web site. The web site listed sixteen testimonials of previous clients that were satisfied with their service (SurveyMonkey.com, 2004). This electronic service was also used in a previous thesis in the Rowan graduate school program (Swierk, 2005). The Yahoo.com New Jersey media specialist listserv proved its validity and reliability through the preliminary survey. A preliminary survey was taken through an email asking all New Jersey media specialist, "Whether or not students could access their library catalog from the web?" (see Appendix A). Responses were emailed and recorded into the listserv and a private email account over two week period (see Figure 1).

## Reliability and Validity

To ensure the reliability and validity of this survey it was pre-tested by five individuals involved in the field of school media centers and library science. Three middle school librarians were selected to pre-test this survey, Michelle Marhefka, (Clearview Middle School), Donna Pettit (Excel School), and Jennifer Jamison (Eugene A. Tighe Intermediate School). It was also pre-tested by Elizabeth Miller, a library science graduate student, who was completing field work at Clearview Middle School and Dr. Marilyn Shontz, a university professor in library science at Rowan University. Ms. Marhefka suggested adding on an introduction screen to explain the survey and adding a less than \$5,000 to question three. Ms. Miller suggested that a “not applicable” response be added to question nine. Ms. Jamison and Pettit did not have any additional suggestions to improve the questionnaire. Dr. Shontz, the thesis advisor made the final approval of the questionnaire before the URL was emailed or posted to the listserv. The middle school librarians and graduate student were selected because their work environment was similar to high school library media center. They were also not included in the survey because it was limited to high schools. Dr. Shontz was chosen because of her expertise in the field of library science. There responses and comments were used to improve the structure language of the questions and the overall quality of the survey.

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## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Responses

Out of the 522 public and private secondary schools in New Jersey, 63 secondary schools participated in the online survey conducted through SurveyMonkey.com. This online survey was conducted over a six week period from January 23 to March 1, 2006. A total usable response rate of 12% was achieved.

#### Variables

This study surveyed public and private high schools in New Jersey. The dependent variable was whether the school library media centers had or did not have their library catalog available on the Web. Other variables that affected existence were the regional differences, economic differences, and circulation figures.

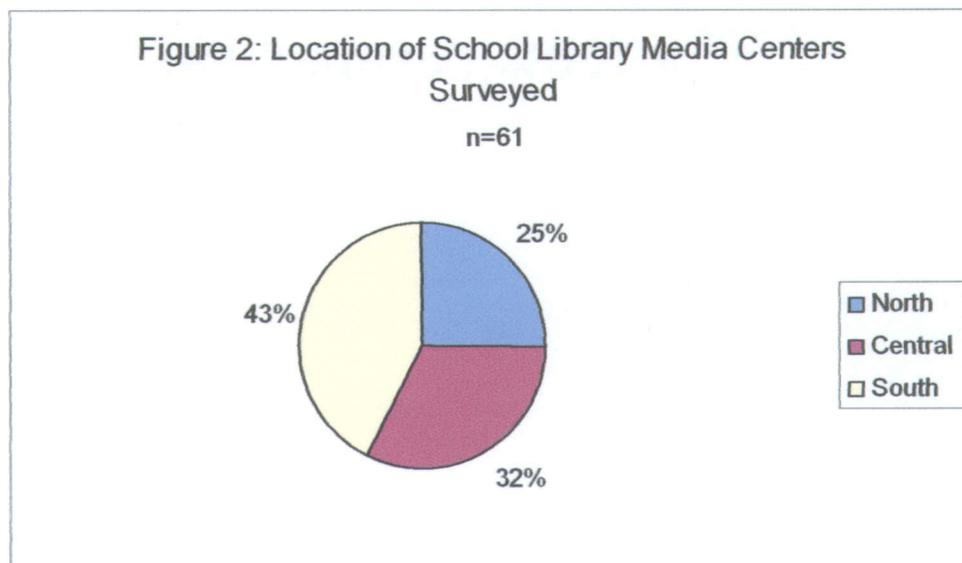
#### Statistical Analysis

The descriptive statistics for this online survey were calculated by SurveyMonkey.com. The online survey vendor provided graphs with percentages for each question and response. It also provided for personalized responses for each respondent. The percentages and personal responses were recorded into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet which was used to create the charts and graphs.

## Results

### *Survey Questions 1 and 2*

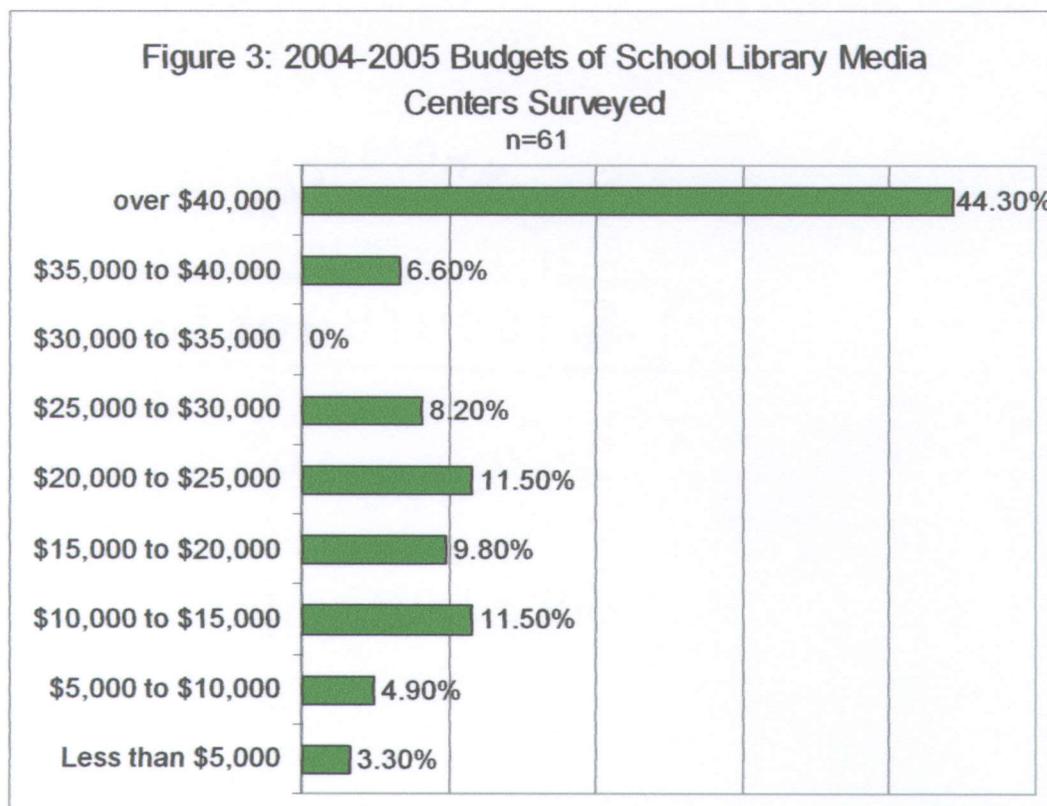
Question one asked the participants in this online survey, in which region of the state their school library media center was located. According to the online survey responses, 43% of those who responded worked in school library media centers located in southern New Jersey, followed by 32% for central and 25% for northern New Jersey (see Figure 2). None of the participants in this online survey skipped this question. The second question asked school media specialists surveyed whether or not their school district was categorized as an Abbott school district according to the State of New Jersey. Only 13.1% responded “yes” that their school district was categorized as an Abbott school district according to the State of New Jersey, while 86.9% responded “no” Two of the participants in this online survey skipped this question.



