

**THE ROLE OF PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MEASURES
IN IMPROVING ACCESS TO MATERIALS AND SERVICES
IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the role of promotional activities and measures in improving access to materials and services in public libraries. I approached the topic by collecting data relevant to the management and outcomes of promotional activities within a sample of public library services, using the following methods:

- A review of literature and research. Addressing the paucity of literature and research that is both current and directly relevant to this topic, was one of the motivating factors behind the study.
- A short postal questionnaire distributed to the heads of 43 English public library services. A high response rate (79.07%) indicated a high level of interest in the topic. Data was collected on the staffing, documentation, funding, training, evaluation and objectives of promotional activities. Correlation was observed between the data and the overall expenditure status of the respondents.
- Case studies were produced in 3 public library services (referred to as Library Services A, B and C). The case studies were intended to complement and add depth to the questionnaire data. Relevant staff members were interviewed and an embedded case study was conducted in each service, looking at a specific promotional event: a local history fair, a readers' surgery and display work.

Findings are summarised in the conclusion and the resulting recommendations are articulated in terms of a proposed 'methodology' of promotion, which includes:

- Clearly defined structures of responsibility
- Policy documentation and/or guidelines relevant to promotion
- An amount of 'reserved' funding for promotion
- Realistic training opportunities for all levels of staffing
- Co-ordinated evaluation measures

Suggestions also are made for topics of further study that arose from the research.

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1 Introduction

1.1. Statement of objectives

The central objective of this study is to achieve an understanding of the value and role of promotional activities and measures, in improving access to materials and services in public libraries. The topic is adapted from an original idea suggested by my project supervisor Richard Proctor, who observed a dearth in relevant literature and research.

To fulfil the central objective of the study it was necessary for me to develop knowledge about a) the management of promotional activities, and b) their outcomes. These requirements can be expressed as a set of sub-objectives:

- To investigate the management of these issues by public libraries and their staff i.e. how promotion is conceptualised, planned, funded, organised and developed. Attention will be given to the context of constrained or diminishing resources, and the effect this has on the perceived status and functions of promotion.
- To identify the outcomes of promotion. Are they clearly articulated and understood? Are they tested/evaluated, or based on assumptions? Do service providers and service users share a common understanding, or do tensions exist?
- To ascertain how such concepts as *promotion* and *marketing* are perceived by stakeholders in this context.
- To describe (and evaluate) a selection of current promotional practices.

The phrasing of the topic was chosen advisedly, to communicate the concept of 'improved access' rather than 'increased use'. This is because 'access' is a more capacious concept, use being only one of its potential outcomes.

Achieving the objectives of this study will produce insights into a range of thoughts and actions, reveal the extent to which public libraries stake their patronage, image, influence, resources and assets on engagement in promotion and indicate what, if any, are the dividends.

2. Review of relevant literature and research

2.1. Introduction

As mentioned earlier, there is a dearth of literature and research that relates precisely to the topic of this study. While this provides a rationale and justification for the study, it also makes it difficult to construct a research environment and define the scope of the study in relation to existing knowledge.

However, there are several areas of literature and research that are of relevance, and can be categorised thus:

- Methodology and research methods (discussed in section 3.)
- Background/contextual information about public libraries
- Marketing texts, divided into:
 - general marketing theory
 - marketing for the not-for-profit and/or service sector
 - marketing for library and information services
 - marketing for public libraries
- Texts addressing the promotion of library & information services (including public libraries), topically divided into:
 - promotional theory
 - practical guidance (including 'how to' manuals on specific topics e.g. press releases, leaflets, etc.)
 - case studies of real-life promotional experiences
 - reports/articles describing new promotional initiatives

2.2. Issues arising from the literature and research

(In order to demonstrate how existing literature and research has supported and informed my research decisions, pertinent issues are translated into questions for consideration. They are framed and shaded.)

It would seem wise to begin this review by summarising some of the definitions of key terms and concepts offered in the literature. Of direct relevance to this study are the concepts of: promotion (and the 'promotional mix'), marketing (and the 'marketing mix'), public relations, communication and publicity. It is important to note that in attempting to conceptualise these items, many commentators offer relative, rather than absolute definitions e.g. contrasting marketing with promotion, promotion with communication, or public relations with publicity.

The most common relative definition is that of promotion versus marketing. Though this study is not about the marketing of public libraries, it is a strongly associated concept that colours our understanding of promotion, and must be acknowledged as such. Commentators are often at pains to stress that, where terminology is used correctly, promotion is only one (albeit important) element of the marketing process (Pyle 1991, p. 200), and ought not to be perceived or treated as its sum total. According to Gallimore (Cronin (ed.) 1992, p. 126), marketing is 'not simply a matter of promoting a service' but 'an essential management activity'. Moreover, effective marketing demands a 'total approach to organisational development and the running of a service' (Comedia 1993, p. 71). This suggests that marketing is a larger and more capacious activity than promotion.

Despite this, a number of commentators suggest that many librarians (especially public librarians) often fail to grasp this distinction (Walters 1992). Kinnell and MacDougall (1997, p. 189) develop this point further, suggesting that it is a misconception common to many not-for-profit organisations, because promotion is often a 'key factor in successful marketing' in the not-for-profit sector. Walters (1992) volunteers another reason for the perception of promotion and marketing as synonymous; it is the most 'visible' element of the marketing mix. Visibility will eventually result in familiarity; consequently, de Sáez (1993) maintains that promotion is the aspect of marketing with which library and information professionals are most familiar and comfortable with. This perceived misconception forms part of a wider concern about the relationship between library staff and the concepts and practices of marketing (this will be discussed in more detail later in this review).

Does the data suggest that librarians are cognisant of the difference between promotion and marketing, or are the terms often employed synonymously?

Promotion is often described as the fourth and final element in the 'marketing mix', as conceptualised by McCarthy (de Sáez 1993), the other elements being 'product', 'price' and 'place'. Promotion itself is often divided into a 'mix', best understood as a portfolio of promotional techniques or channels, selected to meet the prescribed objectives of the promotional strategy (Rowley 1998). Walters (1992) divides the promotional mix into advertising, personal selling, public relations and promotions, while Rowley (1998) adds direct marketing, sales promotion, and sponsorship.

There is a common factor between all of these 'tools' of promotion: they all involve or constitute a communication model. Some critics actually refer to the promotional element of the marketing mix as 'marketing communication' (de Sáez 1993). What is the relationship between promotion and communication? Rowley (1998, p. 383) suggests that 'promotion is one side of the communication process', the other side being provided by market research, to create a two-way communication model, described thus:



(Diagram adapted from Rowley (1998))

(The important role of market research in informing promotional strategy is discussed later).

A different interpretation of the dynamic between promotion and communication is offered by Krieg-Sigman (1995). Promotion, in its purest and most simple sense, is described as 'communication with an attitude' (p. 419), a thing set apart from routine communication. It would seem that promotion is both a

specific type of communication and an organisational activity which is served by various communication models. That may seem a contradictory and unsatisfactory statement, but any confusion can be resolved if we are mindful of a comment made by Cronin (1981, p. 383). Our inability to develop a clear understanding and lucid, workable definition of promotion is, according to Cronin, due to 'a tendency to confuse function with purpose when talking about promotion'. To explain, our grasp of *what promotion does* is often obscured by our preoccupation with *how promotion is done*. Promotion is, states Cronin (1981, p. 383), 'something more than the sum of its parts'.

Interpretations of the relationship between the concepts of promotion and public relations are particularly heterogeneous. Public relations is defined by Leerburger (1989, p. 7) as 'a management function that establishes and maintains a 2-way dialog between an organization and its various publics and to use that dialog to express a positive influence towards the organization'. An alternative definition is offered by Hart (1999, p. 47), who sees public relations as 'the planned and sustained communication of you messages to your target markets using the public media of print, broadcast and electronic press'. A rather limited denotation, it focuses on 'media' to the exclusion of the promotional or public relations 'event' (Krieg-Sigman 1995) and the role played by all staff i.e. the embedded public relations value of quality service delivery (Usherwood 1991).

There is a further tension apparent between Hart's statement and one made by Pyle (1991) about the true nature of public relations. Pyle recalls an observation made by the Publicity and Public Relations Group of the Library Association, that 'all organizations have public relations whether they want them or not. The question is whether they are good or bad public relations' (p. 206). This would seem to dispute the controlled, 'planned' element of Hart's definition.

Despite this differences, no commentator disputes that *public relations is ultimately concerned with the exercising of a relationship of influence between the organisation and its publics*. Usherwood (1981a) expands the concept of the

public(s) to embrace all of those who could be conceived as stakeholders in the organisation, transforming public relations into a relationship of political consequence, that is both internal and external to an organisation.

Usherwood draws no explicit distinction between public relations and promotion; nor does Huws & Eyre (1994). Edsall (1980) and Pyle (1991) imply that public relations is greater than promotion (at least in terms of complexity), while Weingard (1989) proposes that promotion is both more and less than public relations. The latter statement merits our attention, not least because it addresses the difference directly. Weingard suggests that while public relations can be most simply understood as the 'subset' of promotion that provides a model of positive communication, it also constitutes a 'guiding context' i.e. public relations is 'the philosophical relationship between library and community' (p.70) which informs and influences the promotional approach taken, as well as carrying the promotional message.

The relative definitions of promotion and publicity perhaps cause the fewest semantic problems for this study. There is no consensus between commentators, but the two terms are often used synonymously and without comment. Elsewhere, publicity is seen as a sub-set of promotion, often an offshoot of public relations in the promotional mix (Rowley 1998). Alternatively, publicity is sometimes identified as one tier of a two-tiered model of promotion, the primary tier being a promotional 'event' supported by a secondary tier of special publicity (Leerburger 1989). Finally, a rather odd distinction is made by Hamilton (1990, p. ix), who posits that while publicity is 'promoting something in order to draw attention to it', marketing is 'promoting something in order to sell it'. It is a curious definition, which seems to fall foul of other commentator's warnings about seeing promotion as equivalent to marketing, implying that marketing is in fact only one type of promotion, which positions promotion as the more expansive concept.

Amidst all of these seemingly confusing statements, have we developed a useful sense of what promotion is, as well as what it is not? To summarise, promotion is variously defined as synonymous with, more than, or less

than the related concepts of marketing, public relations, communication and publicity. However, if we synthesise the available literature, several salient factors emerge: while promotion, public relations and communication can all be said to involve relationships of influence and meaning, the literature suggests that public relations and communication, for good or bad, are inevitable. Even when promotion occurs with inadequate thought and planning, a decision was taken at some level, however perfunctory and instinctive, to do it. Therefore, promotion is **premeditated**. Whether disastrous or wildly successful, a **choice** is made to promote or not to promote.

The decision to promote is taken because **positive outcomes** are expected to result from the time, resources and effort deployed. Therefore, successful promotion is partially dependent on meeting clearly articulated **objectives**. Whether or not those objectives have been met will be dependent on a process of **evaluation**. Promotion is also based on an assumption of **quality** i.e. that something is worth promoting, and that the promotion itself ought to be of commensurate quality. More than simple **promulgation**, promotion contributes to an **onwards and upwards momentum**.

To return to the comprehension gap observed between librarians and the concepts of marketing and promotion, the literature is divided over the attitude of librarians towards these disciplines, and also their aptitude i.e. whether or not librarians possess adequate marketing and promotional skills. It has already been mentioned that promotion is the element of marketing which librarians are most familiar and comfortable with (de Sáez 1993). Conversely, Cronin (1981, p. 383) suggests that 'there are still pockets of scepticism, resistance and suspicion within the profession' towards promotion. Even when it is embraced with enthusiasm and commitment, it suffers from the aforementioned confusion over the function and purpose of promotion. Hart (1999) suggests that the whole concept of marketing is all too often met with suspicion from librarians, which is diagnosed by Usherwood (1991) as the result of the persistent misuse and 'abuse' of marketing terminology.

The public library service is often seen as embodying 'non-commercial values', and has understandably shied away from the adoption of 'business' language and practices e.g. the concept of the library user as a 'customer' seems to cause particular offence (Usherwood 1991 and Karpf 1999). It would seem that, while some critics detect an affinity between librarians and the concept of promotion, it is offset by a disinclination to accept the 'whole' concept of marketing. I would only add to this that libraries are organisations comprised of many different individuals, so the range of aptitude and attitudes possessed by staff will vary greatly. I suspect that the truth probably lies somewhere in between the extremes described in the literature.

Do negative or positive staff attitudes emerge from the data? Do they appear to influence promotional effectiveness?

A consumer survey conducted by Which? Magazine in 1990 would appear to demonstrate a negative fallout from the uncomfortable relationship between public libraries and marketing concepts and practices: it found that 41% of respondents felt that public libraries were either 'not very good' or 'not good at all' at marketing their services. Moreover, the report considers marketing as 'an important part of their service' (p. 108) rather than an adjunct to it. It is impossible to judge whether respondents understood the distinction between marketing and just promotion (at one point the report itself equates marketing with advertising), but the message is clear: public libraries could do better.

How do library users view library promotion, and how do they respond to specific promotional activities?

Hamilton (1990) distinguished between promoting in order to raise awareness (publicity), and promoting in order to 'sell' something (marketing). Whether or not libraries (especially public libraries) are 'selling' something is one of the most disputed issues that arose from the literature. Leerburger (1989, p. 6) states unequivocally that libraries are indeed involved in 'simple, old-fashioned selling',

while Hart (1999, p. 7) asserts with equal force that promotion which forms an integral part of marketing is not the same as selling, because 'marketing starts with customers and selling starts with the product or service'. Cronin (1981, p. 384) flatly accuses many libraries of engaging in what he terms 'product-centred or minimal marketing' that forgoes the gathering of intelligence about user wants and needs (real and potential markets).

The concept of selling seems to cause so much unease and controversy for library commentators that we must ask if the promotion and marketing of libraries (especially public libraries) is really so very different, and in what ways. We have already established that public libraries can be categorised as not-for-profit, public sector service organisations. Huws & Eyre (1994) remind us that there are specific difficulties inherent to the promotion of a 'nebulous' product i.e. information. While this may be true, it is more commonly held that libraries are offering a 'service' to 'users', rather than a 'product' to 'customers'. The characteristics of a service-based rather than product-based organisation are, according to Rowley (1995, p. 27), the 'intangibility' of a service (heightening the importance of the 'experience quality') and the 'inseparability of delivery and consumption i.e. 'services are normally produced at the same time as they are consumed'.

Rowley also cites the 'perishability' and 'heterogeneity' of the service experience; a service is comprised of many individual episodes of human interaction, so in realistic terms, a truly 'complete' quality audit or inventory is impossible. Clearly, these qualities place certain restrictions on the way in which a service can be promoted i.e. it is difficult for a potential user to evaluate the service without actually using it, and it is difficult to implement the 'sales promotion' element of the promotional mix for a service that is basically free at the point of use.

Hamilton (1990) maintains that, of all library and information professionals, public librarians are facing the most daunting marketing and publicity challenge. This is apparently due to the theoretically limitless potential market for public library services (and limitless segmentation) and also the prevailing apathy of the public at large. On a more positive note, Hamilton also suggests that, because of the

seemingly inexhaustible potential market, public librarians 'can choose to promote almost anything, as long as there is a definite segment of the market out there likely to be interested' (p.4).

How do library services decide what to promote and what not to promote? At what level are decisions about prioritisation taken, and how are they justified?

The identification of market segments takes place in the earlier stages of marketing cycle, in the form of market research. In this respect, public libraries do not differ from any other type of organisation, in their need to underpin any promotional activities with a sound knowledge of current and potential markets. The literature generally judges the gathering of marketing intelligence by public libraries to be inadequate. That intelligence, according to Cronin (1981, p. 384), ought to contribute to the 'mapping of an organization's customer universe' but in practice it is often allowed to 'end with the increasingly popular user study or community profiling exercise'.

Cronin was writing eighteen years ago. Does the data suggest any increase in the use and sophistication of market research activities in public libraries since then?

Even where this type of data is collected, critics suggest that it this is often done in an unsystematic and uncoordinated manner. This failure to aggregate data (Cronin 1992) means that a mine of potentially valuable information is left untapped. De Sáez (1993) points out that the promotional activity most likely to fail is that which is developed in isolation from the rest of the marketing process. Kinnell & MacDougall (1997) suggest that promotion often ends up subsuming all the available thought, action and resources which ought to be distributed more evenly throughout the marketing process.

Furthermore, there is little consistency in the way in which different public library services gather their intelligence (Comedia 1993), creating yet another obstacle to the macro-level research called for by Usherwood (1981b). This begs

the question: if marketing intelligence is either a) not being collected b) not being aggregated and utilised, then what (if anything) is informing the promotion of public library services?

What does my research suggest about the utilisation of market intelligence? Once collected, is it organised effectively and used to inform service development (including promotion?)

The promotion of library services may also be constrained by the corporate context in which they operate. Pyle (1991) succinctly explains this:

..most libraries are subdivisions of much larger parent organizations. They have never been in greater need of effective publicity and PR but, lacking clout at corporate level, it is often a struggle for them to either prise the necessary money out of the finance director or persuade the board that professional-quality promotion is part of an efficient library service.

(p.200)

Elsewhere, Pyle (1989, p. 80) has also suggested that libraries may suffer from a 'comprehension gap' between themselves and those involved with promotion at a corporate level e.g. the central PR unit, warning that 'the librarians know nothing about PR and the PR people know nothing about libraries. The results can be disastrous'. At a fundamental level, public library services must ensure that their promotional activities are in keeping with the objectives and corporate culture of the overarching parent organisation (Eyre 1996), yet ensuring that the identity of the service is not subsumed or overruled (Usherwood (1981b).

Do public library services show signs of being constrained by the corporate context in which they operate? Are corporate provisions adequate and relevant to public libraries? Do they see themselves as possessing enough 'clout' within the parent organisation?

It would seem that the use by public libraries of promotional and marketing concepts that originate in the commercial sector is a much a matter of adaptation, as adoption. There is little wholesale rejection of commercial practices evident in the literature, but libraries are advised to use these techniques with caution. According to the report *Borrowed Time?* (Comedia 1993, p.54), 'the library should not be

limited by the bookshop model'. In fact, there is some assertion that booksellers are increasingly coming to recognise the potential value of service and not-for-profit models, and are gravitating towards some of their practises e.g. establishing reading areas within the bookshop, running reading groups and employing stock specialists (Carter & Morris 1999).

Libraries are reliant on 'repeat business' (Kassel 1999) rather than one-off consumption, which has implications for the promotional approach taken. If the library is seeking to establish an enduring relationship rather than a quick sale, it is clearly not enough to offer a short term promotional incentive. To understand this, we need to unpack briefly the various objectives of the communication models, which, according to Rowley (1998) underpin the objectives of the promotion itself. There are various models available, but Rowley identifies 3 core phases common to them all, namely the 'cognitive', 'affective' and 'behaviour' stages. To summarise: the cognitive stage involves raising the awareness of the target audience; the affective stage influences the attitudes of the target audience; the behaviour stage is achieved if the target is persuaded to take action.

These stages of communication comprise a relationship of influence and are closely twinned with the objectives of public library promotion. We seek to promulgate the scope of library services and materials; we hope to communicate convincingly about their quality, value and relevance; and ultimately, to persuade stakeholders to act in ways which are favourable to the development of our organisation. The sophistication of this process explains why, while it is technically possible to map some of the objectives of promotion onto Ansoff's product/market matrix (de Sáez 1993), the matrix does not express the full range and complexity of potential outcomes of promotion. It seems to me that it corresponds more directly with the affective or 'take-up' stage.

The dynamics of promotional communication are realised through the deployment of various tactics. In order to assess the relative merits and limitations of a range of these tactics, we first need to address the perceived objectives of promotion. Why ought public libraries to promote their services and materials? There is no legal obligation, beyond the undefined provision of the 1964 Public

Libraries Act that libraries must 'encourage use' of their services (Smith 1992). A different kind of obligation, introducing a more ethical dimension, is proposed by Edsall (1980), who reminds us that public libraries are largely dependent on public funds, so that

... to spend money for a public service and keep it a secret that can be unearthed only by the most determined bibliophile or devoted patron with unusually good eyesight would appear to be immoral and unethical. It is akin to a "public be damned" attitude.

(p.3)

I suspect that in everyday working practice it is the prospect of the advantageous outcomes of promotion, rather than the fulfilment of an ethical obligation, which motivates most public librarians to promote. The favourable outcomes of promotion have been described with varying levels of complexity by different commentators. Most simply, Krieg-Sigman (1995, p. 419) states that 'if you do not promote, no-one will ever know what you are doing'. To this, Usherwood (1981b, p. 4) adds that public relations is partially concerned with 'getting people to like you', and that 'people who like you are more likely to support you when times get tough.

In a similar vein, Eyre (1996, p. 178) defines both promotion and public relations as the 'gaining of public support for an activity, cause, movement or institution'. I would add to this, to suggest that *active* public support is libraries are really after; promotion is not tenable as a purely intellectual exercise. Usherwood (1991, p. 188) argues that public libraries must focus promotion on what the service is really all about in order to protect it, namely 'access to information and ideas'. This suggests that public libraries should be ever mindful of the 'bigger picture' while promoting specific aspects of the service.

Cronin (1981, p. 385) posits a 'cumulative advantage theory of promotion', suggesting that effective promotion will have a 'snowballing effect' and gathering influence and momentum and easing the way for future promotion, so that success breeds success.

Rowley (1998) translates the objectives of promotional strategies into a number of categories, including increased sales (equivalent to 'use' in libraries), the maintenance or extension of the market share, brand recognition, the creation of a favourable future 'climate', an informed and educated market, a competitive advantage and improved promotional efficiency. It is a mixture of short and long term outcomes, encompassing the cognitive, affective and behaviour stages of the promotional communication process. Rowley stresses that these objectives must be adopted in proportions that are appropriate to the individual organisation.

Irving (1992, p. ix) plots the potential objectives of marketing along a continuum which ranges from the direct and palpable, to the indirect and more enduring outcomes, all contributing to 'improved funding, support and impact'. It would seem sensible to assume that promotional objectives will correspond closely with those of the overall marketing strategy.

The specimen statement of public library aims and objectives produced by the Public Libraries Research Group (Heeks & Turner (eds.) 1981) devoted an entire section to public relations, identifying mutual understanding, favourable influence over attitudes and opinions of the public library, increased awareness and increased public confidence. Interestingly it stops short of citing increased use of the service as an explicit objective. I would suggest that 'increased use' of the library service is perhaps the easiest of all promotional objectives for librarians to identify and lay claim to.

What types of objectives for library promotion become evident in my research? Are they expressed in terms that relate to Rowley's three stages of communication? If 'increased use' is mentioned, is any explanation given as to how that increased usage will be comprised e.g. market penetration, service development, etc.?

The relationship between library promotion and library use tends to focus on a desired increase in volume of use, rather than an increase in what might be called 'informed' or educated use. Addressing the problem of non-use of the public library

is often regarded as the most pressing promotional requirement. *Borrowed Time ?* (Comedia 1993) observes that

... non-use is often predicated by on a sense that the library or staff have failed to convince non-users of their need for library services. There is a case for more systematic research into library use and non-use which can inform the future development of the library.

(p.10)

The last sentence is a near-perfect description of marketing. The preoccupation with promoting to increase the use of public libraries is highly understandable, but also more than a little ironic. This is because whether an increase in library use can be attributed solely to a specific promotional activity is notoriously difficult to prove. It requires, according to Usherwood (1981b, p. 170) 'quite sophisticated research techniques to isolate that effects of the campaign for all the other internal and external factors that may, or may not, have led to an increase in the use of a service', warning against 'confusing correlation with causation'. It would sees that conventional performance indicators such, as issue figures, gate counts, and number of enquiries are not enough. Questions must be asked, in order to unpack all of the possible reasons for an increase, before attempting to gauge the impact of promotion.

This type of sophisticated evaluation will inevitably be labour and resource intensive, but the argument for more effective evaluation for library promotion is an compelling one. According to Eyre (1994), the inadequate provision of evaluative measures is symptomatic of the lack of methodological support for many decisions that are taken. But why evaluate? Most simply, because there is no other way of knowing whether promotional objectives are being met and there is no conceivable justification for not knowing. Moreover, whether those objectives were satisfied or not, we need to know precisely why (Pickton 1989).

Although all proposals for library promotion should be subject to prior evaluation, the process usually begins in earnest either after or sometimes during the promotional activity. It is crucial that two things are established at the offset: a clear set of objectives (as discussed earlier), and the mechanisms for measuring

whether those objectives have been met. Often overlooked, these indicators ensure that the data necessary for evaluation is correctly collected and aggregated at the time; it simply cannot be done retrospectively.

No commentator suggests that the effective evaluation of library promotion is easy to achieve. However, the inherent difficulty of evaluation is generally regarded as little reason not to do it, and at best an insufficient excuse. Pickton (1989, p.88) allows that some of the problems arise from the fact that promotion is not a science, nor even 'scientific in nature'. There are no laws and very few constants to be relied upon, but rather than seeing this as a justification for not evaluating, Pickton (1989, p. 80) sees it as accentuating 'the need for evaluation, if any attempt at all is to be made to be economical and effective'. The suggested methods range from those which will be familiar to most librarians (questionnaires and interviews), to the more innovative (laboratory tests, recall tests and media analysis).

Usherwood (1981b, p. 166) further asserts that, while it may be difficult, evaluation (of public relations) is not impossible. He identifies the real problems as being the difficulty of measuring 'long-term cumulative effects' and the sheer expense of evaluation, which he estimates, may be 'greater than the cost of the public relations effort itself'. By implication, evaluation is perhaps the only (albeit costly) means of justifying the initial expenditure on promotion.

Usherwood (1981b, p. 168) also criticises the lack of 'precision' in many of the evaluative methods thus far identified. We have already looked at the example of the complex relationship between library promotion and increased use. Usherwood offers another: attendance figures are often recorded at promotional events and cited as proof of the 'impact' of that promotion, but other evidence suggests that 'the people who attend such events are already well informed about the service or topic being promoted'.

Rowley (1998, p. 387) adds that it is also difficult to separate out the effects of promotion from other elements of the marketing mix. For evaluation purposes, Rowley suggests sales figures (presumably for a fee-based information service) and other 'measures of reputation, but offers no explanation of what these measures

might involve. Edsall (1980) suggests that librarians keep a portfolio record of past promotional events, as a means of evaluation and to inform and perhaps inspire future planning.

At one time or another, scrupulous evaluation is likely to reveal an unsuccessful promotional activity or campaign. Kassell (1999, p. 3), who insists that the key to marketing success is repetition and perseverance, urges library and information professionals not to be afraid of failure, but to view it a 'natural part of the process', and to learn from it. This seems sensible advice in the light of failure (or limited success) which has already occurred, but can public libraries, suffering from constrained resources, really afford to fail where they have invested so much hard-pressed time, money and effort?

Does the data suggest that libraries make adequate provisions for the evaluation of promotional activities? If so, are those provisions applied consistently and systematically to all areas of promotion? How scrupulous and sophisticated are the measures of evaluation? Are clear benchmarks and performance indicators established? Does evaluation inform and influence future planning?

Could any of the activities featured in the embedded case studies be considered failures, or only partially successful? If so, what are the consequences?

Another key issue that arises from the literature concerns the quality and integrity of library promotion. Krieg-Sigman (1995, p. 425) presents four conditions, which all promotional activities must conform to, regardless of what they are promoting. They are: consistency (which includes effective communication to library staff of any promotional initiatives), honesty (Krieg-Sigman suggests that this can be most difficult when communicating with library staff), simplicity and the selection of 'media/methods which fit the project'.

Does the data suggest that library staff are well informed of all promotional activities which may affect their work?

Before we discuss some of those tools of promotion, it would seem appropriate to consider briefly 'what' is being promoted. Having established a clear distinction between promotional communication ('communication with an attitude' and routine communication, Krieg-Sigman (1995, p. 419) is equally unequivocal about what qualifies for promotion. These qualifications can be condensed into two main concepts: the quality of the item/service/feature (a criteria supported by Usherwood (1981b)) and the desire to affect some change to it. This change may translate as its increased or redirected use, or a positive transformation in the way that it is perceived.

If these requirements are not satisfied i.e. the quality or level of service is limited, change is not desirable or the item is 'administrative in nature' then Krieg-Sigman (1995, p. 420) suggests that it ought not to be promoted but 'routinely communicated'. To be worthy of promotion, an item must be able to a) justify the attention that is being drawn to it, and b) cope with the possible consequences of that attention i.e. increased demand.

An item that qualifies for promotion according to these standards, is then subdivided by Krieg-Sigman (1995, p. 421) into either the major library 'event' (for instance a library roadshow or author appearance) or the 'ongoing "normal" (routine) things' such as the range and quality of the collection, or the mobile library service. It is suggested that the latter is by far the most difficult (and less obvious) to promote. It would seem that librarians must engage in the intelligent selection of what to promote, as well how best to promote it.

On the matter of how best to promote, Krieg-Sigman (1995) simply advises librarians to 'use what works'. The tools or channels of promotion have been categorised in various ways, sometimes within the framework of the 'promotional mix'. Leerburger (1989) identifies three main methods: the published word, personal contact, and atmospherics. We can assume that the published word includes 'print and paper' publicity (e.g. library guides, book lists, posters) but it is a category which appears slightly to overlook the use of images and graphic design.

Leerburger was writing ten years ago, so we can assume that this category has evolved to incorporate the electronically published word i.e. library service web pages.

Personal contact embraces all of the relationships and interpersonal episodes that occur between staff and other stakeholders, ranging from a pre-planned class visit to the everyday interactions which are embedded in library service delivery. Atmospherics is described by Leerburger (1989, p. 15) as 'the concept of designing the library building with consideration for the people who use it'. It includes the 'ambient' factors of architectural design, fittings and fixtures, colour schemes, lighting and extends to such provisions as signage, guiding and the physical organisation of materials. Carter & Morris (1999) provide an example of how the latter can be perceived as promotional. Having observed that library users often develop a very set pattern in their use and movement around the physical space of the library, they suggest that physically rearranging stock can confound these entrenched behaviours and reveal previously unnoticed areas of the collection.

Eyre (1994) does not recognise atmospherics as an element of promotion, but does classify user education as a distinct promotional method. Hart (1999, p. 68) divides the tools of promotion into the 'media' of public relations, advertising, direct mail (described as 'either junk mail or advertising by post' and exhibitions, roadshows and seminars. Rowley (1998, p. 384) also cites advertising, defining it as 'any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by any identified sponsor'. Rowley broadens Hart's direct mail into the larger concept of 'direct marketing' which can encompass other media e.g. telemarketing. The American commentator Walters (1992) assumes that telemarketing will be carried out by library staff or volunteers. The possibility of the library service commissioning an external body (e.g. a marketing consultancy) is not considered.

Is there evidence to suggest that public libraries in the U.K. are adopting the tactics that have been more pervasive to American libraries, such as telemarketing? If so, have they proved effective?

Rowley (1998) nominates sponsorship as another tool of promotion. The most obvious form of sponsorship is that of financial support, but it could equally involve the donation of materials, space or professional expertise. Eyre (1994) advises initial caution in entering into sponsorship arrangements:

Accepting money or other benefits will bring with it obligations or conditions which the sponsor will expect to be met. There are many pitfalls e.g. are the policies of the organisation in line with those of the authority? The logo of the sponsoring body will have to be displayed on any publicity produced for the sponsored events. Is this likely to cause conflict or other problems?

(p.25)

At the core of sponsorship are the advantages gained by access to other organisations' people and resources (Ernestus 1981). If Eyre's caution is heeded, then logic suggests that perhaps the safest and most sympathetic organisations to work with are other public library services. They are more likely to have compatible objectives and professional values, but de Sáez (1993) claims that this area of co-operative work is particularly under-utilised. De Sáez (1993, p. 59) proposes a framework of co-ordination between neighbouring library services, whereby a series of promotional campaigns could be operated on 'a rolling basis', with different library services taking turns to create and resources an element of the campaign, and then enjoying the work of the others for the rest of the cycle. In this way, librarians could amplify the promotional 'fruits' of their work while avoiding the unnecessary duplication of effort.

Does the evidence suggest that sponsorship and co-operative work are becoming increasingly common practice in public libraries? If so, who are the most common participants? Have libraries experienced any difficulties relating to the ethics or obligations of sponsorship? Is there evidence of co-operative work between library services?

Eyre (1994) mentioned the potential imposition of conspicuous 'sponsored by' logos. In fact, logos are part of corporate 'branding', which is of direct relevance to libraries, as well as their sponsors. Branding is associated with the concepts of corporate identity (an organisation's self-perception) and corporate image (an

organisation's perception by customers/users). I draw attention to it, because it can be an aid to effective promotion. The brand is concerned not only with a name or logo, but all that is implied by those symbols. Strong branding can help identify the providers of a promotional event, while an established brand can be seen as a guarantee of quality or integrity, therefore securing brand loyalty and return business. All of these benefits are outlined by Rowley (1997), along with the provisos that a brand is often hard to establish, and even more difficult to protect, maintain or change.

What does the data suggest about the effectiveness of public library 'branding'? Do libraries brand their promotions effectively, especially those which occur beyond the four walls of the library? Is the corporate identity of the library service subsumed by that of the parent authority?

The selection of the correct promotional tool will depend on many factors, not least the objectives of the promotion. Usherwood (1981a) reminds us of the varying 'reception conditions' of different media, stating the example of the radio listener, who is unlikely to record a radio promotion 'for posterity' and will probably exhibit a poor recall of the information given (this suggests to me that the radio may not be the ideal medium for promotional messages which contain specific times, dates, telephone numbers, etc.). Despite this inherent obstacle, Usherwood (1981b) suggests that radio is particularly useful for reaching non-users of the library service, so perhaps it is necessary to overcome the limitations of the radio medium by communicating key information simply and repeatedly (Edsall 1980).

Of course, if the library service is only providing a press release rather than an interview, little control can be exerted over how the broadcaster presents that information, or whether it is broadcast at all. The same is true of the press releases distributed to local newspapers: unless libraries pay for an advertisement, they have no editorial control and will be competing for column space with other organisations and individuals. A press release seeks to educate and inform (Leerburger 1989) about some aspect of the service, and most critics suggest that producing an effective one requires a considerable degree of skill, creativity (Edsall 1980) and timing (Usherwood 1981b).

Leerburger (1989) stresses the importance of exploiting 'local organs for information dissemination' (such as local newspapers and radio stations), while Edsall (1980) maintains that the most successful promotional events are those which have some kind of local topicality.

Sharply contrasted with the large promotional event, are the pervasive activities that are so thoroughly embedded in the culture of public library service that their existence and production may become habitual and routine to library staff at all levels. As a result, they may never be subjected to the methodological rigour that Eyre (1994) recommends for promotional work. I am thinking specifically of displays. Eyre places displays and exhibitions in a distinct promotional category, while other critics make no such allowance e.g. according to Leergburger's (1989), displays could be considered as 'atmospheric' supported by published materials.

Opinions vary as to whether an absolute distinction can be made between displays and exhibitions. Hamilton (1990) uses the terms synonymously, Usherwood (1981b, p. 54) admits that the difference is a 'moot point', while de Sáez offers a more concrete definition, explaining that displays are akin to a 'shop window', while exhibitions showcase the library service outside of its own four walls and are usually staffed by library representatives. An exhibition could be mapped onto Leerburger's (1989) category of personal contact, supported by published materials and other library wares. Both displays and exhibitions are essentially involve 'setting out the library stall', but it would seem that a staffed exhibition that occurs in a location remote from the library itself, is likely to have greater resource implications than an in-house display.

Hart (1999) suggests that these resource implications have limited libraries' exploitation of opportunities to exhibit. Hart also observes that the precise impact of an exhibition is notoriously difficult to evaluate, a charge that may also be levelled at in-house displays.

Do librarians perceive a difference between displays and exhibitions? Does the evidence support Hart's claim that exhibitions are constrained by a lack of resources?

A number of recommendations have been made which seek to a) increase the effectiveness of displays b) to facilitate their evaluation. All commentators accentuate the need for displays to justify their existence and the time, effort and resources that are devoted to their production. Edsall (1980) encourages librarians to weigh the potential value and impact of displays before according them a degree of priority in overall promotional programme.

Edsall (1980, p. 106) is adamant that the decision to mount displays 'should not be determined solely on the basis that space is available, that it is a traditional activity and "we have always done it" '. Display work must be supported by explicit objectives, which should inform how and where the display is mounted. It is not enough for the display to appear attractive; it must be of direct relevance to some element of promotional strategy. To illustrate, Usherwood (1981b) points out that a display intended to attract new users is unlikely to succeed if it is placed inside the library. Preaching to the already converted is one of the perils of all promotional activities, because it can render all our efforts irrelevant. Edsall (1980) upholds that the very best displays are those which can be seen outside the library, including window displays.

Another reason that display work may escape scrutiny is the relatively low demands they often make on material resources. Edsall (1980, p. 105) suggests that librarians have tended to pride themselves on their ability to improvise with limited funds and materials, but this kind of 'making do' can open the door to low quality and amateurism. Usherwood (1981b) observes that librarians have tended to apply lower standards to their own printed materials and publications than those they expect of others.

The literature has little to say specifically about the evaluation of display work. Usherwood (1981b) offers some practical tips to increase effectiveness, such as changing displays regularly, circulating displays between libraries, and photographing and recording work for the PR portfolio. He also recommends that where possible, display materials should be available for loan/use and that in these

cases, a degree of informality is preferable in the display arrangement. This is because evidence suggests that people are unwilling to take an item away if it means breaking up a 'perfect' symmetrical display.

What does the evidence suggest about the planning, execution and evaluation of display work? Is it supported by clearly articulated objectives? Is it subject to some form of evaluation? Is somebody responsible for the overall co-ordination of display work, or is it self-regulating? How do librarians justify the continuation of display work?

From my analysis of the literature, the spectrum of discrete promotional tools can be expressed thus:

- Published words & graphics (printed/electronic)
- Events / activities
- Interpersonal promotion (pre-meditated or embedded in service delivery)
- Use of media: radio, press, television (paid advertising, press releases, personal appearances and interviews)
- Displays/exhibitions
- Branding (marginal)

A single promotional campaign could use one, several or all of these tools. Often these tools are used to support each other i.e. published words and graphics, interpersonal promotional and the media could all be used to publicise a promotional event (Eyre 1994). A complementary relationship between two or more tools has to be carefully planned. Once one or more tools have been chosen and produced, they must be intelligently distributed (Usherwood 1981b) and positioned so that they reach the people they are intended for.

Where promotional tools are used in support of each other, is this relationship managed effectively?

Two significant promotional trends are reported in the public library literature of the last five years. They are the concept of the 'off-the-peg' or bought-in promotion, and the promotional element of the reader (and literature) development phenomenon. The two have developed in very close association with each other and their use is not confined to public libraries, but has also involved the commercial book trade, schools, etc.

The off-the-peg promotion was conceptualised by the *Well Worth Reading* initiative founded and run co-operatively by Dorset, Hampshire and West Sussex public library services. It is the only scheme of its kind operating on a national basis. McKearney (1998, p. 652) states that the scheme's objectives are to 'raise standards, achieve economies of scale and act as a forum for the exchange and dissemination of cutting edge ideas'.

Improved quality and the removal of 'the sheer slog of producing promotions' (McKearney 1998, p. 652) seem to be the scheme's main selling points. Libraries can effectively buy in promotional materials such as posters, reading lists, bookmarks, reader response cards and dump bins, all based around a specific theme (staff training is also available). The scheme also aims to help libraries to promote underused areas of stock, pronouncing itself to be 'underpinned by a reader development approach that attempts readers to experiment' (McKearney 1998, p. 652).

What advantages do librarians perceive in the purchase of off-the peg promotions? The recommended reading lists tend to be very specific: it always possible to satisfy the demand they stimulate? How are they communicated to library staff i.e. how is awareness raised about themes, etc.?

The concepts of reader and/or literature development are becoming pervasive to public libraries and the amount of promotional resources allocated to them appears to be increasing. Proponents of reader and literature development tend to view them as respectively empowering the reader in his/her access to and experience of 'good' books, and supporting the creation and appreciation of literature.

Champions of reader development often cite the library 'returns phenomenon' (when users select books from the returns trolley/shelf rather than those in their 'proper place') as proof of the need for informed intervention. It is viewed as evidence of the reader's desire for guidance and recommendations (Van Riel & Fowler 1996). Some enterprising practitioners (Carter & Morris 1999) have responded to the returns phenomenon by suggesting that low-issuing items might be placed on the returns shelf/trolley (it is a small-scale but instant and cost-free promotional activity).

Neither literature development or reader development is beyond the reproach of some commentators. Watson (1996) intimates that the appointment of a literature development worker (LDW) in many local authorities is perhaps not the most effective deployment of resources. He draws attention to one Literature Officer who chose to invest his allocation in staff training, rather than bringing in an 'outsider' on a three-year contract.

An ethical tension is detected in *Borrowed Time?* (1993, p. 45), which caveats at 'over-emphasis on the need to promote "good" literature, and the wish to claim the library as a kind of literature centre'. The report predicts that this impulse could 'well begin to destroy the very quality that makes public libraries so successful as popular cultural institution - a non-judgemental, catholic stock-holding policy, offering something for everybody' (p.45). Apart from the ethical objection, there is an incipient danger that these types of initiatives will come to be seen as the beginning and end of the public libraries' promotional objectives, absorbing an inequitable amount of promotional resources, to the detriment of other aspects of the service.

Does the evidence support the view that the spectrum of library promotion is being obscured by the focus on reader or literature development?

Roberts (1989) demands a greater transparency in the resource implications of library marketing and promotion, arguing that library managers in particular ought to be well informed. Roberts (1989, p. 46) also stresses that 'resources' encompasses all of the 'material, human and intellectual, as well as financial' costs.

Recommendations in the literature tend to focus on the funding and staffing areas of resourcing, although I believe there is another important element which is rarely referred to directly, and that is 'what is written down', or documentation. I mentioned earlier the instant and cost-free value of the creatively managed returns trolley. Krieg-Sigman (1995) is equally enthusiastic about the value of the 'on-the-spot' promotion, but this cannot compare to the far-reaching impact of more planned, sustained effort. Any planned activity ought to be supported by some kind of policy documentation or at least a coherent set of guidelines. As previously mentioned, the PLRG produced a specimen set of public library aims and objectives that included a section on public relations. But what most critics tend to lobby for is the production (and annual revision) of a marketing plan (de Sáez 1993) by all library services, assuming that an element of this plan will be dedicated to promotion.

Does the data suggest that library services have 'something written down' about promotion i.e. produced some form of policy documentation or guidelines relating to promotion? Does it constitute part of a written marketing plan?

Thoughts in the literature on the human resource implications of promotion reveal two areas of concern, namely the personnel needed and the skills they must possess. Overarching these considerations, is the question of how they can be best organised. Weingard (1989, p. 74), speaking about public relations, outlines the key tried and tested models, of 'a committee structure, assignment to a key management person, designation of a staff member, or an assumption that 'everyone should do it'. While it is to be hoped that all library staff are instilled with a sense of their involvement in the promotional effort, it seems advisable that clear structures of responsibility are in place to support and guide them. Pyle (1981) and Weingard (1989) recommend that a single person with overall responsibilities manage the engagement of all staff in promotion/public relations.

How do library services define the structures of responsibility for promotion? Are there dedicated personnel with overall responsibility, or is it an 'add-on' to other responsibilities? Is a responsibility for promotion indicated in job titles and descriptions?

Another complaint common to the literature is a perceived lack of personnel whose promotional work is dedicated to the library service rather than serving a wider corporate function. Writing ten years ago, Usherwood (1981b) noted that, while an increasing number of local authorities were employing public relations officers and design consultants, the separate library PR department simply did not exist. More recently, Rowley (1995) claimed that there was no precedent for marketing managers in library and information services in general.

Does the data support the statement made by Usherwood (nineteen years ago) that library-dedicated PR departments do not exist? Does it support Rowley's more recent claim about the absence of dedicated marketing managers?

A range of skills are prescribed as requisite, including marketing, graphic design, copy writing and reprography. They are expected to operate at a professional rather than amateur level, which may mean the employment of specialist staff e.g. graphic designers. Pyle (1991) astutely points out that although the advent of inexpensive personal computers and desk top publishing (DTP) software has enhanced the ability of staff at all levels to produce typography and graphics of an acceptable quality, it requires an advanced degree of skill to exploit these tools to their full potential.

Are the skills possessed by library staff of relevance to library promotion? Are they expressed in terms of formal qualifications? Are adequate training opportunities provided? Do public library services have experience of 'buying-in' the skill and expertise on non-library personnel? Have these arrangements been successful?

To some extent, the development and acquisition of promotional skills is inhibited by the general squeeze on training budgets in many public library services (Pyle 1991). Training is seen a crucial to promotional efficiency and at least equal

in value to the more 'glamorous' activities (Usherwood 1981b). The inadequacy of training opportunities corresponds with a reluctance to invest serious amounts of money in promotion (Edsall 1980).

In fact, it is not the amount of money spent on promotion that draws criticism in the literature, but the proportion of total library expenditure that it constitutes. Cronin (1981, p. 390) recalls a survey which revealed that promotion and publicity constituted between 0.001% and 0.23% of the total library systems costs of public libraries in the United Kingdom. He compares this with a recommendation made in a West German report that 5% of a library service's operating budget should be dedicated to promotion and publicity. This is exceeded by Hamilton (1990, p.7), who quotes a recommended figure of 10%, to include marketing and publicity.

The atmosphere of financial constraint that is affecting all areas of public library service provision exacerbates these difficulties. Retrenchment causes many dilemmas for librarians. For some, it places a serious question mark over the legitimacy of spending substantial amounts on promotion, when funds for materials and staffing are being contracted, and opening hours reduced. Promotion finds itself in an ironic and unenviable position: it is often one of the first areas to go, just when it is most needed and valuable (Eyre 1996). Commentators are unanimous in their defence of (well-planned) promotional expenditure. Krieg-Sigman (1995, p.418) argues that ever-decreasing resources makes promotion 'vital to the survival' of the service, while Hamilton (1990, p. 7) states simply that 'you spend money to make money'.

Bearing in mind the prevailing climate of financial constraint for public library services, in real terms has spending on promotion increased, decreased, or remained stable? Is it one of 'the first to go' when finances are threatened?

The difficulty of protecting promotional expenditure is further aggravated if it is not placed under a discrete budget heading, but is effectively absorbed by one or more other categories of expenditure (de Sáez 1993). This makes it hard to either

control or calculate promotional expenditure. At worst, it might mean that promotion is only given the leftovers (if any) of each budget it is absorbed into (Hamilton 1990).

How do public libraries budget for promotion? Is it in the form of a dedicated budget, or is it absorbed under other budget headings? What range of expenses is it expected to cover?

Now more than ever, public libraries are being required to 'exercise a strong influence altogether out of scale with their numbers and capacity for future activities' (Aslib 1995, p. 47). If public libraries are to respond constructively and vigorously, then effective promotion (and marketing) is clearly one way of meeting this pressure. But it would seem that so far, the progress of public libraries in this respect has failed to satisfy or impress some of their critics. At its most gentle, the criticism suggests that the public libraries simply do not yet possess effective promotion and marketing strategies on any noticeable scale (Aslib 1995). More unequivocally, Cronin (1981, p. 384) suggests that librarians are lulled into complacency, gulled by the 'fallacy of the service that speaks for itself.

In conclusion, perhaps the clearest and most succinct of warning shots across the bows of the public library was delivered by Pyle (1991). Quoting Ignatieff, who observed that 'support for libraries is soft, and is growing softer' (p.199), Pyle concludes that public libraries have effectively 'missed the boat' on promotion, and in doing so may have compromised the service and its future - stating simply that it looks suspiciously like a case of 'too little, too half-hearted and too late' (p.200). I hope his words are still being heeded.

3. Methodology & Methods

The next step in the study was to synthesise all of the questions provoked by the topical literature review, along with the stated research objectives, into a workable conceptual framework. Methodology provides this conceptual framework, affording structure, system and justification in the approach to new knowledge. To identify an appropriate methodological process, a review of methodological literature was conducted.

3.1. Methodological literature review

The study was originally conceived as a way of systematically investigating the given topic, in order to extrapolate the data that would afford new knowledge. As such, there was no central theory or testable hypothesis steering the development of the conceptual framework. Admittedly, significant issues did arise from an examination of the literature, which were translated into research questions. However, no one issue took precedence over the others in its guiding of the research strategy. In practice, they constituted no more or less than a set of sub-objectives or mini-hypotheses, providing broad validation for a study of this area of library work and to be tested 'along the way' to a new understanding. Though they suggest what 'to look out for', these premises operate in a limited way and do not circumscribe the conceptual boundaries of the study.

In this sense, the prevailing approach of this study is 'inductive', explained by Patton (1990) as allowing 'patterns themes and categories' to emerge from the data as it is collected and interpreted, rather than imposing them onto the data at the offset. Induction permits the data to determine the key concepts to be discussed, rather than vice versa. This is opposed to the 'deductive' approach, spelt out by Busha & Harter (1980, p. 10) as 'logical inference, in which conclusions follow necessarily from premises and in which reason progresses, from general principles and established "truths" to particular instances.'

Deduction also implies the testing of hypothesis. Perhaps the purest form of this type of test is the controlled experiment', which constitutes an element of this study.

The data requirements of the study were both qualitative and quantitative. The difference between the two is summarised by Patton (1990, p. 14) (a proponent of qualitative research): while quantitative research 'facilitates comparison and statistical aggregation of the data', qualitative research, while less suited to generalisation, produces 'a wealth of detail' and enriches understanding. Moreover, Patton notes that while qualitative data can have a quantitative (enumerative) structure imposed on it, quantitative data cannot be made to yield qualitative explanations.

I attempted to develop a symbiotic relationship between qualitative and quantitative approaches, so that the quantitative findings would lend structure, context and some statistical credence to the qualitative findings, which would in turn deepen our understanding of what the quantitative data might 'mean'.

Patton (1990) encourages researchers to identify the exact purpose and function of a project. According to his definitions, this study is primarily 'basic' (contributing to a body of knowledge) with perhaps some aspirations to being 'applied' i.e. put to some specific use. While in no way a consultative document, it is to be hoped that it will be of some practical value, at least to the three library services involved in the case studies.

Mellon (1990) observes that is becomingly increasingly fashionable to import elements of the 'naturalistic inquiry' approach to studies that are primarily quantitative in nature. While Guba (Erlandson et al. (1993) stresses that naturalistic inquiry is not synonymous with qualitative research, most commentators concede that it's principles and practises are more in sympathy with those of qualitative rather than quantitative research. Naturalistic inquiry offers an alternative, 'organic' approach to methodological design. It allies itself to inductive research, and eschews comparability and generalisation in favour of 'unique' case studies and 'deep understanding' (Erlandson et al. (1993).

'Holistic' is a word popularly applied to naturalistic inquiry; the direction of data collection and analyses is allowed to develop as the study progresses, rather than being decided at the beginning of the process.

This study adopts some but not all of the practices of naturalistic inquiry. For reasons given later, the 'interview guide' approach defined by naturalistic inquiry is used consistently throughout the study. Observation, and an immersion in unique 'case study' situations also feature heavily (naturalistic inquiry practitioners recommend both). Some of these choices arose through necessity, rather than design i.e. the embedded case studies were negotiated after the case studies commenced. This type of spontaneous expediency resembles the guiding principle of naturalistic inquiry. Where this study deviated significantly from those principles was in the case study that involved a controlled experiment. It involved a degree of intervention on my part, and a manipulation of the research setting (Patton (1990)) that directly contravened the tenets of naturalistic inquiry.

What I have described is basically a mixed or composite methodological approach that is not without precedent. It is akin to the process of triangulation, whereby various aspects of different methodologies are brought together to maximise understanding of the same research topic (Patton 1990). Both data and methods can be subject to triangulation.

It also brings to mind a third option to the classical opposition of paradigms, conceived by Patton (1990). Rather than subscribing to either the quantitative, deductive paradigm of 'logical-positivism', or the qualitative, inductive paradigm of 'phenomenological inquiry', Patton proposes a 'paradigm of choices'. Described simply, this option recognises that varying suitability of different approaches to different research situations, encouraging the selection of what is appropriate in each case. Applied to my research, both paradigms have relevance, albeit to different elements of the study.

According to Busha & Harter (1980) whatever methodological approach is upheld, researchers are beholden to certain principles of quality and integrity in their research. Briefly, they must a) fully understand the research problem, b) articulate

the questions clearly, c) be realistic in their data requirements and ask for only what is relevant, and d) balance economy with a comprehensive coverage of the research problem.

It would seem that research is best understood as an entirely equitable process. A poorly conceived study, braced only with weak methodological support and inadequate or inappropriate research instruments, will furnish the researcher with material of corresponding quality.

3.1. Methods: selection, design and administration of research instruments

The methodological approach outlined above was facilitated by a number of methods, described below.

A review of relevant literature and research Busha & Harter (1980, p. 17) describe the value of the literature review as an aid to compiling 'a list of important issues, theories, or questions that can be categorized, ranked and utilized according to their value in the frame of reference of a particular inquiry'. They also prescribe that the literature reviewed prior to research is 'current', a criteria which caused particular problems for this study, as outlined in the statement of 'limitations' (found at the end of this chapter).