### *Survey Question 3, 4, and 5*

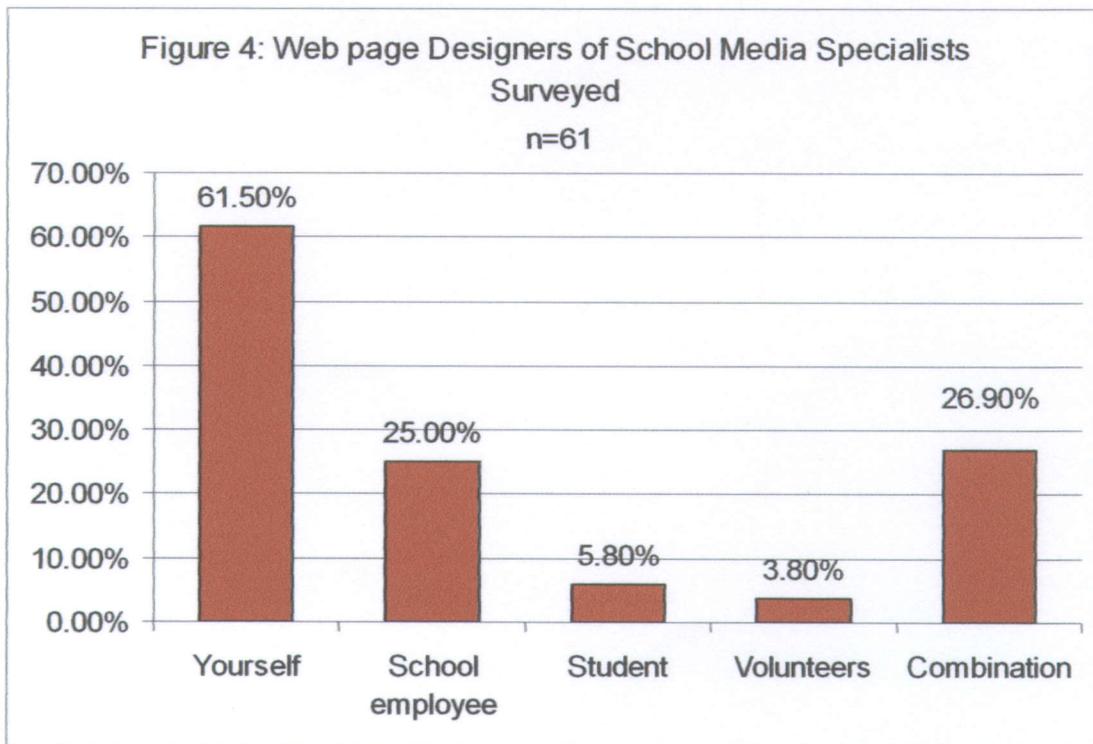
Question three asked the school media specialists surveyed, the range of their 2004-2005 budget for their school library media center. The majority (44.3%) of the

school media specialists surveyed claimed to have a budget over \$40,000. Only a small minority 3.3% had a budget less than \$5,000 (see Figure 3). Two of the participants in this survey skipped this question. The next question asked the school media specialists if their school library media center was automated. An overwhelming majority of 98.4% claimed that their school library media center was automated. Only two of the participants in this online survey skipped question four. Question five asked the school media specialists to name the vendor of their school library media center's automation system (for responses see Appendix D). A majority used some version of Sagebrush/Spectrum. Three of the participants skipped this question.



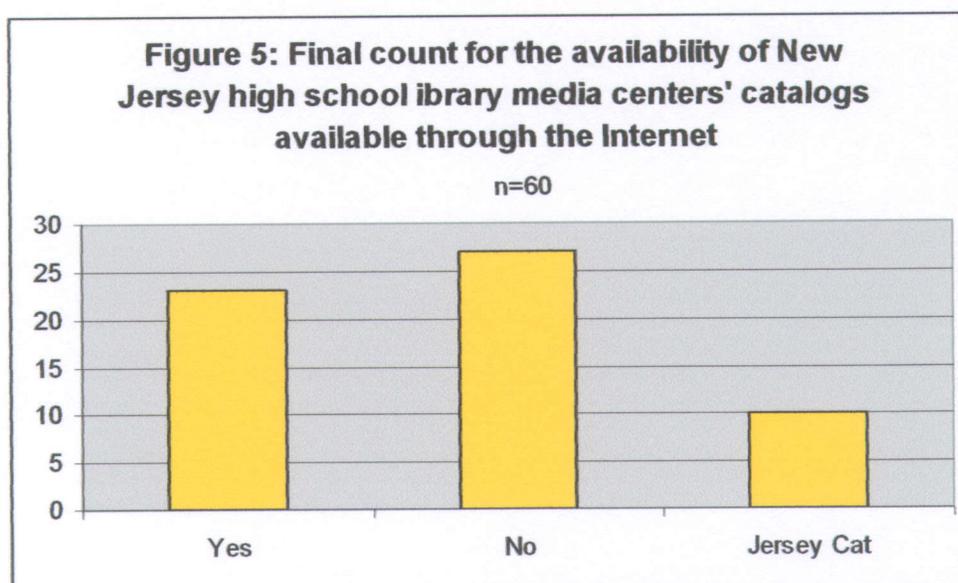
*Survey Question 6 and 7*

Question six asked the school media specialists whether or not their school library media centers had a Web page. An overwhelming majority (83.9%) of the school media specialists surveyed claimed to have a Web page for their school library media center. Two of the participants of this online survey skipped this question. The next question asked who designed the school library media center's Web page. A total of 61.5% of the school media specialists surveyed claimed that they designed their school library media center's Web page (see Figure 4). Only 3.8% claimed to have volunteers design their school library media center's Web page. Two of the respondents to this online survey skipped this question.

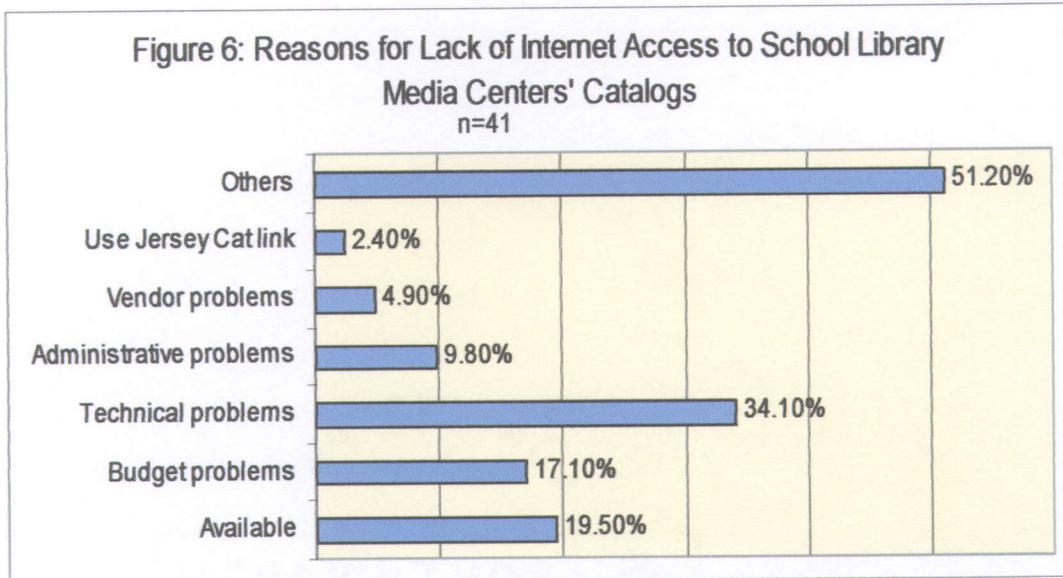


*Survey Question 8, 9 and 10*

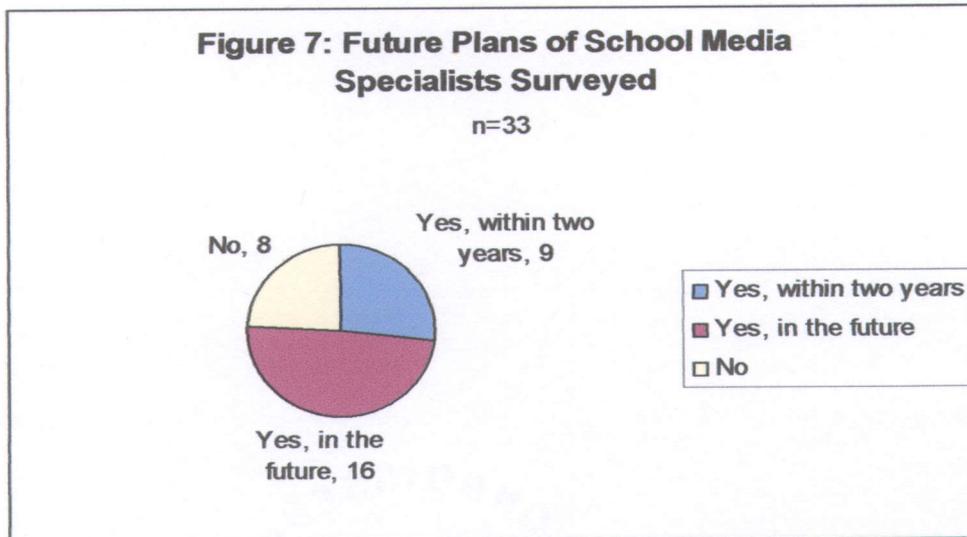
Question eight asked the school media specialists surveyed whether or not their school library media center's catalog was available on the Internet. A total of 27 of the school media specialists surveyed stated that their school library media center's catalog was not available through the Internet (see Figure 5). While 23 media specialists stated that their catalog was available either through a school library media center or a school district's Web page. Three of the participants in this online survey declined to answer.



Question nine asked school media specialists the reasons why their catalog was not available on the Internet. Respondents could check more than one response. The majority of the media specialists (51.20%) surveyed gave a narrative response (see Appendix E). The second largest majority (34.1%) responded that technological problems kept them from having their school library media center's catalog available on the Internet (see Figure 6). Twenty-two participants of this online survey skipped this question.