Questionnaires Questionnaires are used predominantly to collect quantitative data, although they can yield an elementary level of qualitative data (Patton 1990). The potential benefits and limitations of questionnaires are outlined by Busha & Harter (1980). The advantages which influenced the use of questionnaires in this study are: the economies of scale possible in terms of sample size, data collection, analysis and presentation (important in the context of a one-researcher project), the relative ease of data analysis, the increase in comparability of results due to identical wording and question order, flexibility for respondent's to complete the questionnaire in their own time, and the clear articulation of the research problem involved in designing a 'formal' research instrument.

This potential disadvantages which influenced the use of questionnaires in this study are: the difficulty of clarifying ambiguous responses, the inability to further unpack or explain the given data, the absence of non-verbal cues, the low-response rate (especially to postal questionnaires) and related non-respondent bias, and the distortion caused by ambiguous or suggestive wording or question order (with no opportunity to clarify).

Interviews At their most basic, interviews are little more than verbal and personally administered questionnaires (Line 1982). I believe this is an under-use of their potential and did not use them in any research situation where an impersonal questionnaire would have sufficed. The defining advantage of the interview over the questionnaire is the greater depth and involvement of responses. Most basically, interview responses tend to be longer than questionnaire responses (Line 1982). There is an opportunity to clarify any ambiguities. At the prompting of the interviewer, responses can be unpacked in detail. The interpretation of verbal data is complemented by the availability of non-verbal cues i.e. body language.

All interviews in this study were conducted according to the tenets of 'naturalistic inquiry' (Mellon (1990) and Erlandson et al. (1993)), using interview guides rather than a more structured schedule. Described by Mellon (1990, p. 48) as 'a list of issues to be explored' that can be reviewed and expanded 'as more is learned about the research topic', this approach was selected because the designation of responsibility for promotion varied between each of the case study library services, as did the data requirements for each of the embedded case studies. Therefore, questions that were highly relevant to one interviewee, could be irrelevant to another. Moreover, the 'interview guide' approach offers a flexible approach to the 'unpredictability' of the personal interview situation, as observed by Busha & Harter (1980).

The only significant caveat comes from Patton (1990) who suggests that the use of the interview guide approach reduce the comparability of the data. In practice I also found that it lengthened and complicated the process of analysis. Another

limitation inherent to interviews is the influence that may be inadvertently exerted by the interpersonal style of the interviewer e.g. tone of voice, vocabulary, and physical gestures.

Case studies The case study is described by Busha & Harter (1980) as 'a concentrated focus on a single phenomenon and the utilization of a wide array of data-gathering methods'. The value of the case study is centred on the empirical, in-depth understanding it can facilitate of a problem within its unique setting. The generalisation of case study findings is therefore questionable. Busha & Harter (1980, p.152) remark that 'a single case study does not generally yield definite results.'. However, it does not follow that conducting multiple case studies can resolve this limitation. The comparability of one case study with another is a problem in itself. This is well illustrated by the range of embedded case studies included in this study. Under close examination, their similarities seem nominal, while in many ways they bear little or no meaningful resemblance to one another.

Observation Observation is a high-intensity research technique that requires considerable funds of attention, energy and discipline from the researcher. Busha & Harter (1980) refer to observation as 'direct surveillance', while Marshall & Rossman in Erlandson et al. (1993, p. 94) dub it 'the systematic description of event, behaviours and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study.'. Patton (1990, p. 26) provides the most informative definition: he describes the unique function and ability of observation, 'to take the reader into the setting that was observed'. The objective of the research exercise is that the 'observer's notes become the eyes, ears and perceptual sense of the reader.' (p.26).

However, observation is more than a narration of everything that registered upon the senses of the observer within the allotted span. The peculiar conditions of observational research mean that data is immediate and transient, and consequently there is no way of recalling it after the observed event other than through field notes, recordings and memory. Memory is notoriously unreliable, so it seems sensible to decide what kinds of data will be relevant, translate them into a list of observational 'cues', and record them systematically during the event, with some flexibility to accommodate other points of interest should they arise.

Mullings (1984) suggests that comprehensive note-taking may not be possible if the observer has 'full participant' status, as it will interfere with the authenticity of participation. Patton (1990) conceptualises participation as a continuum, ranging from full participation to complete separation from the events observed. While the role of participation in securing a complete understanding of a situation is acknowledged, there is a general consensus that it is inadvisable for the observer to manipulate the research settings in any way; participation may increase the likelihood of such manipulation.

Related to this is the continuum of disclosure, whereby the observer decides whether to observe covertly (unknown to all participants), or opts for full disclosure of the research exercise to all participants, or somewhere in between (known to some but not to others). Ethical objections have been raised to the concept of covert observation, but its others suggest that it is the most effective way of ensuring 'natural' behaviour in participants (Mullings 1984).

Ideally, the position of the observer on both of these continuums is clearly stated and consistently operated throughout the observational exercise. In practice, consistency can be hard to realise (see embedded case study for Library Service B). Another difficulty is created by the qualitative nature of observational data: it is sometimes resistant to the imposition of structured analysis and representation.

In conclusion, while observational research may be reported in the form of a detailed, descriptive, narrative account, it is underpinned by a disciplined and judicious selection of data. Patton (1990) stresses the importance of excluding any 'value' judgements or emotive language from the account.

Controlled experimentation According to Patton (1990, p. 41) experimental research involves the complete control of the research environment, by means of 'manipulating, changing, or holding constant external influences ... in which a very limited set of outcome variables are measured'. In practice, I believe that Patton's definition of controlled experimentation is upheld with varying degrees of success. Anything approaching complete control and the elimination of 'external influences' is

only really possible under stringent laboratory conditions. This is far removed from the environment of the working library, which cannot (and should not) be 'controlled' purely for experimental purposes.

A working compromise must be reached. Where uncontrollable variables and external influences cannot be removed, they should be duly described. Some attempt should be made to estimate their impact on the outcomes of the experiment.

3.2. How research methods were applied in the context of this study

Sources of relevant data The sources of relevant data were identified as the service providers and service users of public library authorities. Factual and opinion-based data was sought from both categories. The data sought from service providers concentrated on the management of promotional activities. The data sought from service users concentrated on their experience and perception of library promotion and their use of library services. Some background information (i.e. ages and occupations) was also collected to help construct a general profile.

- A review of relevant research and literature
- A postal questionnaire distributed to a sample of English library services. That sample was purposive and constructed in the following manner: using the CIPFA (1998) public library statistics (estimates), I ranked the library services surveyed according to expenditure per 1000 of population, within each of the four categories of Greater London, Metropolitan Districts, Unitary and County library service authorities. I then selected the top and bottom five within each category for inclusion in my sample (referred to hereafter as the 'highest spending' and 'lowest spending' services). The sample was constructed according to expenditure in order to assess whether any correlation was evident between the expenditure status and the data expressed i.e. the type and extent of provisions made for library promotion.

There are some limitations to this method of construction: CIPFA (1998, p.6) advises caution when evaluating statistics relating to expenditure, stating that 'in many cases the services provided are used by a much larger population than that resident in the authority. This is particularly true in certain London authorities and seaside resorts.'

This sample was 'topped up' by the three library services chosen for case studies. They did not qualify as highest or lowest spending services within the main sample. Their selection and inclusion is justified on the following basis:

- their proximity to my places of living and study (geographical proximity can be an important consideration when conducting a small scale research project with limited resources, and ought to be openly acknowledged as such)
- their willingness to become involved in the greater depth of research required by case study, and
- the need for some linkage between the quantitative data and elementary-level qualitative data derived from the questionnaire and the richer descriptive data yielded by the case studies.

The questionnaire was kept brief (3 pages) and designed to place a relatively light cognitive load on the respondent. In this way I hoped to secure an acceptable response rate, mindful of the sometimes-poor response to postal questionnaires (Heather & Stone 1984). The questionnaire was addressed to the director of the library service, with a request that it be passed on to a relevant colleague and returned by a specified time (roughly three weeks after distribution). Though perhaps not best suited to the questionnaire format, some open ended and/or qualitative questions were included. This was because, on the topics which they addressed (objectives and evaluation), I felt that it was important not to prompt the respondents with fixed response categories. I was interested to see what definitions and concepts were in operation.

- Line (1982, p. 143) asserts that surveys 'can only reduce the area of darkness surrounding any problem or make it less dark' and that a successful survey 'is as likely to pose further questions as to offer answers'. This statement would

appear to support the validity of conducting in-depth case studies which may yield data of sufficient depth on order to answer some of the questions posed by the survey results, and shed a little more light on the whole research domain.

Consequently, case studies were conducted in three English library services. They will be referred to as Library Services A, B, and C. Library Service A is part of a metropolitan district local authority, while Library Services B and C are part of county authorities. Within each library service, an 'embedded' case study was also conducted.

The case studies consisted of interviews with personnel identified as having overall responsibility for promotion. The embedded case studies consisted of: interviews with personnel relevant to embedded case studies, and the evaluation of three promotional events or activities, being a local history fair (library service A) a 'readers' surgery' type event (library service B) and in-house display work (library service C). These embedded case studies were investigated respectively by means of a user survey, an observational exercise and a controlled experiment. They were evaluative in so far as an attempt was made to 'measure operations in terms of the goals of libraries or library projects or the end results sought' (Busha & Harter 1980, p. 160).

(For examples of all research instruments, see appendix.)

3.2.1. Analysis

Quantitative data was analysed using tally sheets. Where relevant, data was converted statistically (where the numbers being represented were rather small to warrant statistical conversion, exact figures were emphasised). Qualitative data was analysed through the identification of broad response categories that emerged from the data. These were then grouped thematically.

3.2.2. Presentation

Numerical and statistical data will, where appropriate, be presented using visual aids i.e. tables and pie graphs, to support textual evidence. Qualitative data will be textual.

3.3. Limitations

- The dearth in relevant literature meant that the literature review is partly composed of relatively dated texts. Consequently, this may reduce their relevance to the study. They may not be cognisant of recent developments in management, technologies, working practises or the broader political, social and economic contexts of public libraries. These limitations are duly noted. What does endure is the simple common sense of many of the texts and their recommendations and observations. While it was important to remain alert to the age of the texts, it actually provided an extra dimension with which to frame several of the mini-hypotheses e.g. are the assertions and statements made in the literature of 1989, supported by the evidence of ten years hence?
- The functional scope of the study. Though the concept of promotion will be interpreted as broadly as time and resources will allow, it is clearly not exhaustive. A more capacious project could focus on aspects of materials management/collection development, automated library systems, signage and guiding, or library building design. The issue of literacy and lifelong education initiatives, plus the promotion of services for children and young people are all relevant to this study but are not specific to the stated objectives. The study also attempts to avoid any sustained focus on the wider concept of marketing at the expense of promotion, but this was a difficult limit to operate. Coverage is limited to promotional activities that improve access for library users. It does not extend to take in internal and political promotion aimed at library staff and elected members of local government.

All of the above have a role to play in the promotion of access to library services and materials, but they are substantial topics in their own rights and worthy of more focused attention.

4 Research findings

The research findings are organised into topical categories. Within each category, relevant data from the general questionnaire to library services is presented, followed by findings from the case studies. The data from the three embedded case studies is presented in the section on specific promotional activities (4.8.1/2/3).

The method of sample construction for the general questionnaire was outlined in section 3.2.. The population (N) for this sample was all English public library services.

Table 1. Breakdown of response rate to general questionnaire:

Type of service	Highest / lowest spending	Questionnaires sent	Questionnaires returned	Response rate %
Case study	n/a	3	3	100.00
Unitary (sub total)	highest	5	5	100.00
	lowest	5	4	80.00
		(10)	(9)	(90.00)
County (sub total)	highest	5	4	80.00
	lowest	5	4	80.00
		(10)	(8)	(80.00)
Metropolitan (sub total)	highest	5	2	40.00
	lowest	5	3	60.00
		(10)	(5)	(50.00)
Gtr. London (sub total)	highest	5	4	90.00
	lowest	5	5	100.00
		(10)	(9)	(90.00)
TOTAL	all	43	34	79.07

Table 2. Composition of sample (*n*) according to spending categories

Category	Questionnaires returned	% of sample (<i>n</i>)
Case studies	3	8.82
Highest spending	15	44.12
Lowest spending	16	47.06
TOTAL	34	100.0

Table 3. Composition of sample (*n*) according to service categories

Category	Questionnaires returned	% of sample (<i>n</i>)
Case studies	3	8.82
Unitary	9	26.47
County	8	23.53
Metropolitan	5	14.71
Greater London	9	26.47
TOTAL	34	100.00

4.1. Policy documentation and guidelines

4.1.1. Findings from general questionnaire

The respondents were asked:

a) Has your library service produced any current policy documentation or guidelines relating to the promotion of services and materials?

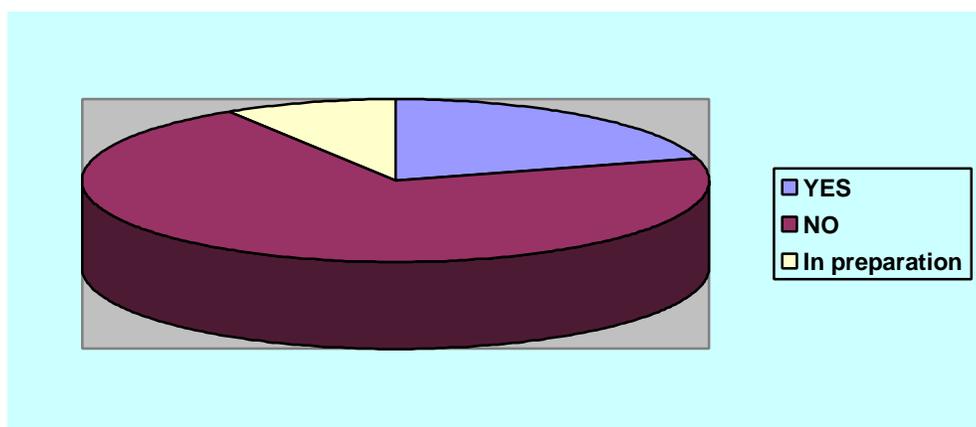
YES or NO

The results are summarised below in table and graph form:

Table 4.

Response category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
YES	7	20.59
NO	24	70.59
In preparation	3	8.82
TOTAL	34	100.00

Graph 1.



Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 4a. Responses from highest spending services

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	4	26.67
NO	10	66.67
In preparation	1	6.66
TOTAL	15	100.00

Table 5a. Responses from lowest spending services.

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	3	18.75
NO	12	75.00
In preparation	1	6.25
TOTAL	16	100.00

The respondents were then asked:

b) If YES, please describe briefly (or enclose a copy)

Of the 7 respondents who answered YES to question a):

- 3 enclosed all or part of the relevant documentation (all 'highest spending services')
- 1 responded "Outdated policy is about to be revised."
- 1 responded "Marketing form has to be completed containing proposal for promotional activity".
- 1 respondent (a 'lowest spending' service) who answered that documentation was 'in preparation' also enclosed a copy of a draft document.

The 4 sets of enclosed documentation varied considerably in terms of approach, length and intended audience. What follows is a brief description of the 4 sets of documentation:

1. 1 respondent enclosed two 'promotion practice documents': *Exhibitions, displays and promotion of publicity material* and *Media coverage*, and two 'marketing practice documents' on *Organising quizzes and competitions* and *Organising promotional events and activities*. It would seem that some distinction has been drawn between what qualifies as either marketing or promotion (in a later question the respondent indicates that the service also has a current marketing plan or strategy: it is unclear whether the marketing practice documents are part of a larger document).

These documents vary in length from roughly 600 to 1000 words. They cover such topics as relevant areas of policy provision and requirements, procedural guidelines, who to contact for further advice, targets and monitoring, ideas for themes, planning and timing. The emphasis of these documents is highly practical. For example, the document covering events and activities includes a specimen checklist to be completed for every event. It encourages staff to identify objectives, staffing and funding requirements, liaisons and contacts, arrangements, marketing/advertising, etc. It divides the checklist into items for consideration "well before the event", "nearer the event", the "day before or on the day" and "after the event". (Also see section 4.6.1.).

2. Another respondent enclosed the contents page from a 'promotion resource pack' which is circulated to all service points and also sold to other library services at £20 a copy (70 of these packs have been sold). It covers such topics as fiction promotion, the promotion of existing stock and includes 'thematic fiction lists'. This was accompanied by a quarterly promotional bulletin which is distributed to staff and councillors, which reports promotional 'news and views'. The respondent added that the bulletin was about to be 're-vamped'.

3. Another respondent enclosed a policy extract entitled "Marketing and promotions - structural framework'. Roughly 200 words long, it briefly outlines what will be included in the annual promotions and marketing plan which is developed each year (this was not enclosed) e.g. details of 'major promotional activities', costs, 'likely staffing and van requirements' and 'implications for each service point'. It also describes the management of press contacts.

4. A draft document titled "Promotions and activities strategy". It is roughly 600 words long and is targeted at services for children and young people. 'Promotions' is defined as "anything which highlights the role of the library service", while marketing is described as having two strands: "to establish what our customers want in order to inform policy and planning" and "to ensure that our customers know what we are doing". More a simple statement than a comprehensive set of guidelines or practice document, topics such as objectives and resources are defined only in their broadest sense. There is little evidence that this document is intended for use at 'ground level' by library staff.

The respondents were then asked:

c) If YES, please describe how the documentation/guidelines is used by the library service.

Of the 7 respondents who answered YES to question a):

- 5 also responded to question c).
- 1 respondent who answered that documentation was 'in preparation' also responded to question c)

Only 4 of these responses actually talked about the use of documentation; the other 2 gave general descriptions of the decision-making structures that inform promotional activities:

"Each library has a copy to follow through - central files are kept by the core team." [respondent enclosed documentation 1. as described above]

"Senior management team use to evaluate potential of event and base decision on whether it goes ahead. We want to know what expected outcomes will be, as well as cost resource implications."

"Pushed at Monday morning training sessions. Librarians / Assistants-in-Charge encouraged to use as much as possible." [respondent enclosed documentation 2. as described above]

" To inform staff, councillors and directorate." [document in preparation - enclosed documentation 4. as described above]

" The Group for Arts, Policy and Planning (GAPP) has directed promotional activities - this is about to change with new priorities."

"All service point plans and suggestions feed into the Marketing & Promotion Quality Team." [respondent enclosed documentation 3. as described above]

4.1.2. Case study findings

At the time of research, none of the case-study library services had produced any policy documentation or guidelines relating to promotion.

In Library Service A, the Group Manager with marketing and promotional responsibilities was in the process of preparing a marketing strategy.

The Publicity & Marketing Officer in Library Service B explained that the reading promotions steering group (see section 4.2.2.) had produced a very basic statement of aims and objectives i.e. "to promote the library to present and potential users" and "to promote the full range of services". The service was in the process of securing committee approval for an extensive service review:

"there's a lot in there about changing the format and the venues of libraries, and I think once that gets endorsed and gets the backing of the treasurers, we know we can roll forward with it, because we've got a six year plan. That in effect has become my marketing policy, because that's the way libraries are going and we've got to find a way of marketing that to the public. So we've not got any proper policy at the moment, but I'm hoping that this document will be the basis of marketing."

The Publicity & Marketing Officer also drew attention to the service's recently produced mission statement and suggested that this should also inform a marketing policy document. She was awaiting the endorsement and implementation of both the service review and the mission statement before developing documentation specifically concerned with marketing and promotion.

In Library Service C, the Operations Officer responsible for the print and stationery budget described a paper or set of guidelines drawn up by a marketing group (see section 4.2.2.) in the early 1990's. It comprised a "formula that librarians were meant to follow if they had an event, which went all the way through to evaluation". She was unsure whether librarians "out in the field" were still using the formula.

4.1.3. Interpretation of findings

Many of the commentators surveyed in the literature view might be concerned to learn that only 7 (20.59%) of 34 respondents indicated that their service had produced any recent policy documentation or guidelines relating to promotion. A slightly higher proportion of the 'highest spending' services (26.67%) than the 'lowest spending' services (18.75%) appear to have done so, but 1 respondent in each category (including a case study service) indicated that they had some documentation in preparation (8.82%).

Something else rather interesting emerged unexpectedly from the data, which suggests that these statistics are not so bleak as they first appear: as previously mentioned, one of the respondents enclosed examples of documentation which mentioned that seventy copies of the 'promotion resource pack' produced by the service had been sold on to other library services. This suggests that more library services have in their possession some form of documentation, than those who have actually produced it 'in house'.

I find this encouraging, as it suggests that a greater number of services have realised the necessity of having 'something written down', than is indicated by the statistics alone. It also points up a flaw in my research design: if I had asked respondents if their service 'used' or 'possessed' relevant documentation, instead of asking them if they had 'produced' it, it may have encouraged those who had bought this resource to include that information (if there any within my sample).

It seems unwise to draw any concrete conclusions from the examples of documentation I received. Only 4 of the 7 services who had produced any documentation enclosed examples, ranging from brief 'mission' type statements to highly specific 'how to' guidelines. Accordingly, their intended purpose seems to vary, from those directed at senior management or committee level, to those designed for practical use in staff training sessions.

It emerged from the case studies that while one service was in the process of producing a marketing strategy, another felt obliged to await the outcome of a service review and endorsement of a mission statement before setting anything down on paper. One of the case studies also demonstrated how documentation that is prepared some time ago, and then left unrevised, can effectively fall into disuse, especially if the group which originally produced it is unavailable to promote its use.

4.2. Staffing, structures of responsibility & training

4.2.1. Findings from general questionnaire

The respondents were asked:

Who is/are responsible for the development of promotional activities and measures? Please give post title(s) and area(s) of responsibility:

Findings:

All 34 respondents gave a response to this question. The data yielded by this question proved difficult to analyse and present effectively. I initially divided the responses into the following categories:

- those identifying one post/postholder
- those identifying more than one post/postholder
- those which identify no specific post/postholder
- those which identify all staff (or all professional staff) as having promotional responsibilities

These responses are broken down thus:

- 9 respondents mentioned a single post/postholder. Of these:
 - 4 mentioned either 'head of service'/'chief librarian' or 'assistant city librarian'.
 - 3 mentioned a 'principal' or 'senior librarian', 'manager' or 'officer' with either regional or service-wide responsibilities, which include promotion or marketing.
 - 2 mentioned a 'marketing manager' or 'officer', 1 of whom worked "within a larger department, not just libraries".
- 20 respondents mentioned more than one post-postholder. Of these:
 - 7 gave a response which suggested the existence of a structured relationship between various postholders i.e. a degree of formal co-ordination into a team, group or working party. These were:

"Promotions working party" and "all staff"

"Marketing & Promotions Quality Team"

"Promotion co-ordination group"

"Marketing team" and "Book promotion team"

" Done as a team - involved are: Head of Lib. & Inf. Service / Team Leaders / Branch Librarians. Currently a working group looking at promoting National Year of Reading - likely to continue as a group co-ordinating reading and lit promotion. Group consists of: Team Leaders, Children & Young People's Librarian and Branch Librarian with marketing responsibilities."

"Proposed new structure ... the promotions will be co-ordinated by a principal officer & carried out by service & community librarians and a stock development officer."

"A core team" of "Marketing and development manager", "Marketing co-ordinator", "Promotions and media assistant", "Administrative post", and "Marketing champions who work out in the libraries, 2 per district (10)".

- 13 mentioned a variety of postholders but gave no indication of any formal co-ordination between them i.e. no mention of a team, group or party structure. These responses were mostly a 'pot-pourri' of senior management officers, team leaders, district librarians, and specialists (e.g. children's, IT, adult). An N.Y.R. co-ordinator, a Literature Development Officer and a marketing manager received one mention each. None of these respondents identified any personnel wholly dedicated to promotion.

- 1 respondent said "All professional staff (12 FTE)".
- 4 respondents said that responsibility was allocated to no one specific post/postholder.

TOTAL= 34 responses.

Respondents were then asked:

To what extent is the promotion of services and materials explicitly mentioned in job descriptions for:

Professional staff? all / some / none

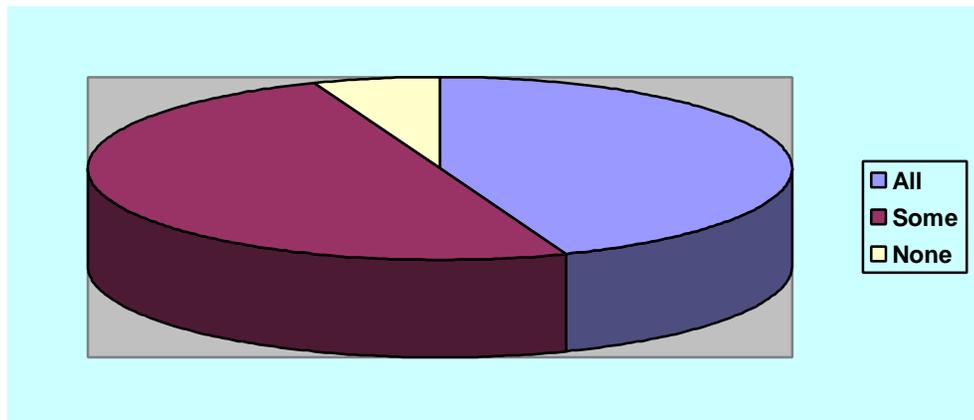
Non-professional staff? a// / some / none

The results are summarised below in table and graph form:

Table 5. Professional staff

Response category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
All	15	44.12
Some	17	50.00
None	2	5.88
TOTAL	34	100.00

Graph 2. Professional staff



Additional data:

- 1 respondent who answered 'All' professional staff, added the comment that it is "a key result area" (the same respondent answered 'Some' non-professional staff, adding " any professional or assistant in charge of a library).
- 1 respondent who answered 'Some' added the comment "not specialist IT/ bib posts."
- 1 respondent who answered 'Some' added the comment "all public service staff."

Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 5a. Responses from 'highest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
All	10	66.67
Some	4	26.67
None	1	6.66
TOTAL	15	100.00

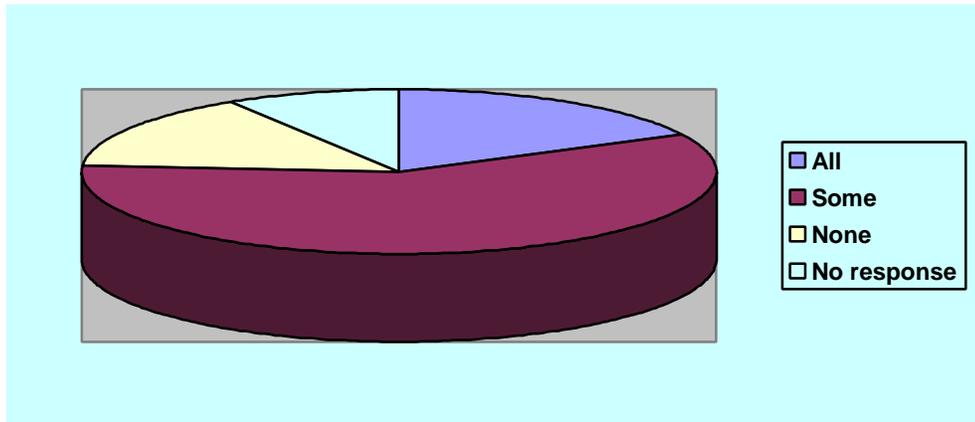
Table 5b. Responses from 'lowest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
All	5	31.25
Some	10	62.50
None	1	6.25
TOTAL	16	100.00

Table 6. Non-professional staff

Response category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
All	6	17.65
Some	20	58.82
None	5	14.71
No response	3	8.82
TOTAL	34	100.00

Graph 3. Non-professional staff



Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 6a. Responses from 'highest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
All	4	26.67
Some	8	53.33
None	1	6.67
No response	2	13.33
TOTAL	15	100.00

Table 6b. Responses from 'lowest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
All	2	12.50
Some	10	62.50
None	3	18.75
No response	1	6.25
TOTAL	16	100.00

Respondents were then asked:

a) Does your library service provide staff with specific opportunities for training in promotional skills?