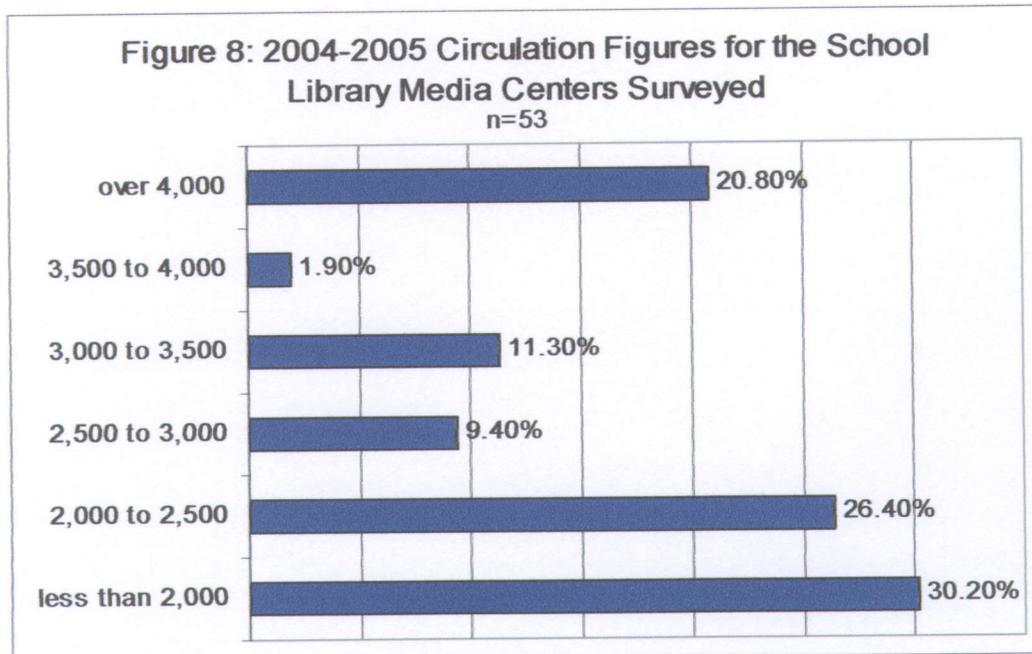


Question ten asked school media specialists who did not have their catalog available on the Internet, if there were plans in the next two years to provide this service. Out of the thirty-three responses, eight stated that they had no plans to allow Internet access to their catalog. However nine stated that they had plans in the next two years to provide this service. While sixteen stated that they planned to provide this service sometime in the future (see Figure 7). Thirty participants of this online survey skipped this question or responded that their catalog was presently available online.

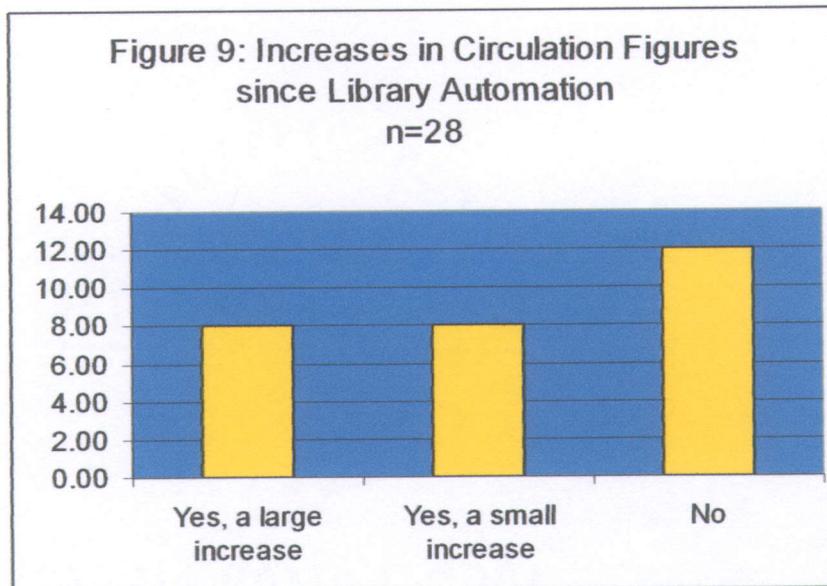


*Survey Questions 11, 12, 13, and 14*

The next question asked the school media specialists surveyed the total circulation figures for their school library media centers for the 2004-2005 school year. A slight majority (30.2%) claimed that their annual circulation figures were less than 2,000 (see Figure 8). The second largest majority (26.4%) claimed their circulation figures were between 2,000 and 2,500. The smallest minority (1.9 %) that claimed their circulation figures were between 3,500 and 4,000. However, 20.8 % claimed that their circulation figures were over 4,000. Ten participants in this online survey declined to answer question eleven.

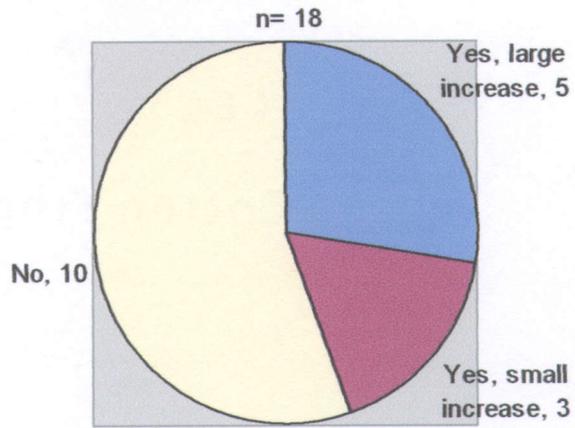


Question twelve asked the school library media specialists surveyed if they had seen an increase in circulation figures since installing their automation system. A total of twelve of them stated that they did not see an increase in circulation figures since installing their automation system. While eight stated that they saw either a large or a small increase since installing the automation system (see Figure 9). Thirty-five participants either did not respond to this question, already had an automation system present upon date hire, or were not automated.



Question thirteen asked the school media specialists surveyed if they had seen an increase in their circulation figures since allowing Internet access to their school library media center's catalog. A total of ten stated that they did not see an increase since allowing Internet access to their catalog (see Figure 10). However, a total of eight stated that they did see either a small or large increase in their circulation figures since allowing Internet access their catalog. Forty-five participants either skipped this question, already had an automation system present upon date hired, did not have their catalog available online, or were not automated. The last question asked the school media specialists surveyed to state the name of the high school where their school library media center was located. The responses to this question were not printed or published in any way, but were used to eliminate duplicates.