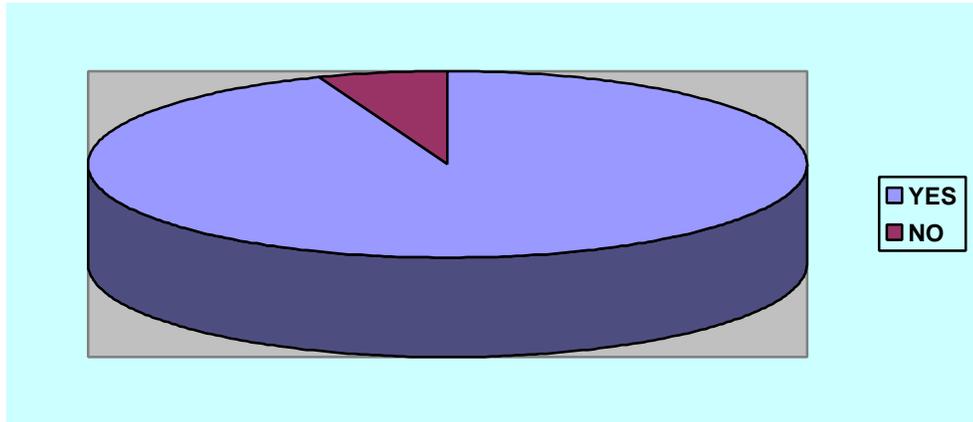
YES or NO

The results are summarised below in table and graph form:

Table 7.

Response category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
YES	32	94.12
NO	2	5.88
Total	34	100.00

Graph 4.



Additional data:

1 respondent (a 'highest spending' county service) who answered 'YES' added the comment "Built into our business plan and Personal Development Scheme".

Correlation with expenditure status:

The 2 respondents who answered 'NO' were both 'lowest spending' services.

Respondents were then asked:

b) When did you last offer such a training opportunity?
less than a year ago / more than a year ago

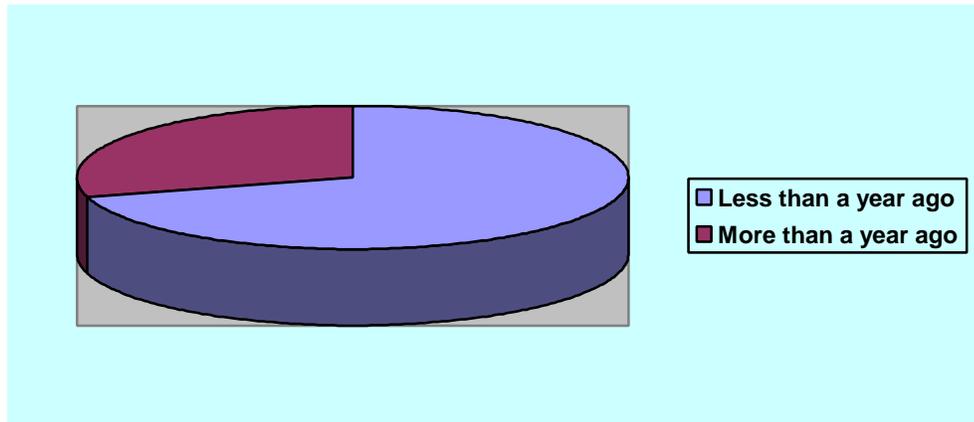
The results are summarised below in table and graph form:

Table 8.

Response category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
Less than a year ago	24	70.59
More than a year ago	10*	29.41
Total	34	100.00

* includes 2 respondents who answered 'NO' to question 4b).

Graph 5.



Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 8a. Responses from 'highest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
Less than a year ago	14	93.33
More than a year ago	1	6.67
Total	15	100.00

Table 8b. Responses from 'lowest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
Less than a year ago	9	56.25
More than a year ago	7	43.75
Total	16	100.00

4.2.2. Case study findings

In Library Service A, overall responsibility for promotion and marketing is "added on to service management responsibilities" for the Group Manager, Circulation Services (Marketing and Promotion). Responsibility is also allocated to "one senior librarian in each of the seven service areas", with whom the Group Manager works closely. Until one year ago, a research assistant, who was specifically responsible for the co-ordination of the service's user satisfaction survey, had supported marketing activities.

I asked the Service Manager whether promotion was explicitly mentioned in job descriptions for library staff. She explained that while promotion was not included in all job descriptions for professional or non-professional staff, they were currently in the process of reviewing and revising them, and that hopefully the importance of promotion was "communicated through appraisal and staff development". Some training opportunities for promotional activities (such as display work) had been made available to staff at all levels, though not within the last year.

In Library Service B, a dedicated postholder is responsible for the co-ordination of promotion and marketing exclusively for the library service (which is a stand-alone service and not part of any larger department): the Publicity & Marketing Officer. The Officer controls allocation of the marketing budget, but the actual development of promotional activities brings her in contact with a variety of colleagues:

"I can work with anybody from the chief librarian, to a librarian or a group librarian."

The Officer explained that two groups had recently formed to support the promotion of adult reading. It was generally felt that the promotion of children's services was already being adequately 'dealt with' in promotional terms.

"... it was adult stock that we'd got problems with. Adult specialists don't seem to be very proactive on publicity and marketing. Children's librarians seem to be a lot more outgoing."

Two distinct reading promotion groups resulted: a steering group and a task group, which comprise service advisers, the adult stock specialist, members of the library systems group and other librarians (the Publicity & Marketing Officer sits on both groups). The groups were the result of a recent district audit, when it was realised that "we weren't doing any stock promotion, structured stock promotion, it was all a bit ad hoc.". The Publicity & Marketing Officer explains the different responsibilities of each group thus:

"...we set up the promotions steering group, which decides on the aims and objectives of what we want to do with stock promotion. We've then also got a task group, with different sets of people, and they're the 'do-ers'. We sit down and decide what project we're going to do, how we're going to do it, and how we're going to get the staff on board, how we're going to bring the publicity in and how we're going to get the publicity out and write the copy for it, you know, quite practical."

She added that the groups had not been given a definite life-span:

"but no-one's told us to disband at the end of the year, so as one promotion drops off, we add another one on so I can tell you what we're doing until next May, which is really useful for budgeting and planning and trying to get the staff motivated".

The Publicity & Marketing Officer observed that she was often "brought in at the tail end to pick up the promotional bit, when all the decisions have been made". This seems to suggest that to some degree the Officer felt disenfranchised from the planning and decision-making processes of marketing and promotion. She believed that this limitation of her role to financial and logistical responsibilities may be due to a limited understanding at senior management levels of the scope of the marketing process (see section 4.5.2. for further discussion of staff attitudes to marketing).

In Library Service B, promotion is mentioned in some but not all job descriptions for professional and non-professional staff. The Publicity & Marketing Officer seemed satisfied with the amount of promotional training opportunities provided for staff at all levels:

"We spend quite a lot of money on training. We've had Rachel Van Riel and we've had the Alternative Display Company a couple of times, to show them how to make good displays. I know it's a small element of presentation and marketing, but if you go out there and see a really interesting display of stock, you think 'that looks really good'."

The Publicity & Marketing Officer also indicated that some attempt was made to distribute these training opportunities evenly between the fifteen groups of the service, "so there's someone in every group who's done something". These types of training opportunities had not been made available to staff for more than a year.

The overall responsibility for promotion in Library Service C falls within the remit of a member of the senior management team; the Principal Library Officer (Public Services : Operations and Quality) co-ordinates "service promotions, customer services, complaints, comments, and public relations". Control of the print and stationery budget falls between the Principal Library Officer and the Operations officer, who also "oversees such things as standards, consistency, and house style in all our output". The Principal Library Officer works closely with the Assistant Director, the other Principal Officer (Resources and Commissioning), the five Principal Librarians who each head an administrative district of the service, and other service specialists e.g. children's.

The Operations Officer was part of a marketing group established in the early 1990's, which had now been inactive for some years. It was this group that produced the marketing formula described in the previous section. I asked the Operations Officer why the marketing group was experiencing such a lengthy interregnum. She suggested that in the context of other demands on time and resources, "the group wasn't seen as a need" and that "other people might not see marketing as such a high profile as I would". No formal grouping to discuss

promotional and marketing matters has developed in its place; promotional matters are discussed within the context of regular senior management meetings, as and when they arise.

I asked the Principal Library Officer about the inclusion of promotion in staff job descriptions. Although he was uncertain about the exact situation, he thought it was unlikely to be "explicitly mentioned" in the job descriptions for staff at library assistant level. At 'librarian' level, he guessed that it was only mentioned at any length in the job descriptions for senior postholder's such as himself and the Operations Officer.

At the time of interview the Operations Officer had recently returned from an external seminar on the production of effective "news bulletins". The now-inactive marketing group had itself arisen as a result of a marketing workshop attended by various staff members. I asked the Principal Library Officer whether this type of training opportunity was made available to staff at all levels. He observed that although these opportunities are ostensibly available to all staff, the "day-to-day deployment" of duties "from a senior library assistant down" often made it difficult for them to be released to take up these opportunities. He viewed himself and other staff at senior management level as relatively lucky in the flexibility of their own timetables, which allows them to attend training courses.

4.2.3. Interpretation of findings

Less than half (44.12%) of all respondents indicated that promotion is mentioned explicitly in the job descriptions of all 'professional' staff, and less than a fifth (17.65%) indicated the same about job descriptions for 'non-professional' staff. Within that, 'highest spending' services are twice as likely to mention promotion in the job descriptions of all professional staff, as the 'lowest spending' services - 66.67% compared to 31.25%. The same is true of non-professional levels of staff: 26.67% of 'highest spending' services said that the promotion was mentioned in all of these job descriptions, compared to 12.59% of 'lowest spending' services. Notwithstanding this comparison, it is clear that in both categories promotion appears to be mentioned with much greater frequency in professional' rather than

'non-professional' job descriptions. This would seem to suggest that promotion is seen as more of a management function, than a routine duty. If this is so, it is juxtaposed by the evidence that suggests that promotion rarely seems to warrant dedicated personnel within the library structure. The various descriptions supplied by the respondents about the structures of responsibility for promotion, suggest that in the majority of cases, promotion and/or marketing is either an adjunct to wider managerial responsibilities, or else a logical extension to the work of specialists e.g. children's librarians.

The general 'fuzziness' of responses about staffing and structures of responsibility made my imposition of categories seem at times rather arbitrary. To illustrate, where respondents identified one post-holder as having overall responsibility for promotion, they may in fact be supported by a team structure, but the respondents felt that it was sufficient (and quicker) to simply identify the 'key player'. This may be due to ineffective research design, or else symptomatic of the indistinct and absorbed status of promotion in many services. Interestingly a number of respondents indicated that either a) all staff were seen as responsible for promotion, or b) no staff were *specifically* responsible for promotion. In practice, these assertions may actually amount to the same thing (albeit dressed in different terms), suggesting that the management of promotion is characterised by a lack of definition. Case study data from Library Service B introduced the possibility that, where dedicated staff are employed ostensibly in a 'marketing' capacity, there may be a tendency to limit their responsibilities to promotional work, in isolation from the earlier stages of planning and decision-making.

The 'highest spending' services were more likely than the 'lowest spending' services to have offered training in promotional skills within the last year - 93.33% compared to 56.25%, and the two services that said they did not offer such opportunities were both in the 'lowest spending' category. It may be that the services that have not offered relevant training opportunities within the last year are suffering from the 'knock-on' effects of a general squeeze on training as described by Pyle (1991) and Edsall (1980). Case study data from Library Service C also pointed to a concern about the practical difficulties of releasing staff to take up training opportunities.

4.3. Funding

4.3.1. Findings from general questionnaire

The respondents were asked:

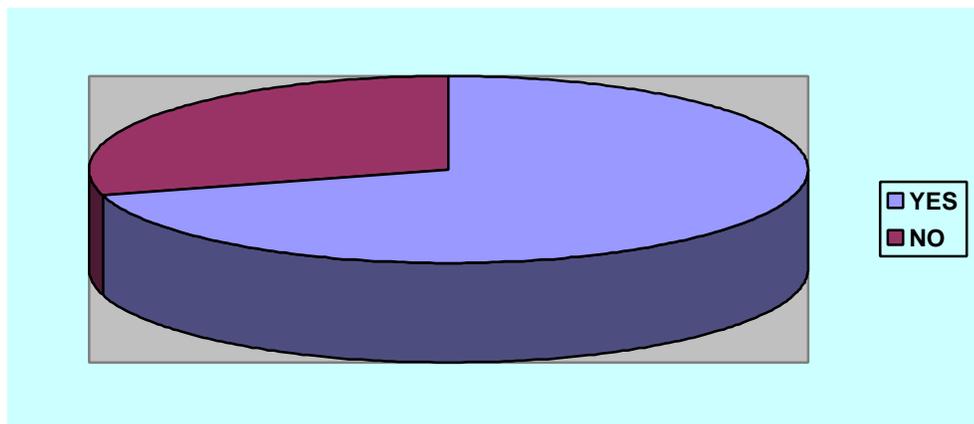
a) Does your library service allocate a specific budget for funding promotional activities and measures?
YES or NO

The results are summarised below in table and graph form:

Table 9.

Response category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
YES	24	70.59
NO	10	29.41
TOTAL	34	100.00

Graph 6.



Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 9a. Responses from 'highest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	13	86.67
NO	2	13.33
TOTAL	15	100.00

Table 9b. Responses from 'lowest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	9	56.25
NO	7	43.75
TOTAL	16	100.00

Respondents were then asked:

b) What was the budget for 1998/99?

Responses are summarised thus:

- Of the 24 respondents who answered 'YES' to question a), 19 quoted specific figures for question b).
- These figures ranged from £1,000 to £53,000.
- The mean of these figures was £12,405.

Respondents were then asked:

c) In real terms, over the last three years has this budget:

increased

decreased

remained stable

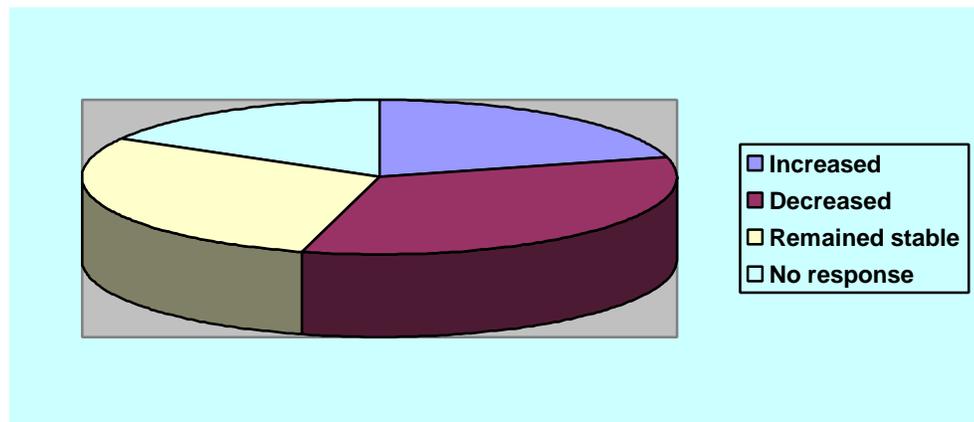
The results are summarised below in table and graph form:

Table 10.

Response category	Number of responses	%
Increased	5	20.83
Decreased	8	33.33
Remained stable	7	29.17
No response	4	16.67
TOTAL	24*	100.00

*respondents who answered 'YES' to question a).

Graph 7.



Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 10a. Responses from 'highest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
Increased	2	15.38
Decreased	5	38.46
Remained stable	5	38.46
No response	1	7.69
TOTAL	13	100.00

Table 10b. Responses from 'lowest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
Increased	2	22.22
Decreased	3	33.33
Remained stable	2	22.22
No response	2	22.22
TOTAL	9	100.00

4.3.2. Case study findings

Library Services A and B both have dedicated budgets for funding marketing and/or promotional activities, while Library Service C does not. In the current financial year, Library Service A allocated approximately £25,000 to a marketing budget and £22,500 to an 'activities' budget. The total library budget for 1999/2000

was roughly £6.3 million. This means that about 0.75% of the overall library budget was dedicated to marketing and promotional activities. Within this budget, proposed activities are costed, along with a built in contingency amount, in order to respond to unforeseen promotional 'opportunities'. The Group Manager explained that certain items are prioritised, such as the Local History Fair (see Embedded case study A), the local children's book award and the *Off the Shelf* festival. The funding for such events is effectively protected by contractual agreements.

The marketing budget includes a print and publication element, paying for copies of the Service Contract, large print and non-English language publications, and service-point information leaflets. It also funds Library Service A's involvement with CIPFA, paying for the user survey, membership and data analysis. The marketing budget covers guiding and signage, translation fees and the production of an annual multicultural calendar. The calendar is unusual in that the cost of production will be recouped by sales. The Group Manager pointed out that very few of the items in the activities budget (e.g. the Local History Fair) directly recoup costs or generate income; it is generally only sales publications which do this. The Group Manager observed that in real terms, spending on marketing and activities is increasing, offset by a context of uncertainty and falling "borrowing use".

In the current financial year, Library Service B allocated £30,890 to "marketing and publicity related projects". The gross library budget for 1999/2000 was set at £6,559,040. This means that approximately 0.47% of the overall library budget was dedicated to marketing and promotional activities. The Support Services Manager (speaking on behalf of the Publicity & Marketing Officer) explained that the calculation of this budget is "historically based but with some discussion at our Senior Management team about priorities".

The budget covers all printed publicity for specific promotional events, plus other more 'routine' items such as a joiners pack (£2,300 in 1999/2000) and the 'New Books Added to Stock' monthly list (£2,300). The service is comprised of three administrative districts: each is devolved an amount for "resources to support

District Plans" (£600 each). £5,250 was allocated for an extensive radio advertising programme, with 25 slots per week over 6 weeks in addition to production costs. £2,000 is dedicated to library refurbishment and £1,500 for guiding and signage.

The Publicity & Marketing Officer explained that the budget also covered "publications of books we do, anything between nil and two a year". Furthermore, she is responsible for the financial management of the services 'Librashops', where those publications are sold along with other 'bought in' stock

"..we've also got shops in fourteen of the libraries around the country, so I'm responsible for those as well, buying in stock and overseeing the budget. I've actually got a merchandising assistant who goes around and does the displays and things like that, but overall, I'm responsible to try and make an income from the shops. We don't run as a trading account or anything. We're given a budget and we've got to try and keep within that budget, buy the stock, and if we make any money over and above that budget, then it's all put back in the pot, with all the fines and money we've raised from videos and photocopies ... to offset the budget the following year."

Overall, the Publicity & Marketing Officer in Library Service B seemed satisfied with the level of spending dedicated to marketing and promotion, saying that "it's a decent amount, where you can actually do quite a bit with it". However, she did add that over the last ten years "it's only gone up by inflation". Although she does not decide the total amount, the Publicity & Marketing Officer breaks down the budget into specific allocations and then submits her plan to the senior management team for approval.

I asked the Publicity & Marketing Officer whether she had to protect certain promotional priorities, to which she replied "No, we've not had to do that, because money hasn't been tight as far as promotion.", despite having "more projects than you can actually afford to do". She also pointed out that it was not her responsibility to protect specific areas of promotion, but the remit of the relevant Service Advisers.

When the Local Government Review (LGR) transformed the service by removing its central city (which took unitary status) and reducing its service points from 80 to 52, the budgetary cuts were proportionally less severe than anticipated by the Publicity and Marketing Officer. She felt that it was an 'endorsement' of the budget and the service's spending.

In Library Service C, spending on marketing and promotion is not a dedicated amount, but is absorbed under several other headings. Three relevant budget headings were identified by the Principal Library Officer (Public Services: Operations and Quality): General equipment including exhibition equipment (allocated £15,300 for 1999/2000), print and stationery (£67,852) and Advertising (£6,116). The total library budget for 1999/2000 was set at £10,998,000, but it not possible to calculate a useful estimate of spending on promotion within that amount, because of the absorbed nature of the spending.

I asked the Principal Library Officer to explain in more detail the absorption of promotional spending in Library Service C:

"There used to be a budget line purely called exhibition equipment ... it's actually now been absorbed into general equipment, sadly because there've been strong reductions there ... we've only got £15,000 for the entire Libraries, Archives and Information equipment of any sort, and that includes vacuum cleaners, right through, so it's not just display stands and we badly need good quality ones ... we're painfully aware that we lack a top quality general purpose exhibition stand, or set-up, it may cost a thousand or two at the most, so we've got to address that."

"Print and stationery looks strong, sixty-eight thousand, but again, when you think how much that's got to do, it's unbelievable, because of all the overdue postcards, all the routine stuff as well as the promotional publications, so it's very limited. To limit it to the absolute essential, if we've got over-elaborate formats or too many pages or too many words, we'll possible try to cut that down and make it simpler, to save money ... to free up what's left in effect for promotional stuff. It's very limited."

On advertising:

"Six thousand pounds is fairly pathetic ... that's if we choose to use the press to actually place advertisements, that's got to include adverts about service disruption, book sales, as well as saying 'come and borrow books with us, we're wonderful', so again it's a tiny, tiny amount."

The Principal Library Officer also mentioned the bonus of 'free publicity' through press releases and other media coverage, and the increasing opportunities offered by sponsorship agreements:

"Sponsorship income I think is directly relevant, for obvious reasons ... it's others people's money to do all this, and that's becoming increasingly important because of the tightness of budgets ... all the taboos about sponsorship about thirty years ago happily have gone ... there was really rather arrogant view that other people's money was dirty money and libraries wouldn't sully their hands by talking with commercial people."

Library Service C receives sponsorship from a "fairly rich commercial partner" for their 'Books for Babies' scheme. The Principal Library Officer saw benefits beyond the money, in the marketing expertise on hand within the private sector: "They've got a huge machine, with a lot of very professional people, and it's exhilarating to work with them". Both the Principal Library Officer and the Operations Officer made a passing mention of the obligation to display sponsorship logos on all publicity for sponsored activities. The potential difficulties arising from this were seen to be purely practical and aesthetic i.e. incorporating the logos into the graphic design of publicity.

The Principal Library Officer's comments about the heavy demand upon the print and stationery budget were borne out by the Operations Officer who looks after that budget. She explained that each financial year she contacts each Principal Librarian to find out what they are hoping to promote, and invites them to make bids against the budget. However, much of the budget is taken up by what Edsall (1980, p. 99) calls 'business communications' e.g. generic stationery, request forms, etc. There is no set or protected amount for promotional print: taking what is left over after the production of necessary business communications, the Operations Officer

has to try to produce what each library group is asking for. She considers some of the routine printed items, such as library guides and 'welcome' bookmarks as halfway between business and promotion, because they are "promotional, but informative as well". The Operations Officer stated that she would "like to see a separate marketing budget".

The Principal Library Officer did express some concern about the overall amount of spending on promotional activities and measures, within the context of total library expenditure:

"The disarming thing is that all in a gross budget of 11 million, I think you'll agree some of those headings are pitifully small ... now that begs all sorts of questions: are we giving it proper attention, are we focusing properly, are we identifying resource level ... those are all perfectly good questions and ones that we've got to address."

4.3.3. Interpretation of findings

The data revealed that most respondents had a discrete budget for funding promotional activities (70.59%). This was more common amongst 'highest spending' services than 'lowest spending' services - 86.67% compared to 56.25%. Of those with a discrete budget, fluctuations in the amount of funding were less clear, with slightly more respondents indicating that the amount had decreased, than those who suggested that it had remained stable (a minority of 20.83% indicated an increase in funding).

Of those questionnaire respondents who quoted actual figures, it is not useful to make inferences, despite that fact that those figures varied dramatically (from £1000 to £53,000). This is because the data collected makes no allowances for the varying size and context of each library service. Moreover, it does not indicate what kinds of items are included under the budget heading. Evidence from the case

studies revealed that a very diverse range of activities can qualify for promotional and/or marketing funding, such as building refurbishment, printed materials, guiding and signage, and translation fees.

In the contexts of the case studies, both services with a dedicated budget (A and B) expressed a general level of satisfaction with amount of funding they received. It seems likely that a dedicated budget makes it easier to identify exact resource levels, take an overview of the year's spending and plan accordingly. As mentioned in the literature review, in 1981 Cronin quoted research that suggested that public library services in the United Kingdom spent between 0.001% and 0.23% of their budgets on publicity and promotion. Library services A and B both allocated a higher percentage than this (respectively 0.75% and 0.47%) to marketing and/or promotion, but significantly less than the German recommendation of 5% endorsed by Cronin, and less again than the 10% suggested by Hamilton (1990).

Interviewees in Library Service C expressed the highest level of concern about the amount spent on promotion, where spending is absorbed under several other budget headings. It appears that absorbed expenditure makes it harder to estimate the overall amount spent on promotion. Moreover, if the amount of funding spent on a particular type activity is indistinct, it seems to follow that it is harder to protect or reserve that money. For example, evidence from Library Service C revealed that the element of the print and stationery budget given over to routine costs (e.g. overdue postcards), had to take precedence over the production of promotional materials. This recalls Hamilton's (1990) observation that absorbed expenditure can result in promotional activities being reliant on left-over amounts of money from other budgets (that are probably limited in the first place). I would suggest that a distinct budget dedicated to promotion makes it less vulnerable to gradual, unseen attrition, or would at least make diminishing resources more conspicuous and harder to ignore.