**Figure 10: Increase in Circulation Figures since Allowing Internet Access to Catalog**



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this survey research was to determine whether high school media center library catalogs were available on the Internet and therefore for home use through the Web; the economic and geographic differences among these school districts; and the impact of the online library catalog on student use of the media center. Questions to be addressed included:

- 1) Why were some school library media center catalogs available/not available on the Web?
- 2) What were the regional differences among these school districts?
- 3) What were the economic differences among these school districts?
- 4) How did the availability of an online catalog impact circulation statistics in the media center?

The questionnaire was distributed through an email posted on the NJASL listerv on Yahoo.com. Additional emails were sent in bulk format using media specialists' email addresses acquired from the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative and the Central Jersey Regional Library Cooperative Web sites. The data were collected over a six week period from January 23<sup>rd</sup> to March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. The data collected from the

SurveyMonkey.com Web site was then converted into the charts that appear in chapter four (see Figures 2 through 10).

#### Answer to Research Question 1

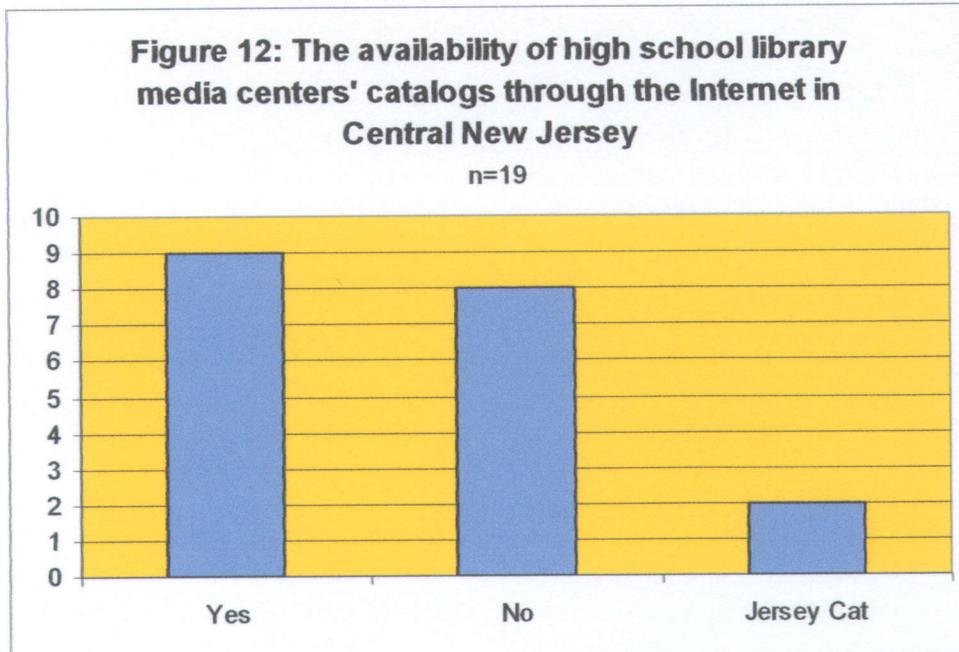
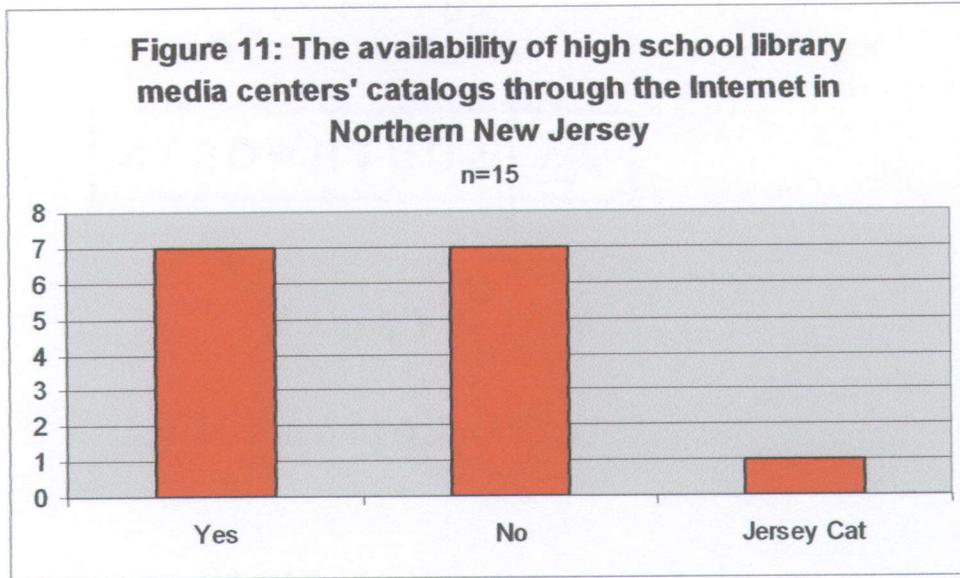
The first question this survey study attempted to answer was, “Why were some school library media center catalogs available/not available on the Web?” According to final count using the data collected in question nine; the majority of New Jersey high school library media centers did not have their catalog available through Internet (see Figure 5). This was a disappointing statistic and the question remained why the majority of New Jersey high school media centers did not have Internet access to their catalogs. According to data collected from survey questions six, seven, and nine; the largest factor in preventing New Jersey high school media centers from allowing Internet access to their catalog was that of technical issues. Out of the sixty-two that responded to question six, 16.1% stated that their high school library media center did not have a Web page. This statistic showed that high school library media centers in New Jersey that were lagging behind technologically. However, according to question seven of those that did have a high school library media center Web page, 61.5% of school library media specialists claimed that they were directly involved in designing the Web page. Technological problems were also evident according to responses collected in survey question nine. Out of the reasons listed for not having their catalog available through the Internet, technical problems had the most responses (see Figure 6). There were multiple open responses for this question regarding technical problems: “just upgraded from a dos-based program,” “lack of support from technology team,” and “Tech. Coord. has firewall concerns” (see Appendix E). Based on the data collected from questions six, seven, and