4.4. Resources

4.4.1. Findings from general questionnaire

The respondents were asked:

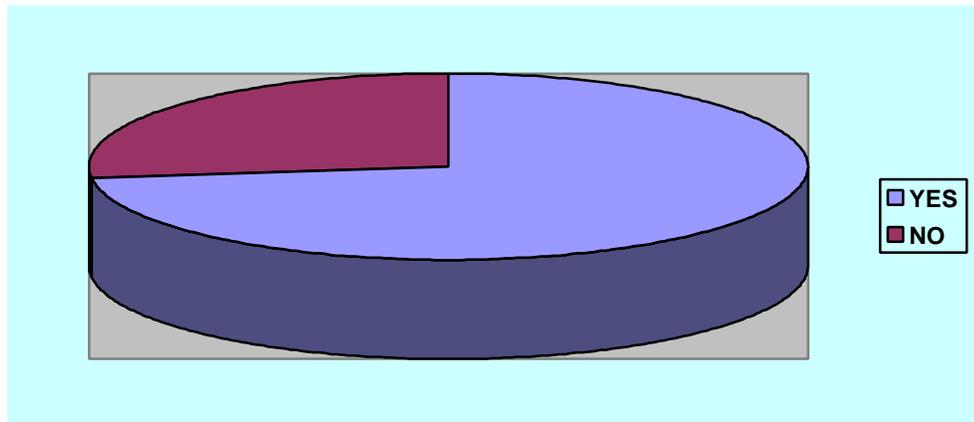
- a) Does your library service have the following resources:
Graphic design / personnel facilities?
and/or
Press / Public Relations personnel/facilities?

The results are summarised below in table and graph form:

Table 11. Graphic design / personnel facilities

Response category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
YES	25	73.53
NO	9	26.47
TOTAL	34	100.00

Graph 8. Graphic design / personnel facilities



Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 11a. Responses from 'highest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	12	80.00
NO	3	20.00
TOTAL	15	100.00

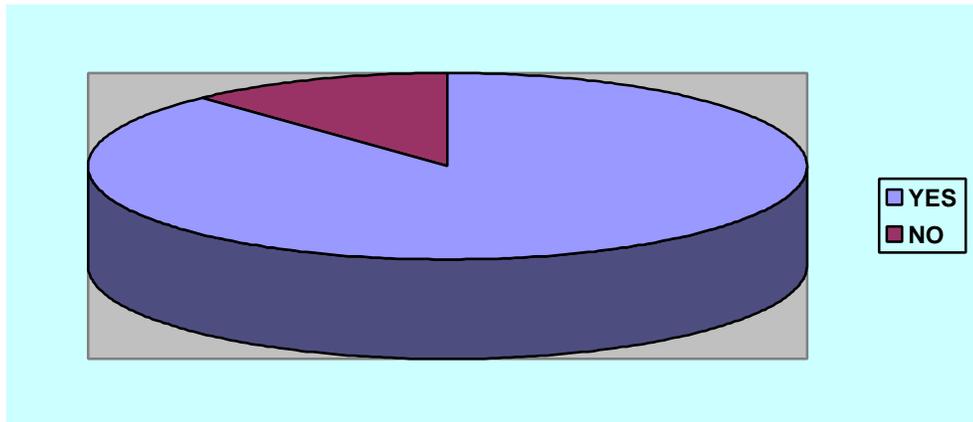
Table 11b. Responses from 'lowest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	10	62.50
NO	6	37.50
TOTAL	16	100.00

Table 12. Press/Public Relations personnel/facilities

Response category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
YES	30	88.24
NO	4	11.76
TOTAL	34	100.00

Graph 9. Press/Public Relations personnel/facilities



Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 12a. Responses from 'highest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	14	93.33
NO	1	6.67
TOTAL	15	100.00

Table 12b. Responses from 'lowest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	13	81.25
NO	3	18.75
TOTAL	16	100.00

Respondents were then asked:

b) If YES, are those resources:

Dedicated to the library service
or
Shared with a larger dept. which includes libraries
or
A central council resource?

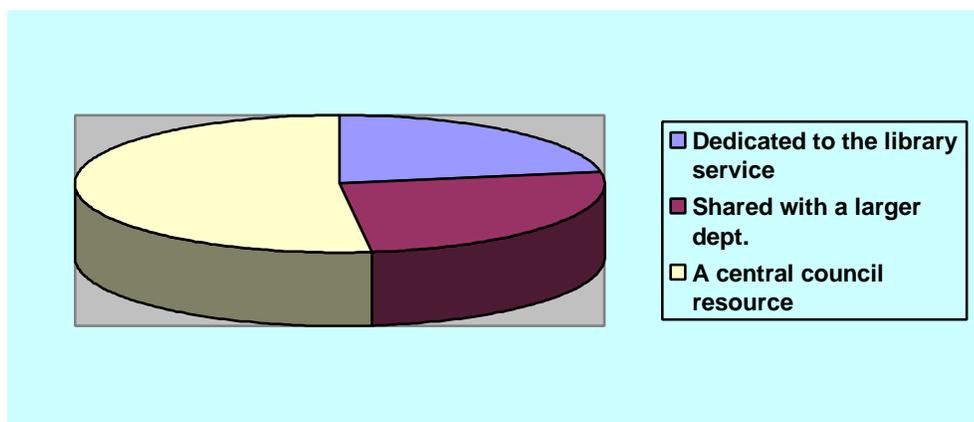
The results are summarised below in table and graph form:

Table 13. Graphic design personnel / facilities

Response category	Number of responses	%
Dedicated to the library service	6	22.22
Shared with a larger dept.	7	25.92
A central council resource	14	51.86
TOTAL	27*	100.00

* 2 respondents ticked 2 categories each

Graph 10. Graphic design personnel / facilities



Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 13a. Responses from 'highest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
Dedicated to the library service	3	23.07
Shared with a larger dept.	3	23.07
A central council resource	7	53.86
TOTAL	13	100.00

Table 13b. Responses from 'lowest spending' services:

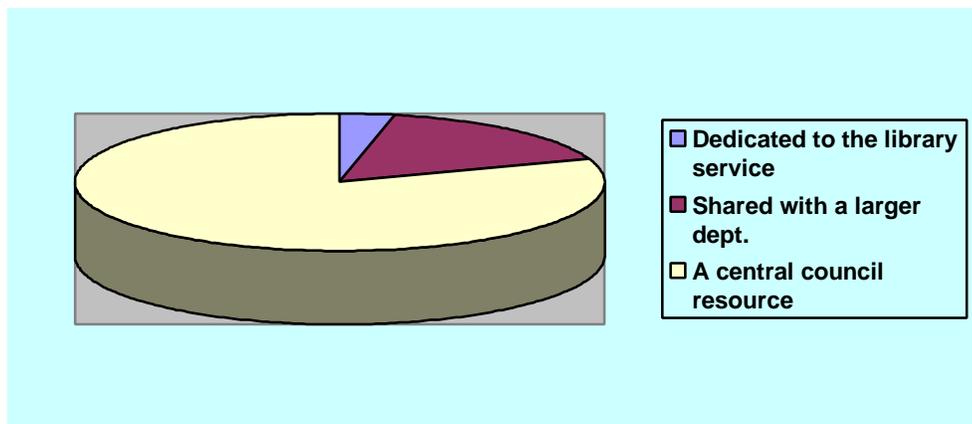
Response category	Number of responses	%
Dedicated to the library service	3	27.27
Shared with a larger dept.	3	27.27
A central council resource	5	45.46
TOTAL	11	100.00

Table 14. Press / Public Relations personnel / facilities

Response category	Number of responses	%
Dedicated to the library service	1	3.12
Shared with a larger dept.	5	15.63
A central council resource	25	78.13
No response	1	3.12
TOTAL	32*	100.00

* 1 respondent ticked 2 categories

Graph 11. Press / Public Relations personnel / facilities



Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 14a. Responses from 'highest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
Dedicated to the library service	1	7.14
Shared with a larger dept.	1	7.14
A central council resource	11	78.58
No response	1	7.14
TOTAL	14	100.00

Table 14b. Responses from 'lowest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
Dedicated to the library service	-	-
Shared with a larger dept.	3	20.00
A central council resource	12	80.00
No response	-	-
TOTAL	15	100.00

4.4.2. Case study findings

Library Service A has access to both graphic design and public relations personnel facilities, which are shared with the larger department to which the library service belongs: *Development, Environment and Leisure*. The Group Manager said that the department exercised very strict standards in terms of the standards of publicity i.e. the use of the corporate 'house-style'. The department was working towards producing a comprehensive range of standard templates and 'pre-prints' to ensure consistency. Major promotional events, such as the official launch of an interactive CD-ROM of local history photographs and information, are sometimes handed over to the public relations unit for the organisation of venue, guest lists and media coverage. The library service also has a direct relationship with the media, maintaining contacts with a range of local newspapers and the local BBC radio station.

The public relations unit and graphic design unit used by Library Service B are both central council resources. When the Publicity & Marketing Officer first joined the library service (roughly ten years ago) it had a dedicated design unit with one full-time and one part-time designer. She observed that the existence of this resource coincided with a period when the service won a clutch of awards for its publicity, but under the recent Local Government Review (LGR) the graphics units

for all council departments were amalgamated into a central unit. While acknowledging the increased quality of publicity made possible by the advances made in desktop publishing technology, she felt that the centralisation of the Graphics Unit has been a retrograde step for the library service:

"..we used to have our own dedicated staff, and now we've got this pool of designers ... it doesn't get turned round quickly. I used to work in the unit, so I knew exactly what was going on, I knew what was a priority and I could take a designer off that to work on that if I knew it was important. But it's quite difficult, some departments are a lot bigger ... Museums is smaller than us, then there's libraries. If you look at Social Services and Education and the amount of stuff they produce, we're quite small fry ... I don't think we've got a lot of clout particularly".

Because of its small size and 'stand-alone' status, it is perhaps unsurprising that the library does not possess exclusive graphic design and public relations facilities, but it would seem that the same factors also make it difficult for the service to compete for those resources in the 'open field' of all council departments. These difficulties do not appear to effect the relationship between the library service and the council public relations department, who check all press releases produced by the library service to "make sure that they mention the county council, but also to make sure that we're not making any sort of political boobs". The Publicity & Marketing Officer described the central public relations unit as being privy to "the wider picture, the bigger political spectrum". Moreover, the public relations unit provides useful media contacts and practical a guidance on how to make rather dry information (i.e. "a load of stats") sound "interesting".

A similar impression of a productive relationship between the library service and a central public relations unit, was reflected in arrangements in Library Service C, as described by the Principal Library Officer:

"... the way they tend to work is they split up all sorts of corporate contacts and duties and responsibilities with the media and with all sorts of other people, but they tend to allocate one or more of their people

to each service area, so somebody called [REDACTED] is our colleague and is allocated to Community Services, which is great because there is continuity there."

Therefore, although the public relations unit is a council wide resource, the larger department to which the library service belongs is allocated its own member of personnel within it. The production of press releases in Library Service C is divided between: 'soft' stories, which are routine, non-controversial and delegated to the Principal Librarians, and stories "with a political edge" which require "professional media handling".

The Operations Officer was slightly more equivocal in her description of the relationship between the library service and the public relations unit: although she felt that they were "beginning to do a slightly better job for us", difficulties arose from the fact that "they have to promote all the county council, not just us". The service has access to a central graphic design unit. Similarly to Library Service B, the Operations Officer acknowledged the ability to produce printed publicity materials at service-point level using DTP and word-processing software, but added that it was something that she was "trying to change", because of her responsibility for providing a "corporate overview" of all printed output (also see section 4.9.).

4.4.3. Interpretation of findings

With hindsight, I wish that I had rephrased this question. Where I asked the respondent if they *had* these resources, I ought to have asked them if they *had access* to these resources, or whether these resources were *available* to them. This is because the question (as it was posed) may have caused some respondents whose service has shared facilities to tick 'NO' and then read no further.

Three quarters (75.33%) of respondents had graphic design personnel or facilities, and more (88.24%) had press/public relations personnel and facilities. Again, these resources were more common among 'highest spending' services (80.00% and 93.33%) than 'lowest spending' services (62.50% and 81.25%).

I was interested to discover exactly what kind of 'claim' the library services had upon these resources i.e. if they were exclusive to the library service, shared with a larger department, or a central council resource. For both graphic design and public relations, the most common model was of a shared corporate resource. Less than one quarter (22.22%) of respondents had dedicated graphic design resources, while only 1 respondent (3.12%) said that their service had dedicated public relations personnel/facilities. This suggests that Usherwood's (1981b) assertion that separate PR library departments simply do not exist, is generally (but not unreservedly) accurate. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this respondent was a 'highest spending' service, but on the whole there is little difference between 'highest' and 'lowest' spending services in the status of these resources (although 'lowest spending' services were slightly more likely to have their own graphic design resources).

In the case studies I tried to tease out the implications of having to share these resources with other departments. There was little evidence of the 'comprehension gap' between libraries and corporate PR personnel as described by Pyle (1989). Perhaps this was due to diplomacy on the part of the interviewees, but it also seemed that there was some degree of specialisation within the corporate resource (e.g. personnel who specifically looked after libraries, or their larger department). The impression created was one of a generally sympathetic and productive relationship, with the corporate PR resource providing useful guidance and a corporate overview.

There was some suggestion that library services can 'lose out' in the (civilised) scramble for limited corporate resources. The suggestion by one interviewee that this may be due to the library service's lack of 'clout' in the wider corporate context, reflects a similar assertion made by Pyle (1991).

4.5. Promotion and marketing

4.5.1. Findings from general questionnaire

The respondents were asked:

a) Does your library service have a marketing officer / manager, or equivalent?

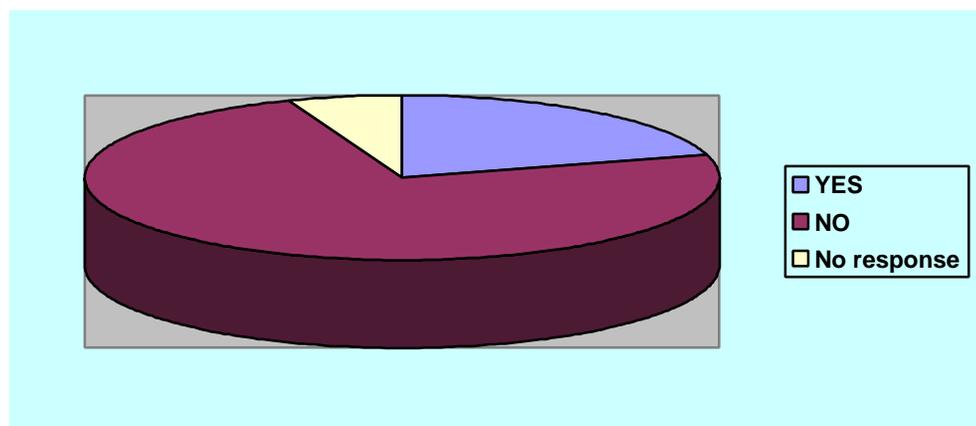
YES or NO

The results are summarised below in table and graph form:

Table 15.

Response category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
YES	7	20.59
NO	25	73.53
No response	2	5.88
TOTAL	34	100.00

Graph 12.



Additional data:

- 1 respondent that answered 'NO' to question a) added the comment: "The responsibility added on to service management responsibilities."
- 1 respondent that gave no response to question a) added the comment "Soon".

Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 15a. Responses from 'highest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	4	26.67
NO	9	60.00
No response	2	13.33
TOTAL	15	100.00

Table 15b. Responses from 'lowest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	2	12.50
NO	14	87.50
No response	-	-
TOTAL	15	100.00

Respondents were then asked:

b) If YES, please give job title:

Results are summarised below:

- Of the 7 respondents who answered 'YES' to question a), 6 responded to question b). The job titles given are as follows:

"Marketing and Publicity Officer"

"Marketing Group for whole department and librarian with marketing responsibilities"

"Marketing and Development Manager"

"Marketing Officer"

"Marketing Manager" (mentioned by 2 respondents)

- 1 of the respondents who answered 'NO' to question a) responded to b):

"The responsibility is added on to senior management responsibilities"

- Both of the respondents who gave no response to question a) responded to b):

"County wide responsibilities for promotion and marketing held by Senior Manager, West."

"Marketing Officer" ("soon")

Of these 9 responses, in 5 cases it is unclear whether the post is dedicated to the library service or shared with other departments. With hindsight, I ought to have amalgamated this question with those about graphic design and PR personnel, in order to clarify this. At least 3 of the responses indicate that marketing is an 'add-on' to other areas of responsibility.

Respondents were then asked:

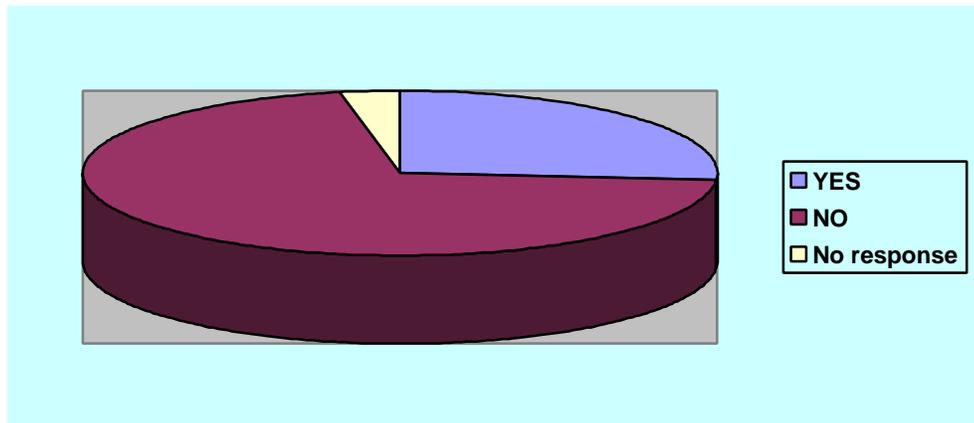
Does your library have a current marketing plan or strategy?
YES or NO

The results are summarised below in table and graph form:

Table 16.

Response category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
YES	9	26.47
NO	24	70.59
No response	1	2.94
TOTAL	34	100.00

Graph 13.



Additional data:

- 1 respondent who answered 'YES' added the comment "still in draft form."
- 4 respondents who answered 'NO' added comments
"one prepared several years ago!"
"But we are committed to producing one this year as part of our annual library plan and service delivery plan."

"Working on Arts plan."

"But being devised."

- 1 respondent who gave no response added the comment "in preparation".

Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 16a. Responses from 'highest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	5	35.71
NO	9	64.29
TOTAL	14	100.00

Table 16b. Responses from 'lowest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	4	25.00
NO	12	75.00
TOTAL	16	100.00

4.5.2. Case study findings

There are few distinct boundaries between the data I collected on marketing and that concerned exclusively with promotion, which explains why the presentation of data may sometimes seem repetitious. However, to reiterate: marketing (and promotional) responsibilities in Library Service A are added on to the service responsibilities of the Group Manager (Circulation Services) supported by a

marketing section shared with rest of the council department that includes libraries. The Group Manager was in the process of preparing a marketing strategy, and when asked defined the elements of marketing as "research, pricing, positioning, presentation".

Library Service B has a dedicated Publicity & Marketing Officer, who was awaiting the endorsement and implementation of a service review (and a new mission statement) before producing any marketing documentation.

Library Service C has no specific marketing personnel (dedicated or otherwise) and a marketing group that has been in abeyance for some time. The group produced a marketing formula, but it was unclear whether it was still in use. I asked the Principal Library Officer to describe his understanding of the concept of marketing, and its role within the library service:

"I reckon promotion is part of marketing ... marketing to me in a true sense is such a broad and continuous process: you have a marketing cycle, you examine the product, you monitor, modify, review, you modify and review again, and then start the cycle again. Promotion to me should logically fit within that ... the honest answer is that we've had lots of flirtations with marketing and in all candour we've done some very good little pockets of marketing in certain service areas..."

The Operations Officer of Library Service C felt that a marketing officer could "pull everyone together", bringing the benefit of marketing expertise to the service while still allowing staff "the responsibility for organising and doing their own local events". However, she did not think that appointing a marketing officer for the whole Community Services department would be appropriate, because of the diversity of the different sections. She pointed out that marketing is a very specific skill:

"I dabble, I like to think I know how to promote an event, but marketing and publicity doesn't always mean throwing a leaflet or a poster at somebody ... I don't think I've got expertise. I wouldn't claim to have it at all."

In contrast to this, the Publicity & Marketing Officer in Library Service B felt that she had developed a comprehensive range of marketing skills, which she was not always able to utilise in her work:

"I'm actually employed as Marketing Officer, but I don't feel they use me to my full potential. They actually paid for me to go on the Institute of Marketing certificate. I've got that qualification, but I don't always think they understand what marketing is, I think they think marketing is a poster or an advert. They don't understand how integrated it is in all thoughts that go through the library service.

I asked her if she thought that librarians have a generally resistant or wary attitude towards marketing practices:

"Yes, because I think they see marketing closely followed by being very commercial, and it isn't necessarily. They think 'marketing, oh god, they're going to make us make some money'. It is one element, it's almost proof of the pudding that you've got you're marketing right, isn't it?"

She felt that marketing and publicity was a developmental issue for librarians during their professional education, because "there isn't a lot done during their educational time on promotions and marketing, even now".

The Group Manager of Library Service A suggested that a gradual change was taking place in professional perceptions of the public library service with a growing awareness of the "need to change". This provided a segue into the issue of market research and intelligence: I was interested to discover what (if any) market research had been conducted in each of the library services.

As previously mentioned, part of Library Service A's 1999/2000 marketing budget was spent on participation in the CIPFA survey on a 'rolling' basis over three years. More directly relevant to 'market' intelligence, in the previous year the service had paid an independent financial unit (*Priority Focus*) to conduct focus

group research at the central library and three community libraries. The unit also conducted telephone surveys with lapsed users (not identified with 'telemarketing' in the Group Manager's response to my general questionnaire) and street surveys.

According to the Group Manager, the results revealed "no real surprises". The most common reason given for non-use was that the library "doesn't fit in with their lifestyles", but even these respondents expressed a high level of notional support for the existence of a public library service.

The Publicity & Marketing Officer in Library Service B suggested that while the service participated in various public surveys, the research was not motivated by an appreciation of the marketing concept and its relevance to public libraries:

"We do surveys, but they're not initiated as a marketing tool. We do CIPFA and we do PLUS, the Public Library User Survey, we do a children's one and an adult's one of those, and we do a census and that type of thing. But as I say, they're not actually done - I don't believe they're done - for a market research purpose, to promote a marketing campaign. The statistics aren't made that readily available to me to do something with ... sometimes it is, but not always."

More positively, she anticipated that extensive consultation with members of the public would feature prominently in the forthcoming service review.

Library Service C had also participated in the PLUS survey and was included in a council-commissioned MORI poll which examined the entire range of council services. Like Library Service A, a telephone survey of lapsed library users had recently been undertaken (commissioning a telecommunications company to conduct the research). In the area of market research, The Principal Library Officer admitted "there's much more to be done there, in all honesty".

Interviewees in all three services described the difficulties of marketing library services to non-users (called a "huge market" by Library Service C's Operations Officer), in terms of identifying them and then persuading them of the relevance of the public library service to their needs. The Principal Library Service Officer in Library Service A acknowledged that the service's marketing activities had "in real output terms concentrated much more on users"; a similar observation was made by the Group Manager in Library Service A.

4.5.3. Interpretation of findings

Contrary to Rowley's (1995) assertion, there is evidence of a precedent for marketing managers (or officers) in library services, but it is a small one. This precedent may be set to increase (one respondent indicated that they would have a Marketing Officer "soon"), but it is still uncommon. Moreover, it would appear that some of these personnel are, like graphic design and public relations, a 'shared' resource. I did not anticipate this: if I had, I would have structured this question in the same way as the question about graphic design and PR resources, in order to clarify the exact status of the marketing personnel. The data again indicated that 'highest spending' (26.67%) services are more likely to have marketing personnel than 'lowest spending' services (12.50%), but it is important to note that we are talking in relatively small numbers.

De Saéz (1993) recommended the production of an annual marketing plan: correspondingly, 26.47% of respondents identified their service as having a 'current marketing plan or strategy', and 4 (11.76%) indicated that some form of plan or strategy was in production (2 of these are the same documentation as mentioned in section 4.1.1.). A higher proportion of 'highest spending' services (35.71%) than 'lowest spending' (25.00%) already have a marketing plan or strategy.

The commentators examined in the literature review often pointed to the confusion over the difference between promotion and marketing, and the existence of sceptical or resistant staff attitudes towards marketing/promotion. I felt that the data yielded by the questionnaire would be unlikely to convey findings of any depth

or subtlety on this topic, so instead I approached it through the case study interviews. All interviewees demonstrated a theoretical grasp of the distinct concepts of promotion and marketing. However, one interview (Library Service B) felt that this level of comprehension was not common to all librarians. This lack of awareness had apparently led to a preoccupation with promotional element of the marketing process, and the under-exploitation of available marketing expertise.

The general questionnaire did not seek to collect data about the market research activities of respondents, as it was not one of the stated objectives of my research. However, it did naturally arise as a related topic during the case study interviews. The first thing to be described by most interviewees as examples of market research activities, were the general library surveys such as PLUS. However, one interviewee pointed to the failure to aggregate this type data in a way that directly informed the marketing performance of the service. This failure to utilise data had been observed by Cronin (1981, 1992), who also accused librarians of viewing user surveys and community profiling as the sum total of necessary market research. The case studies indicate that some services are beginning to develop their market research activities, employing the services of the commercial sector to conduct focus groups, telephone surveys, etc.

4.6. Evaluation

4.6.1. Findings from general questionnaire

Respondents were asked:

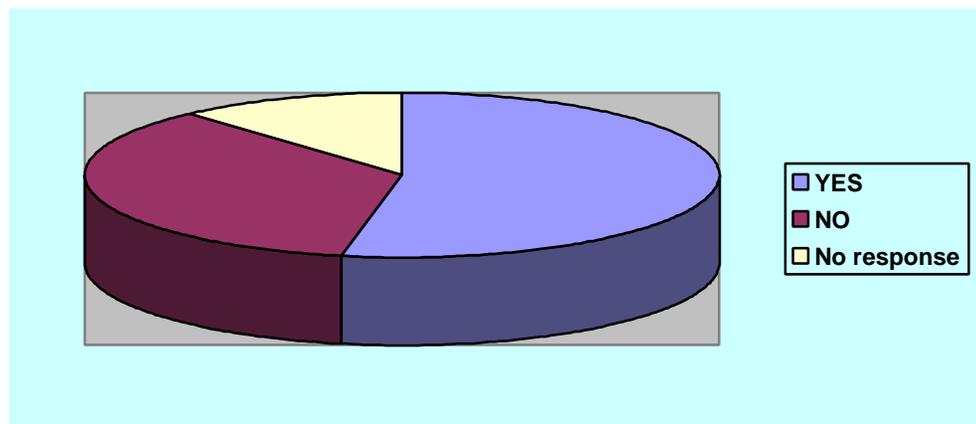
a) Does your library service evaluate its promotional work?
YES or NO

The results are summarised below in table and graph form:

Table 17.

Response category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
YES	18	52.94
NO	12	35.29
No response	4	11.77
TOTAL	34	100.00

Graph 14.



Additional data:

- 3 of the respondents who gave no response to question a) added comments:

"Sometimes"

"Some"

"Occasionally"

Correlation with expenditure status:

Table 17a. Responses from 'highest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	10	66.67
NO	4	26.67
No response	1	6.66
TOTAL	15	100.00

Table 17b. Responses from 'lowest spending' services:

Response category	Number of responses	%
YES	6	37.50
NO	8	50.00
No response	2	12.50
TOTAL	16	100.00

Respondents were then asked:

b) If YES, please describe briefly:

Results are summarised below:

The data elicited by this question proved hard to analyse effectively. The 18 respondents who answered 'YES' to question a) produced a wide range of items, but a common vocabulary did emerge. The data can be placed in five broad categories: specific evaluative methods and instruments, performance indicators, frequency of evaluation, the type of evaluative data and who is involved in evaluation. The data has been grouped under these headings; the number of times they were mentioned is given in brackets.

Specific evaluative methods and instruments

Evaluation sheets [4], Evaluation form for staff [1]
Questionnaires [2], Surveys [1]
Cost/benefit analysis [1], Cost/resource implications[1], Cost [1]
Interviews [1]
Debriefing projects [1]
Evaluation column of business plan [1]
Performance review [1]
PLUS survey [1]

Performance indicators

Attendance [4]
Feedback [4]
Increased loans [3], Increased use of library/materials [1]
New membership [3]
Public reaction [1]
Response [1]
Expected outcomes [1]
Success [1]

Frequency of evaluation

Sometimes / occasionally [3]

Beginning to do this [1]

Type of evaluative data

Anecdotal [1]

Qualitative/Quantitative [1]

Informal [2]

Ad hoc [1]

Statistics [1]

Depend on particular promotional work [1]

Who is involved in evaluation

Through team [2]

Of the 4 respondents who enclosed policy documentation (4.1.1.), 2 also included examples of evaluation documents:

One enclosed a 1-page "public evaluation form" for a poetry or fiction event, which asks users to provide information about where they heard about the event, library use, reading habits, opinions on the quality of stock and how they rate the event in question. Also enclosed was a 1-page evaluation form for "librarians and assistants-in-charge", which asks staff to indicate: how helpful staff resource packs were, the ease of finding stock for a themed display, whether any media coverage was received, and what the response was from the public. Response categories are fixed, either YES/NO or on a 3-point scale using the 'smiley face' graphic.

The other respondent enclosed a 1-page "audience feedback form", asking respondents how they heard about the event and to rate the event on a scale of 1 to 5 on various aspects e.g. interest/entertainment value, sound/technical quality and ease of access to the venue. The form encourages further comments and suggestions for future events. It also gives respondents the option of joining the library service mailing list.

The four separate promotion/marketing practice documents (4.1.1.) that were enclosed by one respondent each include a section relevant to evaluation. The document entitle *Exhibitions, displays and the promotion of publicity material* suggests that a comments board or book might be displayed in conjunction with the display or exhibition.

The document on *Organising promotional events and activities* includes a specimen "events monitoring form" which collects information on the management of publicity, expenditure, (including cost per head), and intended audience. The section on evaluation asks staff to consider whether the event met its objectives, what elements of the event would be repeated or changed, and whether it is to be recommended. It is advised that the staff member keeps a copy of the completed form and forwards one to the relevant officer.

The document entitled *Media coverage* states the targets for number of press releases will be established each year by the Promotion and Development Officer. To this end, Operations Managers and Promotion Librarians are required to keep a record of media releases, and radio interviews, and are expected to scan newspapers, other publications and television to keep a record of column inches and news items. The statement concludes that "A discussion of outcomes will take place annually ... this will enable a sharing of ideas and an examination of successes and failures".

The document entitled *Organising quizzes and competitions* simply advises staff to "evaluate your success, note what went well and what did not, and keep a record for next time".

4.6.2. Case study findings

In their responses to the general questionnaire, all three services indicated that they undertook some degree of evaluation of their promotional work. Library Services A and B both pointed to evidence of increased use and library membership as a valid means of assessing promotional effectiveness. However, the Principal Officer of Library Service C was quick to point out the potential limitations of purely statistical indicators:

"You could claim lots of gold stars for getting fifty thousand kids through the doors of library X, couldn't you ... but if the minute they came in you locked the door and went off for a cup of tea and let them kick hell out of each other, fine, you got them through the door and they know there's a library there, but arguably you ain't achieved much! Whereas if you had five thousand through the door and worked very creatively with them, you get to the difference between outputs and outcomes ... the whole quality arena."

He suggested that because a library service is a "quality industry", there is a real need for appropriate indicators of quality. He made a persuasive argument for the development of more effective qualitative evaluation, acknowledging that this would not be easy to achieve:

"... some of the really telling indicators need a lot of work on them. They also have to, I think, to be unashamedly people's thoughts and views ... people shy away from the anecdotal, saying 'you can't reduce quality to numbers'. Well of course you can ... to me, you just have to work harder, to get the quality indicators.

The service has produced forms for the evaluation of promotional 'events'. The information is sent in to the Operations Officer, but use is only made at group and district level. The Publicity & Marketing Officer of Library Service B suggested that there was definite room for improvement in their evaluation of promotional activities:

"We had a meeting yesterday and we were talking ... we must be a bit more pro-active on doing evaluation, because at the end of the promotion when you're moving on to the next one it's the thing that can often be forgotten ... we've just finished doing a local studies/local history type one during May, but that would be quite difficult to evaluate now. Really it needs setting up from the beginning, not to come in at the end ... like training it's one of the first things to go, but unfortunately people are quite short-sighted because it's one of the most important things as well."

Speaking specifically about display work, the Publicity & Marketing Officer added that more sustained evaluation of promotions would strengthen the case for allowing more staff time to work on promotion:

"If we've got proof that the promotions are successful, we can then go to management and say 'hey look, did you know that X number of joiners, or issues are by X, whatever we decide to do, let's give them a couple more hours a week to do promotion'".

4.6.3. Interpretation of findings

Slightly more than half (52.94%) of all respondents indicated that they undertook some form of evaluation of their promotional work, with evaluation being more common among 'highest spending' services (66.67%) than 'lowest spending' services (37.50%). In reality, I suspect that the division between the services that do and do not evaluate promotion may be much less distinct than these figures suggest. The question allows for a considerable amount of interpretative latitude because I did not include a definition of what qualified as 'evaluation'. There may indeed be services at both ends of the spectrum, who engage in comprehensive, co-ordinated evaluation of all promotional work, or else make no provisions to evaluate any of their promotional work. However, those who engage in pockets of occasional and small -scale evaluation, perhaps restricted to branch or group level, could equally have answered 'YES' or 'NO', depending on their interpretation of the question.

The descriptions given by respondents of exactly how they evaluate are rather unrevealing, producing more questions than answers. Most respondents chose to speak in terms of the tools of evaluation (questionnaires, cost/benefit analysis, etc.) or the types of information collected (attendance figures, increased use of service). There is little indication of a) what this information is measured against i.e. benchmarks or targets, or b) how the information gained from evaluation is used.

Some of the items that were nominated as evaluative tools for promotion, such as the PLUS survey or the "evaluation column of the business plan", surprised me: clearly, promotion is an integrated element of the overall performance of the library service, but surely these tools constitute a rather unfocused and indirect way of evaluating it? Perhaps there is an assumption that if a service can be viewed as broadly successful, then promotion must be working, or at least not 'doing any harm'. Some of the vocabulary used by respondents to describe evaluation and its indicators, such as "ad hoc" and "success" seem a little glib, and do not bear up to scrutiny.

Some interesting material arose from the case studies. In Library Service B the interviewee, while acknowledging the inadequate provisions made for evaluation in the service, demonstrated an understanding of the need to establish evaluation at the offset of promotion rather than afterwards. The same interviewee also suggested that evaluation could be used to demonstrate effectiveness and be used to secure more resources and time for promotional work, corresponding to Cronin's (1981) 'cumulative advantage theory of promotion'. Case study evidence also suggested that staff are cognisant of the limitations of purely quantitative indicators, and the difficulty of identifying effective alternatives (as described by Usherwood 1981b).

I do not doubt that experienced library staff can develop an intuitive sense of whether or not a particular promotional event or activity has been generally 'well received' or not. But if evaluation is informal, sporadic and uncoordinated, and measures are based on inscrutable statistics, intuitive judgements and fuzzy 'guesstimates', then it surely follows that it is much harder to identify the exact reasons behind successes (to be repeated) and failures (to be addressed).

4.7. Objectives and outcomes

4.7.1. Findings from general questionnaire

The respondents were asked:

What are the objectives and outcomes of promotion for your library service?
Please describe briefly:

Results are summarised below:

- Of 34 respondents, 32 (94.12% of *n*) answered this question.
- Both of the non-responses were from 'highest-spending' services.

Again, the data was eclectic and hard to summarise neatly, but a common vocabulary with several recurring themes emerged, which are concerned with: the use of library services, awareness and image of library services, specific areas of service provision, business and corporate objectives. I have categorised the data under these headings, but clearly some of the data is sufficiently ambiguous that it could (arguably) have been interpreted differently and placed under another heading.

The use of library services

To encourage/increase use [16], Increase take-up [1]

Increase number of users/ membership [2]

Non-users [4], Current users [3], Lapsed users [1]

Market penetration [1]

"To encourage existing customers to take up new services or use existing services more" [1]

"To broaden use of library by existing users" [1]

"New business" [1]

The awareness and image of library services

To raise/encourage/increase awareness [14]

To raise/enhance profile [6]

To inform public [2]

"Promotion of what the library is about, what it can offer" [1]

Break down stereotypes [1]

"Promote positive image, internally and externally" [1]

"More informed use of services" [1]

Specific areas of service provision

Children and children's services [3]

"Promote specific aspects of services to users" [1]

"Increase use -especially of the A/V income generating services" [1]

Promote new services [1]

Publicise events and activities [1]

Business and corporate objectives

"Demonstrate effectiveness and Best Value" [1]

"Contribute fully to overall business aims" [1]

"Meet council objectives" [1]

Other comments

Quotations from/ references to policy documents [2]

"To increase support for our services" [1]

"Argue the case for more resources" [1]

"To improve communication, thus access to our services" [1]

Reading [2] reader development [1] literature development [2], literacy [1]

"To show how the library service can make a difference to people's learning and information needs" [1]

"To ensure facilities and services are inclusive" [1]

"To enhance the experience of a library visit" [1]

"Linking with Arts" [1]

"Widening traditional role into a cultural one" [1]

"Any publicity is good publicity" [1]

"None written down" [1]

"Linkages to national initiatives" [1]

4.6.2. Case study findings

Some mutual themes emerge from the discussion of promotional objectives in all three library services. Unsurprisingly, interviewees in all three services identified increased use of the service as a primary objective of promotion. A need to raise awareness was also cited in all three instances. The Group Manager of Library Service A saw promotion as a way to "keep the service in the public eye" and "raising the profile of the service". Library Service C's Principal Library Officer reported that their research "gets some fairly alarming results in terms of utterly basic awareness, so that's what we've got to target in the marketing campaign."

In the absence of a written set of promotional and marketing objectives, the Publicity & Marketing Officer for Library Service B was particularly concerned with addressing low and non-use, and ensuring that promotion is inclusive and comprehensive:

"My own objectives, because they're the only ones I've got because we've not got any policy, really. I would like to do a lot more with non- and lapsed users, and any promotion we do, if we can find some way - some element of getting it out of the library, taking it out of the library to get people in ... a promoting the full range of services, really ... it's reaching as many people as we can and hoping that whoever we reach, someone will find the service of use."

In their responses to the general questionnaire, the Group Manager of Library Service A stated that an objective of the promotion was to "argue the case for more resources", while Library Service C's Principal Library Officer maintained that promotion sought "to demonstrate effectiveness and 'Best Value" and "to contribute fully to overall service aims". Both responses are predicated on the negotiation of the corporate context which public library services operate in, and all that it entails. In interview, the Principal Library Officer explained why he was mindful of the library service's accountability to the corporate overview:

" ... if you logically play it through all your business planning and you are always absolutely clear about what the declared objectives of the county council are, and the declared objectives of our department, and then those of our service, with a bit of luck it will all fit into place like a giant jigsaw."

However, this integration is somewhat offset by the climate of corporate competition provoked by limited resources:

"In the one sense despite all I've said about a legitimate corporate approach to things, there is still competition ... in the nicest possible way, we're all competing for the same money, not only within the department but within the authority overall. We don't climb over each other, but it has to be said there is real competition now."

For Library Service C limited finances have created an additional objective for promotion, which focuses on the income-generating elements of the service such as the 'premier video collection'. The Principal Library Officer says this is marketed "aggressively" and "unashamedly on a profit basis, for once".

4.7.3. Interpretation of findings

The questionnaire evidence suggests that for many library services, the bottom line of promotional objectives is, unsurprisingly, increased use of the library. There was little indication given of how this increase in use would be composed: only three respondents were clear about the relationship between markets and services, in a way that could be mapped onto Ansoff's (de Saéz 1993) marketing grid of service development, market development, market penetration, and diversification.

The focus on increased use/membership of the library service means that the objectives stated by respondents tend to cluster towards the palpable/direct end of Irving's (1992) continuum of outcomes and objectives (as described in the literature review). The less palpable, more enduring objectives situated towards the other end

of the continuum included increased funding, increased support, "to improve communication, and thus access", and the creation of an "inclusive" service: these types of objectives were less frequently cited. Also mentioned in the questionnaire findings and discussed at some length in the case study interview, was the concept of promotional objectives being expressive of larger corporate objectives.

Many of the objectives could also be plotted onto the three stage model communication summarised by Rowley (1998), with several respondents identifying increased awareness and an enhanced image or profile of the service as objectives. Interestingly, only one respondent thought to combine these elements and distinguish "more informed use of services" as a distinct objective.

I would guess that most respondents chose the most obvious and direct objectives that they could think of, and that could be succinctly described in the limited space given on the questionnaire form. I did think about producing a list of possible objectives and offering respondents a set of fixed response categories, but I decided against this, because I felt that it was important that they articulated these objectives independently and using their own vocabulary, without any prompting from me.

4.8. Specific promotional activities

4.8.1. Findings from general questionnaire

Respondents were asked:

Please indicate which of the following promotional activities your library service has produced/ engaged in within the last three years (tick relevant boxes, giving examples where appropriate):

1. reading lists
2. leaflets about services & materials
3. joining / membership pack
4. returns' shelving accessible to users
5. in-house displays / exhibitions of library resources
6. displays / exhibitions of resources in non-library locations
7. posters displayed in libraries
8. posters displayed in non-library locations
9. author visits / guest speakers
10. competitions
11. library service web pages
12. literature / reading events / schemes
13. staff 'outreach' visits
14. use of media opportunities i.e. newspaper, TV, radio
15. promotional work in partnership with other library authorities
16. promotional work in partnership with other organisations
17. telemarketing
18. door-to-door leafleting / direct-mailing
19. others (please specify)

Results are summarised below in table form:

Table 18.

Activity no.	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>	Number of comments
1.	32	94.12	-
2.	34	100.00	-
3.	20	58.82	-
4.	29	85.29	-
5.	34	100.00	-
6.	29	85.29	22
7.	34	100.00	-
8.	28	82.35	21
9.	33	97.06	-
10.	34	100.00	-
11.	27	79.41	-
12.	33	97.06	-
13.	33	97.06	26
14.	32	94.12	-
15.	22	64.71	2
16.	28	82.35	22
17.	1	2.94	-
18.	17	50.00	-
19.	6	17.64	-

Additional data

Displays/exhibitions of library resources in non-library locations (item 6.)

The locations mentioned were as follows:

Supermarkets [5], *Asda* [4]

Local festivals [1], shows [3], fairs [2]

Sports/leisure centres [3], swimming pools [1]

Shops/shopping centres [3]

Other council premises e.g. Town Hall [3]

Schools [2]

Adult education centre [1], Adult Learner's Week [2]

Departmental fairs [1]

Railway stations [1]

Community events [1]

Offices [1]

Residents association [1]

Teachers' conference [1]

"Older persons event at Town Hall" [1]

Posters displayed in non-library locations (item 8.)

The locations mentioned were as follows:

Shops/shopping centres [7]

Health clinics/centres [4], doctor's surgeries [2]

Sports leisure/centres [4], swimming pools [2]

Schools [4], colleges [1]

Supermarkets [2], *Asda* [1]

Community centres [2]

Buses [2]

Post offices [2]

Street advertising [1], bus shelters [1]

Other council departments [1], Town Hall [1]

Railway station [1]

Playgroup meeting places [1]

Offices [1]

Job centres [1]

Staff 'outreach' visits (item 13.)

Recipients of visits are:

Schools [10], class visits [1]

Local organisations [4], community groups [2], groups/clubs [3]

Playgroups [5], day centres [1]

Youth & community centres [2]

W.I. [2]

Colleges [1]

Business community [1], business seminars [1]

Chinese schools [1]

Health centres [1]

Shows [1]

Local history fairs [1]

Homes [1]

'Bookstart' sceme [1]

Asda (The Big Read) [1]

Children's Book Festival [1]

Promotional work in co-operation with other library authorities (item 15.)

"Founder member of *Well Worth Reading*"

"FOURSITE"

Promotional work in partnership with other organisations (item 16.)

Education department [4], other parts of council [1]

Asda [2], *Sainsbury's* [2]

Bookshops [3]

Publishers [3]

Schools [3]

BBC [2]

Book suppliers [2]

Colleges [2]

Football team [2]

GLAXO Wellcome [1]

Health service/authority [2]

National Year of Reading [2]

County show [1]

District council [1]

Friends group [1]

Local societies [1]

Local television [1]

National Literacy Trust [1]

Opening the Book [1]

Parent support groups [1]

Printers [1]

Reading groups [1]

Rugby team [1]

Sponsors [1]

Training council [1]

Telemarketing (item 17.)

The single respondent who ticked this category added the word "questionnaire"

Door to door leafleting/direct mailing (item 18.)

2 respondents who ticked this category added the following comments:

"For a new library and to gain members of Friends Group - about 20,000 letters given out for this meeting"

"For new Internet service"

Others (item 19.)

The following activities were described under this heading:

Shows/fairs/carnivals [3]

Bus advertising [1]

"Consultation with users & none-users" [1]

"Local bus and poster campaign for Internet facilities [1]

"Have had a Promotions Group (of staff) for several years" [1]

4.8.2. Interpretation of findings

Though the general questionnaire asked respondents to state which of a wide range of activities their services had recently engaged in, the data only gives a notional indication how common these activities are. It says nothing about how effective they are. Nor should a tick in every box by a respondent necessarily be interpreted as a 'good' thing; Hafner (1989, p.35) points out that 'quantity ... is not always an effective indicator of library performance. More activity does not necessarily mean better activity.'. Moreover, the list of activities specified in the questionnaire is wholly subjective (chosen unsystematically by me) and not intended to express the complete range of potential projects.

Most of the activities and measures mentioned in the questionnaire seem to be engaged in by virtually all of the respondents, so perhaps it is only worth briefly mentioning the few that attracted a noticeably lower response rate: the joining/membership pack (58.82%), promotional work in partnership with other library authorities (64.71%), telemarketing (2.94%) and door-to-door leafleting/direct mailing (50.00%).

I think it is interesting that considerably less respondents have formed promotional partnerships with other library services (64.71%) than with other types of organisations (82.35%). If a third of services are not working on promotion with other library services, this lends weight to de Saéz's (1993) assertion that more could be done to establish a "co-operative effort" (p. 89) between services. I have already mentioned that logic suggests the most sympathetic promotional partner for a public library service would be another library service. It would seem that library services that do not exploit this opportunity might be missing out. This may not offer the commercial incentives of partnerships with the private sector, but the chance to pool resources, and a cross-fertilisation of good ideas (look at *Well Worth Reading* for a salient success story).

The strict definition of 'telemarketing' is synonymous with that of 'teleselling', given in *The Chambers Dictionary* (1993, p. 1778) as: "the selling of goods or services by using the telephone to seek customers". The single respondent who

ticked this category added the word "questionnaire" afterwards, which is more akin to market research than to 'selling' or promoting. So it would seem that none of the respondents had really engaged in telemarketing, although two of the case study services (A and C) had also used the telephone to conduct surveys with lapsed users.

Exactly half (50.00%) of all respondents indicated that their service had engaged in door-to-door leafleting or direct mailing, but what about the other half? It would be interesting to discover the reason behind these figures, as well as the lack of a precedent for telemarketing. Is it due to practical resource implications, or perhaps because of an ethical resistance to these types of direct advertising i.e. these methods of reaching people are seen as intrusive, and out of keeping with normal library practice?

4.8.3. Embedded case study A

The subject of this embedded case study was a Local History Fair organised by the Development Officer of Archives and Local Studies for Library Service A, and scheduled to take place between 10 am and 4pm on Saturday 12th June, 1999.

Objectives of the event

The major event in the Archives & Local Studies calendar, for budgetary and organisational reasons the fair is held biannually. The first fair was held in 1986, since when it has lapsed occasionally from its biannual sequence. The fair provides an opportunity not only for Archives & Local Studies to 'set out their stalls', but also creates a forum for other council departments (e.g. galleries and museums) and in excess of forty local history groups and societies. The fair does not admit any commercial groups or historical re-enactment societies. This year, the fair provided an opportunity to promote the new interactive CD-ROM which had been developed by Archives & Local Studies. The Development Officer showed me a report compiled for the 1993 fair, which outlined the objectives of the event:

"Its purpose is to at as a show case for the city's various local history groups, both specialist and general, to allow them to attract new members and raise funds through the sale of publications and other items.

To publicise the role of Council departments in local history and in organising events of this kind for the benefit of the community"

It would seem that the event is not purely promotional, but also functions as part of the library service's obligation to provide a service to various parts of the local community, providing a promotional platform for all participants. On these terms, the fair constitutes an element of service delivery, though it is far from routine. There is however one purely promotional element, and that is the library service's responsibility for producing all of the print and media publicity for the event.

Publicity

Publicity materials (posters and flyers) are produced and sent to all libraries and all participating groups. A press release was made to the largest local newspaper, appeared in the listings of another, and also received a mention in a locally-produced publication called *What's On*. An interview about the interactive CD-ROM on the local BBC radio station provided a chance to publicise the fair over the airwaves. All of the media-based publicity was free, rather than paid-for advertising. On the day of the fair, posters were prominently positioned outside the venue, and inside clear guiding and signage directed visitors to the banqueting suite.

Venue

The venue for the Local History Fair is the banqueting suite of the Town Hall. The reasons for this choice of venue are: its central location and ease of access, its attractiveness, and its relevance to the subject of the fair (i.e. historical interest). As a council venue it is nominally free to Archives & Local History, but there are substantial incidental charges i.e. porters. Taking into account the number of exhibitors who regularly attend the fair, the venue is presently full to capacity.

Resources

Besides the floor space, the exhibitors are provided with a table, chairs and a large display board. The display boards are supplied by a contractor, to ensure a uniform look and consistent quality. Refreshments are provided by the council caterers, but their services have to be underwritten by the library to ensure that they make a certain amount of money.

Timing

The date of the fair was chosen advisedly: in the past, it had proved sensitive to calendar clashes (one year it coincided with the cup final and attendance was unusually low) and the added cost of heating the venue in winter had also proved prohibitive.

Organisation

The fair had originally been part of the service's *Off the Shelf* book festival, but now stands alone, along with its own budget. Organisation begins well in advance of the event: prospective exhibitors are contacted in the September/October of the year preceding the fair. This is done so early because many of the groups are relatively small, and meet irregularly.

Budget

This year's fair cost a total of £1065, which breaks down as follows:

- Hire of display boards £500
- Hire of tables £215
- Town Hall staffing £300
- Publicity £50

No charge is made to the exhibiting groups or the visitors to the fair. Some income is generated from the sales of publications and other materials (at this year's fair fifty copies of the interactive CD-ROM were sold).

Evaluation

At the previous fair some evaluation had been undertaken, in the form of questionnaires sent to exhibitors after the event. I was therefore interested in surveying the visitors to the fair. This would be of some interest to library service as well as fulfilling one of my research objectives, to gather data from library service users (current and potential). As the gate count was expected to total more than 1,200, I decided that the most economical means of collecting data from a reasonably large sample of visitors would be via a brief, self-administered questionnaire. I designed the questionnaire to extrapolate the following data:

- How the respondent found out about the fair
- If the respondent had attended previous fairs
- The respondents opinion of the publicity for the fair
- Changes in the respondents awareness and intention to use Archives & Local Studies as a direct result of the event
- Frequency of public library use
- Background data to place findings in context e.g. age, gender, etc.

Findings from visitors' questionnaire

Sample construction

The population (N) from which a random sample (*n*) was taken was the total number of visitors to the Local History Fair: in excess of 1,600.

Table A1. Response rate of embedded case study A questionnaire

Questionnaires distributed	Questionnaires returned	Response rate %
100	74	74

The Development Officer for Archives & Local Studies provided a copy of the interactive CD-ROM to offer in a prize draw for questionnaire respondents. Clearly, the response rate for the questionnaire is exceptionally high, but I do not think that this purely due to this incentive, as very few respondents (about a dozen) actually provided the information necessary to be included in the draw i.e. their contact details

1. Means of finding out about the event

The respondents were asked:

1. How did you find out about the [redacted] Local History Fair?
 - At the library (please state which)
 - Through a local history group (please state which)
 - On a local radio station (please state which)
 - In a local newspaper (please state which)
 - Word-of-mouth
 - Other (please specify)

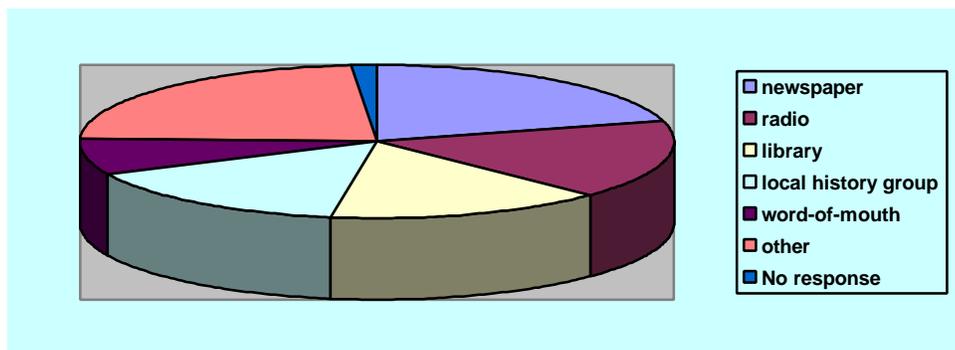
The results are summarised below:

Table A2.

Category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
In a local newspaper	16	21.62
On a local radio station	13	17.57
At the library	12	16.22
Through a local history group	12	16.22
Word-of-mouth	6	8.11
Other	18	24.32
No response	1	1.35
TOTAL	78*	105.41*

* 4 respondents ticked 2 categories each

Graph A1.