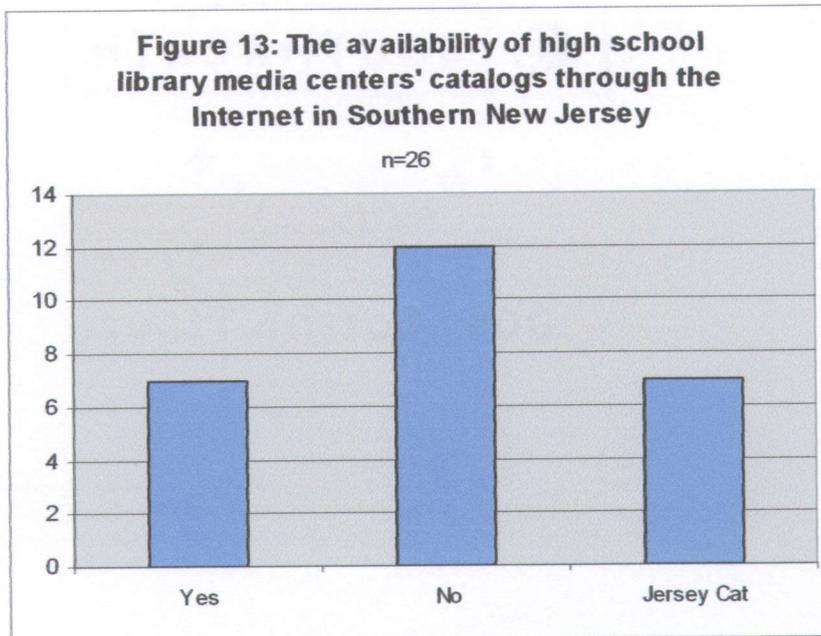
nine; technical issues were one of the largest reasons for not having the high school library media center catalog available on the Internet. However, it was also evident (based on the information collected from survey question seven) that this was not necessarily because of a lack of knowledge of the part of the media specialist, but a lack of support from school district's technology team.

#### Answer to Research Question 2

The second question this survey study attempted to answer was, "What were the regional differences among these school districts?" When breaking down the data collected from survey questions one and eight there seemed to be some minor regional differences in which New Jersey high school library media centers had their catalogs available through the Internet. The northern New Jersey high school library media centers were equally divided, with one using Jersey Cat (see Figure 11). The central New Jersey high school library media centers had slight majority with one more high school library media center's catalog available through the Internet, and with two using Jersey Cat (see Figure 12). In southern New Jersey, the majority of high school library media centers did not have their catalogs available through the Internet. However, seven of the twenty-six high school library media centers surveyed from southern New Jersey, used Jersey Cat as an alternative (see Figure 13). The reason for this difference may be due to the higher cost of real estate in northern and central New Jersey that leads to increased property tax revenues and funding for public schools. Media specialists working in northern and central New Jersey high schools may also have more authority over issues dealing with technology. These data did show that high school library media centers located in the

central or northern regions of New Jersey were more likely to provide Internet access to their catalog from a school library or district Web page.



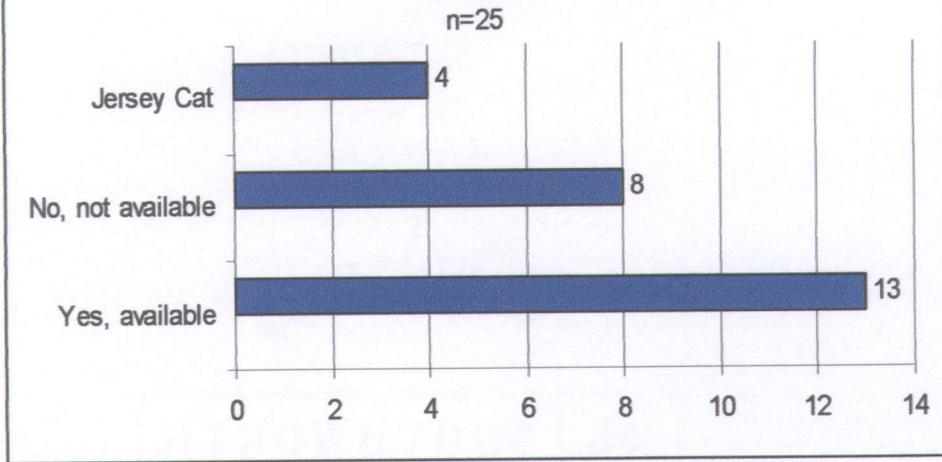


#### Answer to Research Question 3

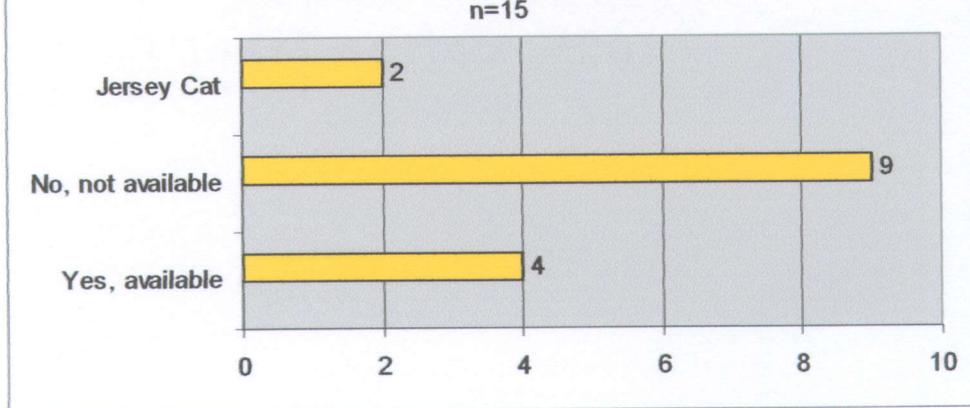
The third question this survey study attempted to answer was, “What were the economic differences among these school districts?” The data collected from survey questions three was studied for differences in annual budgets between high schools that did or did not allow Internet access to their library media centers’ catalogs. For statistical purposes three media specialists answered survey question three, but did not answer question eight. This study showed that school library media centers with larger annual budgets were more likely to provide Internet access to their catalogs. Thirteen out of the twenty-five high school library media centers surveyed with annual budgets over \$40,000 allowed Internet access to their catalog (see Figure 14). Interestingly, of these thirteen: four in the northern New Jersey, four in central New Jersey, and five in southern New Jersey. The majority of high school library media centers with a mid-level budget did not offer Internet access to their catalog (see Figure 15). However, of these sixteen high school library media centers with a mid-level budget, only four were located in northern