Additional data:

- 'In a local newspaper': 13 of the 16 respondents stated which newspaper: 11 named the main local newspaper (which received a press release) and 2 named another.
- 'On a local radio station': All 13 respondents stated which local radio station: all named the local BBC station.
- 'At the library': 10 of the 12 respondents stated which library: all named the central library, or a department of it (Local Studies & Archives is located here).
- 'Through a local history group': 11 of the 12 respondents stated which group: 9 groups were named (1 being mentioned by 3 respondents).
- 'Other': Of the 18 respondents who indicated that they heard about the fair by 'other' means, the following information was given:

Passing the venue [9]
What's On leaflet [2]
Local group/society [2]
Organisers [1]
Archives [1]
"Leaflet in café" [1]
"Advert in bookshop" [1]
"Through town hall porter" [1]

4 of these responses (local group/society, archives and organisers) could have been accommodated by the fixed response categories, but for some reason the respondents did not think so, and added them under 'other'. This complicates the statistical analysis.

2. Previous attendance of the fair

Respondents were then asked:

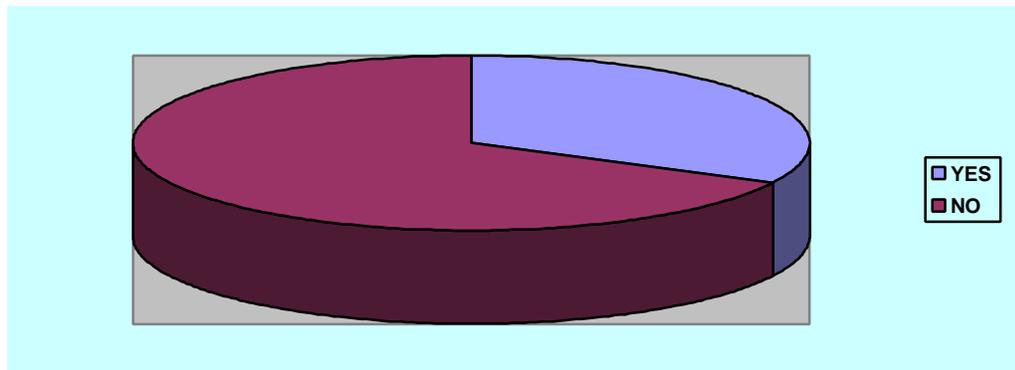
2. Have you attended previous Local History Fairs?
YES or NO

The results are summarised below:

Table A3.

Category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
YES	24	32.43
NO	50	67.57
TOTAL	74	100.00

Graph A2.



3. Awareness of organising/funding role of the service

Respondents were asked:

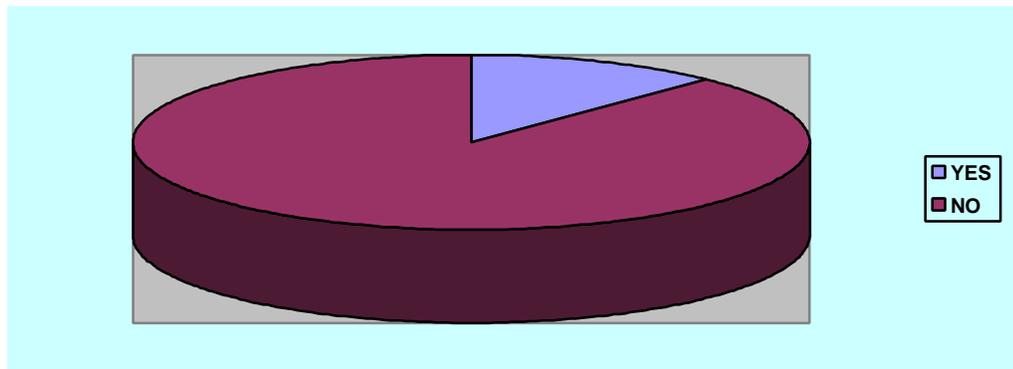
3a) Do you know who organises and funds the Local History Fair?
YES or NO

Results are summarised below:

Table A4.

Category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
YES	9	12.16
NO	65	87.84
TOTAL	74	100.00

Graph A3.



'YES' respondents were then asked:

3b) If YES, please state who:

Findings:

- Of the 9 respondents who answered YES to question 3b) all referred to either the council, the library, Local Studies, Archives or the Local Studies & Archives librarian.

4. Publicity & promotion

Respondents were asked:

4. Do you think that the publicity and promotion for the Local History Fair has been:

excellent / good / adequate / poor / very poor

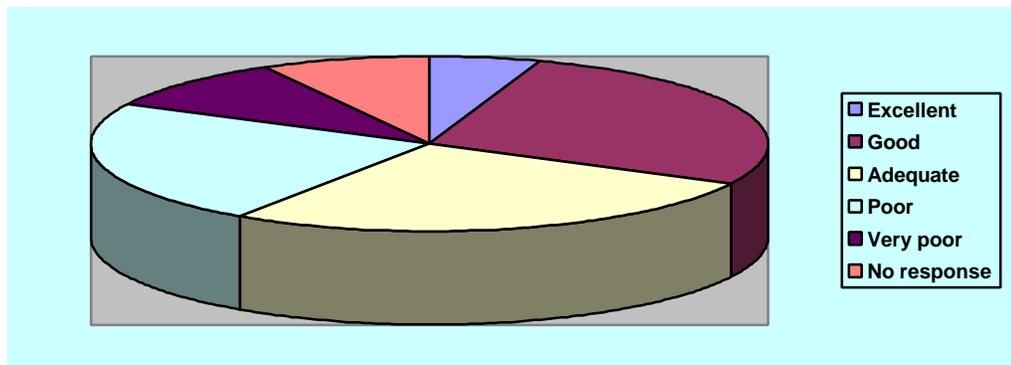
Respondents were also invited to make additional comments.

Results are summarised below:

Table A5.

Category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>	No. of comments
Excellent	4	5.40	-
Good	20	27.03	3
Adequate	20	27.03	6
Poor	17	22.97	8
Very poor	7	9.46	4
No response	6	8.11	5
TOTAL	74	100.00	26

Graph A4.



Summary of additional comments

Several issues emerged in the comments, which I have tried to sort into themes and frequency:

- The respondent's own circumstances/ habits limiting exposure to publicity [6]
- Did not see any publicity in newspapers [4]
- Saw/heard no publicity until passing / visiting town hall on the day [2]
- Needs more publicity [3]
- Insufficient details given in publicity [1]
- Claim that Fair was not publicised on local BBC radio [1]
- Did not hear any publicity on BBC Radio Sheffield [1]
- Experienced difficulty in checking details [2]
- 'Half heard' publicity on radio [1]
- Better publicity would cost more [1]
- Timing of publicity could be better (earlier) [1]
- Attendance perceived as low [1]
- Disappointed by low number of school-age visitors [1]
- On-site signage made it easy to find [1]
- Saw/heard no publicity outside Local Studies & Archives [1]

5. New knowledge of the service

Respondents were asked:

5a) Have you gained any new knowledge about the materials and services of [redacted] Archives & Local Studies Library, from your visit to the Local History Fair?

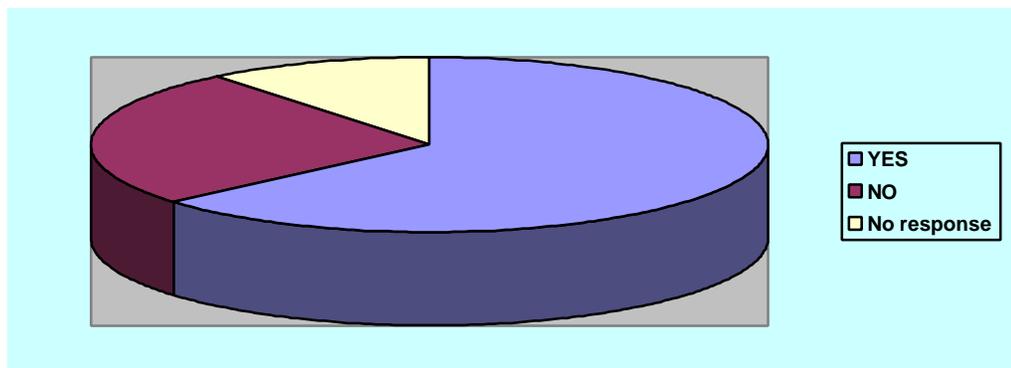
YES or NO

Results are summarised below:

Table A6.

Category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
YES	47	63.51
NO	19	25.68
No response	8	10.81
TOTAL	74	100.00

Graph A5.



'YES' respondents were then asked:

5b) If YES, please describe what you have learned

Findings:

- Of the 47 respondents who answered YES to question 5a), 41 responded to question 6b).
- Of the 19 respondents who answered NO to question 5b), 1 also responded to question 6b) to explain that he 'already visited' the Archives & Local Studies Library.

Summary of responses to 5b

Of the 47 respondents who answered YES to question 5a, 41 responded to question 5b). Analysis of these comments demonstrated quite clearly that interpretation of the question's exact meaning was an issue. The following approximate categories of interpretation are suggested by the comments:

- Interpretation of the question as it was intended to be understood, focusing on the materials and services of Local Studies & Archives. 11 of the 41 comments fell into this category.
e.g. "How to access archives"
"Obtained census details that can be used on home PC"
"Work of archive dept. & repair & refurbishment of old documents'
- Broad interpretation, taking in the entire Fair, explicitly including Local Studies and Archives. 2 of the 41 comments fell into this category.
e.g. "Safe storage of materials, many interesting societies"
"The availability of census information, the presence of so many local history groups"
- Apparent misinterpretation, focusing on non-LS&A exhibitors/information, with no mention of LS&A. 10 of the 41 comments fell into this category.
e.g. "Learned about the Victorian Society"
"Buildings at risk"
"How to get more info about Vulcan"
- Ambiguous and general comments whereby the interpretative scope is unclear. 18 of the 41 comments fall into this category.
e.g. "Information on researching family trees".
"Contacts in two areas where further information can be obtained"
"Leaflets, organisations, given help via purchases"

I ought to emphasise that these categories are approximate and unscientific, and the interrelation and overlap between them is untested. The fourth category, of the ambiguous or general statement, is something of a catch-all; some of the statements placed in this category may actually be eligible for any of the other three categories, but it is impossible to judge. Many comments are placed in this category because respondents articulated their 'new-found' knowledge in terms of their personal interests, rather than indicating its provenance or referring to actual services or materials. To illustrate, "Information on researching family trees" may well have originated from the LS&A stall where such materials and advice were available, but it is impossible to say with any certainty.

6. New knowledge of the service

Respondents were asked:

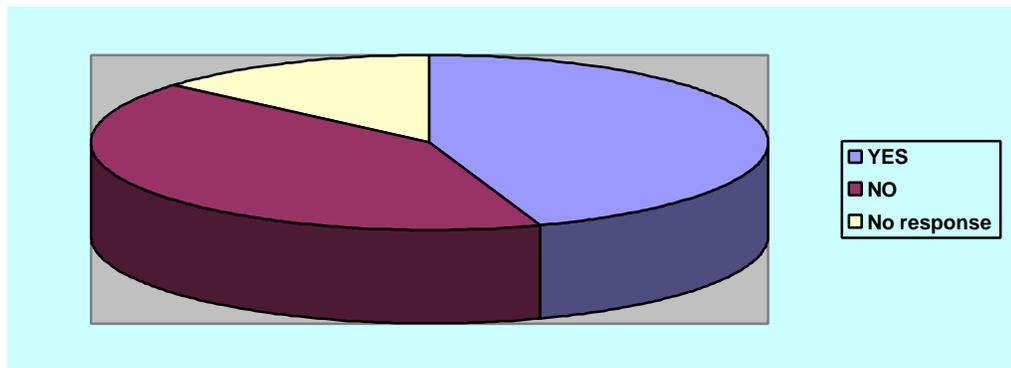
6a) Do you intend to use [redacted] Archives & Local Studies Library, as a direct result of your visit to the [redacted] Local History Fair?
 YES or NO

Results are summarised below:

Table A7.

Category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
YES	33	44.60
NO	31	41.89
No response	10	13.52
TOTAL	74	100.00

Graph A6.



YES respondents were then asked:

6b) If YES, please describe how:

Findings:

- Of the 33 respondents who answered YES to question 6a), 28 also responded to 6b).

Summary of responses to 6b)

Interestingly, there is less evidence of interpretative latitude in the responses to question 6b) than there was in question 5b). I do not know what caused this 'refocusing' in the minds of respondents when interpreting question 6. When designing the questionnaire I expected that the findings of these questions 5 and 6 would exhibit some correlation. Using the four interpretative categories described in question 5b), the data provided in 6b) by those responding YES to 6a), can be distributed thus:

- 9 of the 28 comments fall into the first category.
e.g. "To work through census, birth registers for information on family"
"To use m/film for reference"
"Using census returns and other records"
- 0 of the 28 comments fall into the second category

- 1 of the 28 comments falls into the third category.
e.g. "Visit the Baptist Church, Eccleshall Road for Information"
- 18 of the 28 comments fall into the fourth category
e.g. "Family Tree"
"Reference/increasing knowledge and awareness of local history
in this area"
"Family information"

Of the 31 respondents who answered No to question 6a), 8 chose to add further comments:

- 5 explained that they already use or had used Archives & Local Studies.
- 2 respondents were visitors to the city
- 1 respondent added "maybe"

Of the 10 respondents who gave no response to question 6a), 5 chose to add further comments:

- 5 explained that they already used Archives and Local Studies.
- 1 said that they were "unsure"

As with question 5b), many comments are placed in the ambiguous fourth category because respondents tended to describe their intention to use the service in terms of subject interests and activities (e.g. family history, reference and research) rather than explicitly identifying services and materials. Of the 18 ambiguous comments, I would tentatively suggest that 15 are referring (albeit indirectly) to an intended use of the service.

7. General public library use

Respondents were asked:

7. On average how often do you visit a public library?

At least once a week

At least once a fortnight

At least once a month

At least once every 3 months

Less than once every 3 months

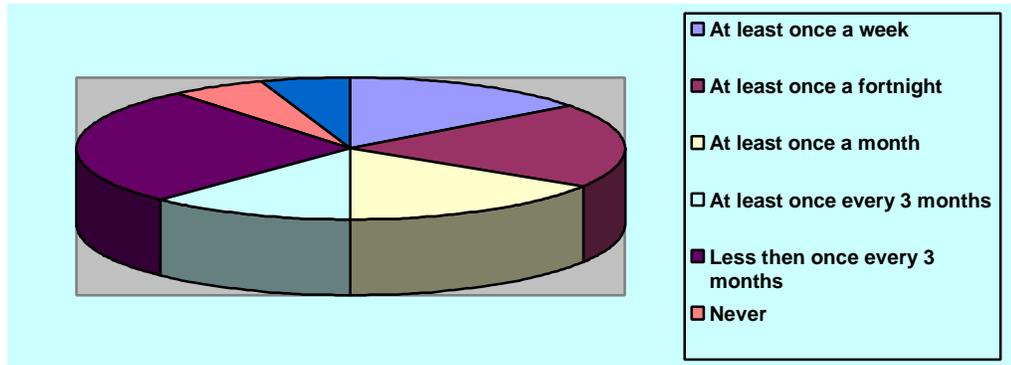
Never

Results are summarised below:

Table A8.

Category	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
At least once a week	11	14.86
At least once a fortnight	14	18.92
At least once a month	12	16.22
At least once every 3 months	9	12.16
Less than once every 3 months	20	27.02
Never	4	5.41
No response	4	5.41
TOTAL	74	100.00

Graph A7.



Additional findings

Respondents were asked:

8. Are you?

Male / Female

Results are summarised below:

Table A9.

Category	Number of respondents	% of <i>n</i>
Female	38	48.65
Male	36	51.35
TOTAL	74	100.00

Respondents were asked:

9. What age group describes you?

16 or under / 17-18 / 19-25 / 26-35 / 36-45

46-55 / 56-65 / 66-75 / 76+

Results are summarised below:

Table A10.

Category	Number of respondents	% of <i>n</i>
16 or under	1	1.35
17-18	1	1.35
19-25	2	2.70
26-35	7	9.46
36-45	14	18.92
46-55	21	28.38
56-65	14	18.92
66-75	13	17.57
76+	-	-
No response	1	1.35
TOTAL	74	100.00

Respondents were asked:

10. Which of the following best describes your occupation?
- Full-time paid employment
 - Part-time paid employment
 - Retired
 - Higher education
 - Looking after the home
 - Seeking work
 - Self-employed
 - Voluntary work
 - School/6th form college
 - Other

Results are summarised below:

Table A11.

Categories	Number of responses	% of <i>n</i>
FT paid employment	29	39.19
Retired	22	29.73
PT paid employment	7	9.46
Higher education	4	5.41
Looking after the home	3	4.05
Seeking work	3	4.05
Self-employed	3	4.05
Voluntary work	3	4.05
School/6 th form college	2	2.7
Other	1	1.35
No response	1	1.35
TOTAL	78*	105.39*

*2 respondents ticked 2 categories each, 1 respondents ticked 3 categories

Correlation

Because the evidence (question 3) suggests low levels of awareness about the library's role as organiser and funder of the fair, I was interested to discover whether or not there was any relationship between levels of awareness and the means of finding out about the fair (question 1).

- Of the 16 respondents who found out about the fair 'in a local newspaper':
 - 3 (18.75%) answered 'YES' to question 3
 - 13 (81.25%) answered 'NO'.

- Of the 13 respondents who found out about the fair 'on a local radio station':
 - 1 (7.69%) answered 'YES' to question 3

- 12 (92.31%) answered 'NO'.

This result possibly bears some relationship to the reception conditions associated with the radio medium (Usherwood, 1981b) i.e. difficulty of recalling details.

- Of the 12 respondents who found out about the fair 'at the library':
 - 1 (8.33%) answered 'YES' to question 3
 - 11 (91.67%) answered 'NO'.

This result greatly surprised me; I had expected a high proportion of 'YES' responses in this category, but it is in fact significantly lower than the percentage of the total sample. It appears that users of the library did not make the 'connection' between the library and the event.

- Of the 12 respondents who heard about the fair 'through a local history group':
 - 3 (25.00%) answered 'YES' to question 3
 - 9 (75.00%) answered 'NO'.

This category exhibits the highest percentage of 'YES' responses - more than double that of the total sample. However, it is important to note that we are dealing in very small numbers.

- Of the 6 respondents who heard about the fair by 'word-of-mouth':
 - All 6 (100%) answered 'NO' to question 3.

The lowest percentage of 'YES' responses - perhaps not surprising as this publicity medium is not within the library's control.

- Of the 18 respondents who heard about the fair by 'other' means:
 - 1 (5.56%) answered 'YES' to question 3
 - 17 (94.44%) answered 'NO'.

- The 1 respondent who gave no response to question 1 answered 'NO' to question 3.

Correlation

I was interested to discover whether or not there was any relationship between the awareness of the library's funding and organising role (question 3) and previous attendance of the fair (question 2).

Of the 24 respondents who said they had attended a previous [REDACTED] Local History Fair:

- 7 (29.17%) were aware of the library's organising/funding role.
- 17 (70.83%) were not aware of the library's funding organising role.

Of the 50 respondents who had not attended a previous [REDACTED] Local History Fair:

- 2 (4.00%) were aware of the library's organising/funding role.
- 48 (96.00%) were not aware of the library's funding/organising role.

Correlation

Because of the mixed responses to the publicity and promotion of the fair (question 4), I was interested to find out whether there was any relationship between this data and the means of finding out about the fair (question 1).

- Of the 16 respondents who found out about the fair 'in a local newspaper':
 - 0 thought that the publicity and promotion of the fair was 'excellent'
 - 5 (41.67%) thought it 'good'
 - 2 (16.67%) thought it 'adequate'
 - 3 (25.00%) thought it 'poor'
 - 1 (8.33%) thought it 'very poor'
 - 1 (8.33%) gave no response to question 4.
- Of the 13 respondents who found out about the fair 'on a local radio station':
 - 2 (15.38%) thought the publicity and promotion was 'excellent'
 - 2 (15.38%) thought it 'good'

- 3 (23.08%) thought it 'adequate'
- 2 (15.38%) thought it 'poor'
- 3 (23.08%) thought it 'very poor'
- 1 (7.69%) gave no response to question 4.

This is the highest percentage of 'very poor' responses. This is very interesting: again, perhaps it is due to fact that the radio is a 'live' communication channel which cannot be re-read or replayed, meaning that much information is only 'half heard' and details are lost.

- Of the 12 respondents who found out about the fair 'at the library':
 - 0 thought that the publicity and promotion was 'excellent'
 - 5 (41.67%) thought it 'good'
 - 2 (16.67%) thought it adequate
 - 3 (25.00%) thought it 'poor'
 - 1 (8.33%) thought it 'very poor'
 - 1 (8.33%) gave no response to question 4.

The highest percentage of 'good' responses.

- Of the 12 respondents who heard about the fair 'through a local history group':
 - 0 thought that the publicity and promotion was 'excellent'
 - 4 (33.33%) thought it 'good'
 - 6 (50.00%) thought it 'adequate'
 - 2 (16.67%) thought it 'poor'
 - 0 thought it 'very poor'

This is the highest percentage of 'adequate' responses, almost double that of the total sample.

- Of the 6 respondents who heard about the fair by 'word-of-mouth':
 - 1 each (16.67%) fell into each category ranging from 'excellent' to 'very poor'

It initially seems baffling that the highest percentage of 'excellent' responses is in the 'word-of-mouth' category, but we are dealing with very small numbers of respondents, so that 1 respondent constitutes 16.67%! Therefore statistical analysis is misleading.

- Of the 18 respondents who heard about the fair by 'other' means:
 - 0 thought that publicity and promotion was 'excellent'
 - 3 (16.67%) thought it 'good'
 - 6 (33.33%) thought it 'adequate'
 - 6 (33.33%) thought it 'poor'
 - 2 (11.11%) thought it 'very poor'
 - 1 (5.56%) gave no response to question 4.

The highest percentage of 'poor' responses. This is perhaps not surprising, as 4 of the 6 respondents in this category who thought publicity and promotion was 'poor' were 'passing trade'.

Correlation

I was interested to find out if the new knowledge/awareness indicated in question 5 translated into an intention to make use of LS&A's services and materials (question 6).

- Of the 47 respondents who answered 'YES' to question 5:
 - 24 (51.06%) answered 'YES' to question 6
 - 19 (40.43%) answered 'NO' to question 6
 - 4 (8.51%) gave no response to question 6 (but all added explanatory comments: 3 indicated that they already used the service, while one was unsure whether they would use the service).

- Of the 19 respondents who answered 'NO' to question 5:
 - 5 (26.32%) answered 'YES' to question 6
 - 12 (63.16%) answered 'NO' to question 6
 - 2 (10.53%) gave no response to question 6 (both added comments to explain that they already use the service).
- Of the 8 respondents who gave no response to question 5:
 - 4 (50.00%) answered 'YES' to question 6
 - 4 (50.00%) answered 'NO' to question 6

Misinterpretation of the questions notwithstanding, this correlation reveals some seemingly perverse relations between the two sets of data. I had expected that those who responded to both questions would fall into two correlative categories, answering uniformly 'YES' or 'NO' to both questions. However, correlation reveals that 5 respondents (6.76% of *n*) answered 'YES' to question 5 and 'NO' to question 6: while they had learnt nothing new about the service at the fair, they intended to use the service as a direct result of the fair.

What could this mean? Unfortunately none of these respondents consented to be contacted so I was unable to discuss their responses with them. I can only tentatively suggest that their visit to the fair may have served as a reminder of the service provisions, or may have helped to clarify exactly what services and materials are available. It is possible that these respondents are existing users of the service who anticipate future use, but do not intend to use the service as a direct result of their visit to the fair. As none indicate any previous use of the service, there is little evidence to support this, so it seems unlikely.

19 (40.43% of *n*) respondents answered 'YES' to question 5 and 'NO' to question 6: while they had gained new knowledge of the service, they had no intention to use service as a result. Can this relationship be explained? 2 of the respondents explained that they were overseas visitors to Sheffield, 1 had used the service in the past, 1 conditioned his 'NO' with a 'maybe', while 2 indicated they already used the service. But what of the other 13 respondents? There are several

possibilities. It may be that, having gained an awareness of service, the respondents simply felt that it was not of further interest or relevance to them. Alternatively, their interest may have been more engaged by the non-library exhibitors and they intended to pursue their interests in those other directions. I think it is also possible that the fair is seen as an enjoyable event 'in its own right', which does not necessarily result in any further action on the part of the visitor.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, 3 of these respondents found out about the fair because they were passing by the venue. We might expect a lower level of sustained interest/resulting action from the category of respondents who had not actively 'sought out' the event, but happened upon it serendipitously. It is encouraging then, that of the 9 respondents who were 'passing trade', 4 indicated that they intended to use the service as a result of their visit to the fair.

Summary

From my findings I cannot assess with any confidence or accuracy to what degree the fair reached new potential users for the Archives & Local Studies Library, and to what degree it was effectively 'preaching to the converted'. This is because the questionnaire did not explicitly ask respondents if they had used the service previous to the event, though 10 respondents chose to volunteer this information.

When designing the questionnaire it did occur to me to include a response category in questions 5 and 6 that would allow respondents to indicate if they were already users of the service. I decided against this, because I wanted to measure *new* awareness and behaviour, which resulted directly from the fair, and the inclusion of such a response category may have obscured this. I felt it was necessary to encourage respondents to think clearly about change, rather than existing patterns of awareness and use. However, I would tentatively suggest that the event is managing to reach a 'new' audience to some extent: less than one third (32.43%) of respondents indicated that they had attended a previous fair suggesting that there is a fresh turnover of visitors (although it may equally be argued that this implies that the majority of visitors from previous fairs did not feel compelled to

repeat the experience). Moreover, almost one third (32.43%) of respondents identified themselves as infrequent or non-library users.

This issue was further complicated by the fact that self-promotion for the Archives and Local Studies was only one of several objectives for the event. The fair was in fact promoting a large number of local organisations (or at least providing them with a free opportunity to promote themselves). This made it difficult for me to isolate the promotional value of the event to the Archives & Local Studies Library.

This is demonstrated in the data collected about the visitors' new knowledge and intention to use the services. While 67.57% of respondents indicated that they had learned something new about the Archives & Local Studies Library, their additional comments revealed that some had misinterpreted the focus of the question: while they had indeed learned something new at the fair, it was not necessarily about the Archives & Local Studies Library. Though this misinterpretation posed difficulties for my research, it does indirectly suggest that the fair fulfilled its objective of providing a promotional platform for the other exhibitors.