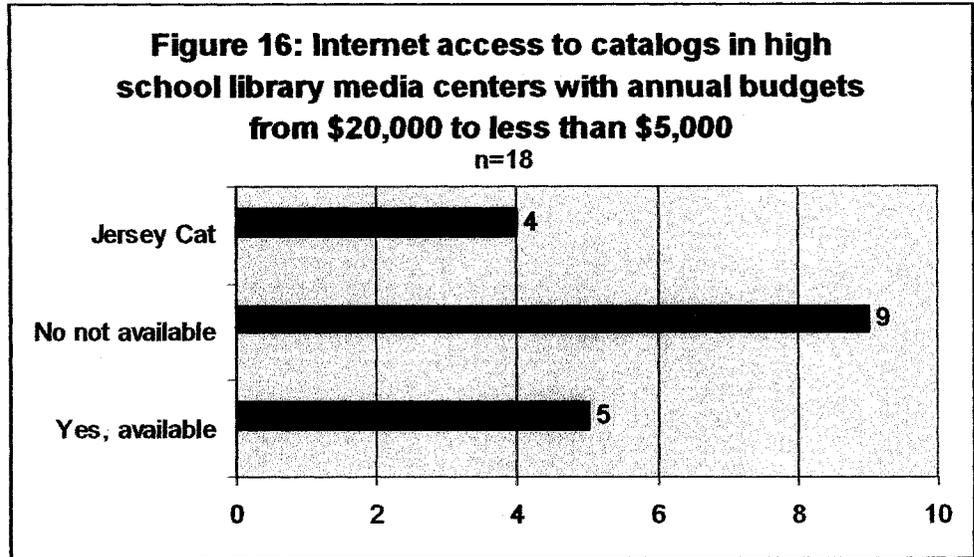
New Jersey, and only one of them allowed Internet access to their catalog. High school library media centers with lowest level budgets also were the least likely to offer Internet access to their catalog (see Figure 16). Eight of these schools were located in southern New Jersey. Out of that eight, only one offered Internet access to their catalog. One of the reasons for these differences may be that school districts with larger annual budgets have more money to spend on additional services. According to the data collected in survey question nine, 17.1 % of the media specialists surveyed stated that budget problems kept them from allowing Internet access to their catalog (see Figure 6). One of the media specialists responding to question nine stated that her automation vendor charged a yearly fee and that the money would be better spent elsewhere (see Appendix E). It could also be true that school districts that spent more money on their high school library media center were located in more affluent neighborhoods. Interestingly, according to the data provided by survey questions two and nine, only two of the eight high schools that were categorized as an Abbott school district allowed Internet access to their school library media center catalog, with one using Jersey Cat. Based on all the data provided by the survey, the lower the annual budget of the high school library media center the less likely it would provide Internet access to its catalog from school library or district Web page.

**Figure 14: Internet access to catalogs in high school media centers with annual budgets over \$40,000**



**Figure 15: Internet access to catalogs in high school media centers with annual budgets ranging from \$20,000 to \$40,000**





Answer to Research Question 4

The fourth question this survey study attempted to answer was, “How did the availability of an online catalog impact circulation statistics in the media center? According to the data collected from survey question thirteen, a slight minority of school library media specialists said that they saw either a small or a large increase in their circulation figures since allowing Internet access to their catalog. However, 9.6% of the media specialists surveyed stated that the Internet access was present upon date hired and therefore unable to witness any difference (see Figure 10). More detailed study is needed to be done to check the past circulation statistics of these high school library media centers for differences since Internet access became available. The results of this survey question were disappointing. It attempted to show that by improving library services, media specialists would see an increase in circulation figures. However, there could be a number of reasons for this lack of increase in circulation figures. The survey question did not take into account a lack of training on how to use the online catalog. It could also be due a poorly developed collection that did not interest the students. Another factor could

be that some of the students who attend high schools that offer this service may not have Internet access at home. Additional study would be needed to obtain a clearer understanding as to why improvements in services at high school library media centers do or do not increase circulation figures.

#### Significance of results

The results of this survey study were important because they revealed potential inequalities in the services and funding in for New Jersey high school library media centers. It was not likely that a high library media center with an annual budget of less than \$5,000 could offer the same services as one with an annual budget of over \$40,000. It revealed some of the problems school library media specialists must deal with concerning technical services in their school district. It was disappointing to see how high school library media centers with large annual budgets have limited library services because of difficulty with technical services. These results also showed that providing additional library services such as Internet access to the catalog were not enough to improve circulation figures. School library media specialists still needed to continue to instruct students on use of the catalog and practice quality collection development. Most importantly this thesis showed that school library media specialists strive to provide the best services to their students. A number of them (10, according to Figure 5), who did not allow Internet access to their catalog, did provide a link to Jersey Cat. This union catalog allowed students to check the holdings of their school library media center as well as their local municipal libraries from home.

### Recommendations for further study

Additional studies could be made to better understand why improved library services were not related to better circulation figures. It would also be interesting to compare New Jersey high school media centers with others in the Mid-Atlantic region such as Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New York in providing Internet access to their catalogs from a school library or district Web page. Another larger survey study could be done to compare different regions of the country in providing this service to their students.

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APPENDIX A  
EMAIL SURVEY

From "matthewdibella1"  
<matthewdibella@verizon.net>  
Date: Sun. Sep. 18, 2005  
Subject: Master Thesis Survey

Greetings,

My name is Matthew DiBella and this is the first question I am posting to this listserv. I am a graduate student enrolled in the Library Science Masters Program at Rowan University.

For my thesis paper, I was wonder how many high school library media centers have their library catalog available on their websites for students to access outside of school?

You are free to respond either way.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Matt DiBella  
Graduate Student-Masters in Library Science

APPENDIX B  
EMAIL INVITATION

From: "matthewdibella1"  
<matthewdibella@verizon.net>  
Date: Mon. Jan. 23, 2006  
Subject: Graduate survey for all public and private NJ high school media specialists

Attention all public and private NJ high school media specialists,

Greetings, my name is Matthew DiBella. I am graduate student in the Rowan University School Library Program and am conducting a survey as a part of my master's thesis. The purpose of this graduate thesis is to understand the geographic and economic differences between NJ high schools that do or do not have Internet access to their catalogs. As a part of this study, I am also hoping to come to a conclusion as to how this affects circulation statistics.

Your responses to this survey will result in a brief snapshot of the availability of high school library media center catalogs on the Internet. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated. The more responses, the more accurate my conclusions can be. Your individual responses will not be published or printed in anyway. The overall results of this survey will be linked to an email posted on the NJASL listserv in May. If you would like to participate, please click on the link below to go to the survey. Feel free to forward this email or share this link with other NJ high school media specialists who are not registered on the NJASL listserv.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=550281652971>

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,  
Matt DiBella  
Graduate Student  
School and Public Library Program  
Rowan University

APPENDIX C  
QUESTIONNAIRE

The following survey is being conducted by a library science graduate student at Rowan University. It is to be filled out by School Library Media Specialists, who work in New Jersey Public and Private High Schools only (Grades 7 through 12, or 9 through 12). Your response will remain anonymous.

1. In which region of New Jersey is your school located?
  - a. North: Warren, Sussex, Passaic, Bergen, Morris, Essex, and Union
  - b. Central: Mercer, Ocean, Monmouth, Middlesex, Somerset, and Hunterdon
  - c. South: Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem
  
2. Is your school categorized as an Abbott school district according to the State of New Jersey?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
3. What was the range of your School Library Media Center's budget for the 2004-2005 school year?
  - a. Less than \$5,000
  - b. \$5,000 to \$10,000
  - c. \$10,000 to \$15,000
  - d. \$15,000 to 20,000
  - e. \$20,000 to \$25,000
  - f. \$25,000 to \$30,000
  - g. \$30,000 to \$35,000
  - h. \$35,000 to \$40,000

i. over \$40,000

4. Is your School Library Media Center Automated?

a. Yes

b. No

5. If yes, what is the name of your vendor?

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6. Does your School Library Media Center have a Web Page?

a. Yes

b. No

7. Who designed your School Library Media Center's Web Page? Check all that apply.

a. Yourself

b. School or district employee

c. Student

d. Outside assistance

e. Combination of both yourself and others

8. Is your School Library Media Center's catalog available through the Internet?

Check all that apply.

a. Yes, through the school library media center's Webpage

b. Yes, through the school Web page

c. Yes, through Jersey Cat

d. No

9. If your School Library Media Center's Catalog not available through the Internet through a school or school library Web page; what are the reasons for this? Check all that apply.

- a. It is available
- b. Budget problems
- c. Technical problems
- d. Administrative problems
- e. Vendor problems
- f. Use Jersey Cat

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. If your catalog is not available on the Internet, do you have plans in the next two years to make it available through the Internet?

- a. Yes, within two years
- b. Yes, sometime in the future
- c. No
- d. It already is available through the Internet

11. What was the range for your School Library Media Center's circulation figures for the 2004-2005 school year?

- a. less than 2,000
- b. 2,000 to 2,500
- c. 2,500 to 3,000
- d. 3,000 to 3,500

e. 3,500 to 4,000

f. Over 4,000

12. Have you seen an increase in your School Library Media Center's circulation figures since installing the automation system?

a. Yes, a large increase

b. Yes, a small increase

c. No

d. Already automated upon date hired

e. Not automated

13. Have you seen an increase in your School Library Media Center's circulation figures since allowing Internet access to your library catalog?

a. Yes, a large increase

b. Yes, a small increase

c. No

d. Already available upon date hired

e. Not available through Internet

f. Not automated

14. What is the name of your high school?

---

APPENDIX D

RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTION FIVE

- Sagebrush (25)
- Follett (19)
- Mandarin (8)
- EOS International (2)
- Atlantic County Library
- Bergin Electric Library for Schools
- Chancery Software
- Concourse

APPENDIX E  
RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTION NINE

- We just upgraded from a dos-based program to windows, so we haven't gotten that far yet.
- IT department has assumed all technology functions whether appropriate or not. I have not had time to deal with it. I'm new and understaffed.
- Athena, our online catalog is not an open Internet accessible product. Our catalog however is available both on or off campus through the Pennington School intranet. This is accessible via Citrix and with correct log-in and password. We are upgrading to Sagebrush Infocentre with will then also allow our catalog to be accessible via the open web and probably through a link on our Library homepage.
- The catalog is on web-based application, but it does not connect to our server from outside of the building.
- Sagebrush charges a yearly fee, I feel that the money would be better spent elsewhere. I have also been told that this is a gateway for viruses. I do not know if that is true or not. I had the software at one point, but I was never able to get the needed tech assistance from our tech coordinator, and the contract expired. It is hard to get our tech people to take on anything new.
- We are waiting for the technology staff to complete the upgrades needed to do this. We have been waiting for two years.
- Lack of technology support from tech. team.
- IT department is concerned about firewall issues right now but they are planning for the future to make the catalog available outside of our network as I have told them how useful this will be for our students.
- New media specialist who is just learning what is needed to do what; also, current catalog needs a lot of fixing to be usable to anyone outside of the library facility.
- It will be at the end of the year.
- We are in the process of making the catalog accessible through the Internet. It should be available by Sept. 2006.
- IT feels there is a lack of security and not enough server space.
- We just got a website, so we are in the process of getting it online.
- InfoCentre has been bought but not installed yet but will be in the next week. There will access from the MC webpage.

- Tech Coord. has firewall concerns.
- Combination of factors. It is available, but it costs more. We have no Library Supervisor to push for it. I did bring it up to the Director of Technology and she is looking into it.
- Have no clue how to do this.
- Security concerns.
- Previous library person did not see the need...would like to switch vendors so hopefully this will happen soon...
- Tech department is afraid that it will be easy to hack into our school network through catalog access.
- This is something I want to accomplish, along with a media center web page, but this is my 1<sup>st</sup> year in the district.