There is less evidence of misinterpretation in data collected about the intention to use Archives & Local Studies, but it is important to remember that the data gives nothing more than an indication of respondents' intentions: to assess whether or not that intention materialises into an increased use of the service is not within the scope of this project. What I think these findings do demonstrate, is the way in which qualitative data can be used to make sense of otherwise inscrutable quantitative data. Though difficult to analyse and not well suited to self-administered questionnaires, without qualitative data I would have been completely unaware that respondents were returning modified and ambiguous responses.

In respect of the event's publicity (the secondary 'tier' of promotion), the findings are not unequivocally positive. As previously mentioned, Leerburger (1981) recommends that libraries take advantage of 'local organs of dissemination'. Accordingly, the publicity channels which attracted most respondents to the fair was the local newspapers (21.62%), the local BBC radio station (17.57%) and the library itself. However, these channels were not without their critics: 2 respondents who

heard about the fair via the radio added that they had only half-heard the information and had needed to check the details by other means. This corresponds to Usherwood's (1981a) comment about the reception conditions peculiar to the radio (i.e. poor recall). 5 of the 13 respondents who heard via the radio rated the publicity for the fair as either poor or very poor, but was offset by 2 who thought that it was excellent!

It is interesting that although publicity for the fair was distributed to all library service points, no respondents had heard about the fair at any service point other than the central library. The way in which publicity is distributed and displayed in other service points may be an issue which the organisers of the fair wish to address. The central library succeeded in attracting as many visitors to the fair as all of the local history groups together. This may be due to the small membership and infrequent meetings of some of these groups. The clear signage and guiding on the day proved effective, drawing in 12.16% of respondents. The overall response to the publicity was mixed: more than half (59.73%) of respondents rated it as excellent to adequate, while almost one third (32.43%) thought it poor to very poor. Despite this, it is important to realise that all respondents (including those who were critical), were sufficiently galvanised into action and managed to acquire enough information to turn up in the right place at the right time!

Awareness of the funding/organising role of the service was very low (even among respondents who heard about the fair through the library service). At a practical level, this inhibits the communication process i.e. interested people are not sure who to contact for information. More significantly, increased awareness of this role would have allowed the success of the fair to be more closely associated with the service, and thus identified as a service achievement and asset. There are no hard and fast measures, but the fair seemed an inexpensive (less than seventy pence per visitor), relatively prestigious promotional event that attracted a healthy number of visitors, none of whom in the survey expressed any negative comments about their experience. As such I think that the Archives & Local Studies Library would gain an increased promotional value by being conspicuously associated with its organisation.

4.8.4. Embedded case study B

What follows is a full record of the observational data adapted from notes made during the observational exercise. I felt that it was important to include the whole account in the final report, so that readers can judge for themselves whether I provided a competent set of eyes, ears (Patton 1990, p. 26) and perceptual senses on their behalf. It is followed by a summary of the main issues arising from the observation, the findings from the subsequent interview with the Literature Development Officer, and a conclusion.

Background

When interviewing Library Service B's marketing/promotions officer, I asked if she should could suggest an event or activity suitable for inclusion in my report as an embedded case-study. She suggested an evening 'wine and literature event' which was scheduled to take place at a named library. She advised me to contact the area librarian for further details.

When I spoke to the librarian I discovered that the event was not scheduled to take place until late summer, beyond the practical time-scale of my project. The librarian asked me about the topic area of my project and suggested that instead I might attend an event which was taking place the following Saturday. The county's Literature Development Officer (LDO) and the regional Reader-in-Residence (RiR) would both be visiting the library and talking to library users about their reading habits. There was also a possibility that as the day progressed, they might move outside of the library and into the nearby shopping area.

I asked whether the event had been publicised and promoted. The librarian said that a press release had been given to a local newspaper and radio station, but added that the event was really a promotion in itself. We discussed briefly what approach I could take in evaluating the event and agreed that observation would be the most appropriate. I asked whether the library service would itself be evaluating the activity. He said that it would be possible to look at issues statistics i.e. whether they increased, but pointed out that there would be many other 'variables' involved

e.g. summer holidays. The librarian agreed to notify the LDO, RiR and the duty librarian of my involvement. I asked about the timing of the event and was told that it was an all-day event and that the library opened at 10am on Saturdays.

Observational data

I arrived at the library shortly after 10am and introduced myself to the duty librarian. The LDO and RiR had not yet arrived. The librarian gave me a brief tour of the library. She was uncertain of the details of the day's event but had expected the RiR and LDO to be at the library all day (it closed at 4pm on Saturdays). The librarian asked some of the library assistants if they knew any more, but they seemed to know very little about the event. The librarian gave me the local newspapers from the preceding week to see if I could find the press release mentioned by the area librarian. I scanned the papers but could not find anything referring to the event. I used the remaining time before the RiR and LDO arrived to explore the library.

It was a purpose built library building situated on a dual carriageway, a short walking distance away from a large supermarket and shopping area. There was relatively little pedestrian traffic on the main road, but it was very busy around the corner in the shopping area. The library building was two-storey, but the public area was limited to the first floor (with direct street access), with an administrative area on the ground floor. However, a sign indicated that there was also a Citizens' Advice Bureau facility housed on the ground floor (this was not open during the period of observation).

The public library area was open plan, with the exception of a number of enclosed study carrels which lined one inner wall (on the opposite side of the library to the children's area). The windows were floor to ceiling, creating a bright, light atmosphere. Signage in the county livery (green and white) was suspended from various points of the ceiling. The issues counter was situated between the entry/exit gates and faces an enclosed lift shaft leading to the ground floor (public access toilets were down there). On entering the library, the enquiry desk was separate from and to the right of the main counter

At the back of the library and in partial view of the counter (partially obscured by the lift shaft) the duty librarian had set up a table and two chairs for the RiR and LDO, accompanied by a free-standing display board. This area was one of the few open floor spaces of the library (a gap in the rows of fixed shelving) and was situated in front of tables displaying books (former stock) for sale, and in between the sequences of fiction and non-fiction.

On the table were reference copies of *The Bloomsbury Guide to Reading*, *Who writes like who* and the library's own *Book Chat Café* file. This was an A4 folder of newspaper and magazine cuttings, bestseller charts, new publications, etc. Attached to the display board were balloons and simple coloured posters and flyers which announced "Saturday June 5th is a very SPECIAL DAY at [REDACTED] Library - There will be 2 book lovers on hand to talk about books and reading to anyone who wants a chat. Let [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] inspire your reading!". A simple clipart graphic of a row of books was reproduced above the text, and the council crest and library service name appeared underneath (I have blanked out all proper names).

Other displays were dotted around the library, including local studies, open learning and a colourful arrangement of tourist leaflets entitled 'Spring into Life', decorated with craft flowers on a bright background. A *BBC Web Wise* terminal was positioned inconspicuously at the side of the main stairwell. Nearby was a double-sided shelving unit housing 'recent additions to stock'. Between the main counter and the lift shaft was an area called the 'Book Chat Café', with plastic chairs, a dump-bin of paperback fiction customised with various takeaway cartons and entitled 'Tasty Takeaways', and a display stand featuring cuttings about libraries and reading.

The LDO and RiR arrived at about 11am, having been delayed in traffic. The LDO had visited the library before, while the RiR had not. The duty librarian introduced us, and we then went to the staff room and had a brief discussion about what they had planned for the day. The LDO explained that his post was part-time, with a remit that was larger than but heavily involved in libraries. He also suggested that the day would be informal and "amorphous".

The RiR explained that her post consisted of 10 hours per week and rotated on a 3-month basis between four administrative areas (the area served by Library Authority B being the last rotation). She described her work as being largely occupied with setting up (adult) reader groups or looking at existing groups. On her previous rotation, she had set up two groups which had a monthly 'themed' meeting for which she prepared booklists. The RiR had a background in public library work; the LDO did not.

As the event commenced, it proved difficult for me to divide my observation into regular time periods. This was because: the LDO and RiR worked separately so that my attention was divided between them, the lengths of each interaction differed, there were gaps of varying lengths in between interactions and the event itself was only very loosely structured.

Both the LDO and RiR addressed me in the gaps between interactions with library users, but the RiR sometimes acknowledged my presence during these interactions, briefly referring to the fact that I was studying, or more specifically studying to be a librarian, etc. In contrast, the LDO did not acknowledge my presence during any of his interactions with library users. Therefore my status as an observer, in terms of participation/non-participation and covert/overt status varied in accordance with the preferred interpersonal approaches of the LDO and RiR, and was not a factor that I could regulate or control.

While I was discussing the event with the LDO, the RiR went upstairs into the library to have a look around the library. We followed her up five minutes later, by which time she had already approached and spoken to one library user in the children's section (a 12 year old girl) who had taken a book (Rosa Guy's *The Disappointment*) on her recommendation. I joined her as she initiated an interaction with another user in the children's section.

The RiR began by asking the user 'What are you looking at?' and 'Anything you think I can help with?'. The girl explained that she was looking for books in the *Animal Ark* series. The RiR asked "What do you like reading?" to which the user replied "animals". The RiR then took her around the shelves and recommended a

mixture of books and authors. The user reiterated that she liked books with 'animal' themes. The RiR wrote down a list of authors and titles and gave it to the user. She also recommended that the user look at the returns trolley. The RiR asked the age of the user (ten). The RiR suggested that when she was tired of "animal ones", she might try books by Malorie Blackman, who writes about "things that happen to young people". The RiR concluded their interaction by advising the user that she can contact her by leaving a note at the desk "if there's anything she wants" and wishing her "happy reading!". Throughout the interaction, the physical and verbal language of the user was slightly reticent, but not hostile. The interaction lasted roughly fifteen minutes.

In between interactions, the RiR explained to me that she is also a professional storyteller. She explains that the three-month rotations as RiR are not long enough and that they are thinking of extending each period. After each interaction the RiR made notes of the user's age, what (if any) items they had taken on her recommendation), suggestions to be followed up, together with her own comments about the stock of library.

The RiR moved to the Large Print section and approached a female user who appeared to be a senior citizen. The RiR introduced herself by name and occupation. She explained that she and the LDO were there 'to talk about reading'. The user immediately volunteered information about her own reading habits, mysteries and murders. This interaction was far more conversational than the previous one. They discussed various authors and films, the RiR explaining books and authors in terms of television adaptations. Instead of taking the user around the shelves, the RiR selected books and brought them to the user. Several books were suggested that the user was "not really interested in". The RiR browsed the shelves with the user, only talking when drawing attention to a particular book (large print was shelved in a single alpha-order, not sub-divided into genres). The user took a book by P.D. James recommended by the RiR. The interaction lasted roughly ten minutes.

Between interactions, the RiR explained she takes reading 'wherever', including libraries, schools, and shopping centres. She explained that she was also a writer and storyteller. She believed that this type of activity "works well", to "go up to people and ask them questions" and also finds it "interesting to see what's not on the shelves". She intended to make recommendations to the librarian about possible 'promotions' and 'stock development' and to produce a report.

The next user approached by the RiR was a male senior citizen browsing the adult fiction stock. The RiR introduced herself (as she did during the previous interaction) and asked the user "What do you like to read?". He responded "adventure". She asked him if there are any authors that he "goes back to time and time again", to which he replied "Yes, Dennis Wheatley". They discussed the work of this and other authors. The RiR suggested another author (Nicholas Kent). The user explained that he has a copy of one of his books, but wants to read them in sequence. He added that he also gets books from the *Reader's Digest*, and that he reads purely fiction. The RiR made a list of her recommendations and gave it to the user. The user suddenly remembered a book of which he knew the title but not the

author. The RiR offered to try and find out the author, taking the user's name and telephone number. She then took the user around the fiction stock, drawing his attention to various authors of possible interest.

At this point the user's wife joined them. The RiR again introduced herself and asked "What do you like to read?". The user replied "Catherine Cookson". The RiR then asked "How many books do you read?". The user explained that she "always had a book on the go" and that she used to read 2-3 books a week, adding that she also used another branch library. This user was very forthcoming and volunteered a great deal of information about her reading and library habits with little prompting from the RiR. She explained that they had both been library users since school and was taken by her mother to the Red Circle Library, a private lending library in the city centre, where loans had cost "a penny a book".

She explained they had "always been big readers" but that their son was not, only reading books only on holiday and preferring history ("he'd rather read a true book") and adventure books. The user described her own parents as having "read all the time". The RiR recommended a book for the users' son, *Restoration* by Rose Tremain. The RiR browsed the shelves with the users, chatting about the other branch library that they used, which they felt had inconvenient opening hours. The whole interaction lasted roughly 15 minutes.

I turned my attention the LDO. He approached a female user who was browsing the biography shelves. He introduced himself in much the same way as the RiR (name, post) and explained that he was asking people about their reading. The user said that she read mostly biography and English literature. This user was the first to ask a direct question: she asked the LDO what he was actually "trying to find out" She explained that she was looking for a book similar to one she had read and that she enjoyed biographies because she liked finding out about "relationships". She added that she had not actually read that much lately.

The LDO talked briefly about his own reading habits, until the husband of the user joined them. The user explained to her husband that the LDO was asking people about what they liked to read. The husband said they were both "not reading as much as they used to", but were trying to "get back into it". The conversation turned to books about films and film stars and the users suggested that the library needed a bigger film section. The LDO told them that they could ask at the counter if they want a particular book. The direction of the conversation changed again when the husband explained that he had borrowed a poetry book the previous year. Finding it "quicker to read", he intended to try more. The users returned to browsing the biography section. The interaction lasted about ten minutes.

In between interactions, the LDO told me that he had helped one user to find a book on stencilling and had recommended a book of poetry (Carole Ann Duffy) to another. He explained that poetry was his special interest, and that he wrote poetry himself.

The next interaction initiated by the LDO took place with a male user in the non-fiction section. The LDO introduced himself and asked the user what he liked reading. The user responded that he read mostly art and gardening books, not much fiction. This user was particularly articulate about his reading interests: he explained that he chose art books because of the "pleasure of other people's work", while he had a more "general, natural interest" in gardening because he was a landscape gardener. He described himself as a "heavy user" of the library, visiting up to three times a week.

The user explained that he had been looking at architecture books when approached by the LDO. The discussion was primarily directed by the user, who questioned the LDO about what he was "actually doing" in the library and whether it was part of a "general survey"? The LDO responded that he was trying to find out "why people use the library?". The user said that his only complaint was about some disputed overdue charges, which he then went on to explain in some detail. This interaction lasted roughly fifteen minutes, after which the RiR and LDO decided to break for lunch.

After a fifty-minute lunch break, the LDO decided to try sitting at the table, to see whether any users would approach him and initiate a conversation. After five minutes no-one had approached him, so the LDO left the table and continued to walk about as before. He approached a female user who was looking through the literary criticism section. The user explained that she was studying as a mature student for a degree at the local university and was looking for some books for her course, the subject of which she described briefly. The LDO guided the user to what he thought would be the appropriate classmark, but could not find anything relevant. The RiR said that she lived closer to another branch library but did not use it because "There's nothing in there, very little". Unable to help, the LDO concluded the interaction, which lasted roughly ten minutes.

The LDO next approached a teenage female user in the craft section. He introduced himself and explained that he was "asking people about the kind of books they're taking out". She explained that she was decorating her bedroom and was looking for books to give her ideas. The LDO asked her whether she used the

library a lot. She replied "Yes, quite a lot". The LDO appeared to attempt to shape his questions to encourage the user to talk more freely. He asked her if she watched any of the makeover television programmes (she did) and then turned the conversation towards careers, asking her if she wanted to make a career out of this interest. She replied that she hoped to go into 'science', and added that she used the library (and her school library) for homework. The LDO commented on the low use of libraries by teenagers. The user reiterated that she used the library primarily for school information. Despite smiling, the 'nervous' body language of the user seemed to suggest that she was quite keen to end the interaction, which the LDO soon did. The interaction lasted about five minutes.

I turned my attention to the RiR, who was initiating a conversation with a pair of teenage girls who were browsing the young people's stock together. The RiR introduced herself and asked them what they liked reading. One replied "romance" and the other agreed. The RiR asked them how old they were (sixteen). They voluntarily described themselves as "kind of on the border" in terms of their reading and said that it was "difficult" to find suitable books. One said that she didn't really know many authors by name. The RiR browsed the shelves with them, drawing their attention to various titles and authors. She also recommended a publisher (*Livewire*) as producing books aimed specifically at young women.

Throughout this interaction, the RiR made verbal and gestural references to my presence, which was not openly questioned by either of the users. The RiR asked them if there was enough stock for them. They replied that they had "read most of them". She asked them about their magazine reading habits (they read several 'teen' titles, including *Sugar* and *Bliss*) and why they happened to be in the library on that day, to which they replied "we've got no money!". The RiR asked if they would be interested in an event at the library to talk about teenage reading e.g. "what you like, what you'd like to see more of", possible involving an author of teenage fiction. Both users replied yes. The RiR concluded the interaction with a general chat about exams and studying. It lasted about eight minutes.

The following interaction was the only one where a user initiated the conversation rather than the RiR/LDO. A young male user who appeared to have overheard the RiR's previous conversation approached her with a specific enquiry. He explained that he was looking for some books for his GCSE English homework: either *1984* or *Wild Swans*. The RiR could not recall the name of the author of the latter. At this point I participated and supplied the name of the author (Jung Chang) and the fact that the book was non-fiction rather than fiction. Neither book could be found on the shelves so the RiR directed the user to the main counter to ask for help from the library assistants.

The user returned roughly ten minutes later (the library assistant had found *1984* in reserve stock) and asked the RiR "what is popular in children's reading?". The RiR responded by drawing his attention to the *Book Chat Café* display stand that included a *National Year of Reading* Top Ten Children's books. She named some authors and titles, which the user wrote down. It was unclear to me whether this was exactly the type of information that the user wanted. The entire interaction lasted about eight minutes.

The following two interactions were very short, lasting only a couple of minutes each. Both took place in the children's section. The first was a twelve year old girl who, when asked what she liked to read, mentioned *Point Horror* and also Judy Blume (her friends had told her about the latter). The RiR found a Judy Blume book on the returns trolley, which the user took away. The second interaction was with a mother accompanied by her daughter and son. Very little information was exchanged, other than the fact that the boy was 'not reading yet'. The RiR browsed around the shelves with them.

The RiR's final interaction was with a father and two children, a boy and girl. She introduced herself to them and asked the children their names and ages (six and four). The boy seemed more engaged by the conversation than the (younger) girl. The RiR asked him what he liked reading, to which he replied 'Dick King-Smith'. He added that he liked horses, so the RiR encouraged him to search through the kinderboxes to find a picture book about horses. There were none, but he chose two books himself. The RiR then turned to the father, and asked him "Do you read?".

He replied that he read "just the paper, the *Telegraph*, once a week". Throughout this interaction the RiR acknowledged my presence but had not explained it to the users: I participated in browsing the kinderboxes. After this interaction, the RiR went to find the LDO in the non-fiction section, who was involved in another interaction. Once this had concluded they decided that they would end the activity (it was 45 minutes until closing time). The RiR thanked the library assistants as we left the building.

Afterwards

I contacted the area librarian who had helped to organise the event and asked if there had been any type of feedback from users about the event. There had been none that he was aware of, though he said that he had spoken to both the RiR and LDO, who felt that it had gone well. It seemed appropriate to try and follow up my observational analysis of the event with an interview. The limited availability of the RiR (who lives in London) meant that it was more expedient to meet with the LDO. The LDO agreed to participate in an interview about the event.

Issues arising from an interview with the Literature Development Officer

From my observation of the event, it was unclear to me whether any precise objectives for the event had been articulated, and exactly what those objectives might be. I asked the Literature Development Officer where the idea for the event had originated. He explained that it had arisen from a meeting attended by himself, the district librarians and line managers, to organise a schedule of activities for the newly arrived Reader-in-Residence:

"At that meeting they dished out a sort of timetable, a schedule of ideas that [redacted] could get involved in, and a reader's surgery came out of it ... which I think seemed to come out of the sort of 'Rachel Van Riel' side of reader development. I think it's an idea that had been tried before and I think [redacted] herself has done it in a number of venues."

He explained that he went along "to see what she was doing and see if I could support her in any way, and see the general idea behind her reader's surgeries, because I've not seen it in action myself before." Beyond this, the Literature Development Officer indicated that they had not articulated a clear set of objectives prior to the event, partly because it was a "bit of a rush job". I approached the purpose of the event from another direction, asking the Literature Development Officer what he thought had been achieved on the day.

"I don't think I achieved that much, because I was just there to ask people in a more general sort of way about what they were doing. [redacted] was there to promote reading, different sorts of reading and I think she did get people to read books that they might not have read before ... they might actually start thinking about how they read and why they read the books they read. You may find some of them actually took books they don't normally read ... again, it's an anecdotal thing really, in that you just talk to someone and they talk to you. How do you value that?"

If reader development was the primary objective of the exercise, then clearly the depth of engagement with individual reader's would be a pre-eminent indicator of success, albeit very difficult to measure. However, I was aware that the Reader-in-Residence had been making notes throughout the event and intended to produce a report, including stock recommendations and ideas for future events e.g. a teenage reading group. In this respect, I felt that quantity was an issue and questioned the validity of basing recommendations on brief and unstructured conversations with a tiny handful of the library's population of users. Moreover, it was the first time that the RiR had visited the library and she had little time to acquaint herself with the library staff, working practices and the context of the local community. I asked the Literature Development Officer if he thought it was appropriate to make recommendations on this basis:

"I think if you co-ordinate that with the idea that you are looking at the shelves yourself ... well, I think she has had a lot of experience working in libraries, she could say 'I think in this area you might want to think about..'. Whether that's taken up or not, I don't know."

He added that any recommendations made by the Reader-in-Residence would be passed to the librarian, who would have a clearer idea of "what goes and what doesn't go" in that particular library.

Despite her previous library experience, the Reader-in-Residence is salaried in her current capacity by the regional arts board, while the Literature Development Officer is jointly funded by the arts board and the county council. Both post-holders hold a remit for the promotion of (respectively) reading and literature that goes beyond their work with libraries, to involve schools, community development projects, local arts organisations, etc. Their responsibilities are not limited to the promotion of public library services, and I felt compelled to ask if these agendas are always wholly compatible with that of libraries. The Literature Development Officer felt that they were:

"If you view libraries as being democratic organisations, anybody can use them, and you think of the idea of arts, one of my remits is to promote literature in arts to as many people as possible, then libraries are a logical choice to work in, as a foundation phase."

He felt that tensions only arose when his time became totally subsumed by library work:

"you've got to be careful that you don't spend all your time trying to sort out reader's circles and small reading events in libraries. You just get sucked into the reader development side of it, which again is important, but at the same time you've got other things to think about."

In fact, his non-librarian status seemed to work as a mixed blessing. While he felt that he was sometimes left out of the communication 'loop' of the library service, he was also free to work outside of the organisational "hierarchy", and to "just get on and do things".

There had been no evidence on the day of the event that the press, radio and in-house publicity had directly generated any interest. None of the users approached had indicated any foreknowledge of the event. The Literature Development Officer agreed that the prior promotion of the event "didn't work very well really", and attributed this to a lack of time between the conception and the event itself, stating that "we had about a week and a half to get some publicity out, and it didn't really make much of an impact". Acknowledging that the publicity was inadequate, he did not see it a factor that inhibited the effectiveness of that particular event:

"I think the thing about readers' surgeries is that you can wing it on the day. You can just go in there and talk to them on the day, without them really knowing."

What he did believe limited the success and impact of the surgery, was the fact that it was planned and delivered as a stand-alone event:

"You could say that if you've affected one person, the day's been a success, if they go away and read another book they might not have read before. In that way, it is a very small but significant success. It's difficult to say how much effect it would have on the culture of the library ... you almost have to see it as ongoing, that happens regularly, maybe every month, so that people get used to it and see it as a resource, rather than just a one-off. I think it would work a lot better like that really."

At the time of interview, there were no plans to develop this idea and make the reader's surgery a fixture at the library, partly because it was yet to be officially confirmed that the Reader-in-Residence's contract would be extended for another year. He was aware of the logistical problems created by the schedule that moved her on from each service after only three months, describing it as having "a scattergun effect". He felt that reader and literature development required careful planning, adding that particular projects "might not take off straight away", the readers' surgery concept being a prime example of this.

Conclusion

This was not a very 'scientific' research exercise, mainly because of my inconsistent status as observer, which oscillated between overt and covert, and participation and non-participation. It was also difficult because I had to divide my attention between two people. This meant that I really only sampled and recorded half of the relevant data.

I do not think it is unfair to suggest that the publicity for the event did not work. Press and radio coverage, and the display set out in the library did not appear to stimulate interest or bring any people into the library. It is impossible to say with any certainty why this happened, but before the event the librarian pointed out that the event was a promotion in its own right, while the Literature Development Officer later suggested that a readers' surgery does not need to be pre-publicised. If the publicity was not a necessary factor, then it is unclear why it was produced. It demonstrates a two-tier use of promotion (as described by Leerburger (1989)) that was basically unproductive, in that the secondary tier failed to provide effective support for the primary event. Where I think publicity definitely did matter, was in terms of staff communication. The library assistants exhibited a low awareness of the details of the event, so were not in a position to contribute to it.

The failure to generate any interest through pre-publicity resulted in virtually all of the interaction's being initiated by the Reader-in-Residence and the Literature Development Officer. I think this sometimes created an impression amongst users that they were being asked to participate in some kind of research exercise: some of the users' comments suggested to me that they thought they were being helpful, rather than being helped! Despite this, a number of users did take books and list of recommendations from the Reader-in-Residence and Literature Development Officer and in this respect the event did have some impact upon the use of the library.

Because the objectives of the event were not particularly well defined, it is difficult and perhaps inappropriate to speculate about the overall 'success' of the event. Implicit in the reader development concept, is the idea of getting people to

use the public library to develop their reading, but it does not follow that looking for increases or changes in use/borrowing patterns is a valid means of evaluation. The librarian was aware of the difficulty of isolating the impact of such an event from other variables affecting library use. Moreover, the number of users involved in this exercise was very small and unlikely to make much of a 'dent' on issuing figures. More significantly, this type of indicator negates the qualitative value of the event, as mentioned by the Literature Development Officer.

Direct feedback from library users, rather than indirect and inferential evaluation through issue figures, might be a more suitable indicator for this type of event. However, it seems more appropriate to ask for feedback on an event which the participants have chosen to be involved in. If (as suggested by the Literature Development Officer) the reader's surgery became a regular event that library users could view a resource, then perhaps this would be possible.

One of the main factors inhibiting the impact of the event seemed to be the staffing circumstances. While I appreciate that the library service wished to make full use of the Reader-in-Residence's skills as soon as she arrived in the county, the three month rotation gives her very little opportunity to develop a rapport and local knowledge for individual libraries, and little time to develop the projects that she initiates, however well received they are. As a 'free' resource to the library service, the potential contribution of a Reader-in-Residence is not doubted, but it is questionable whether this type of activity is the most effective use of her expertise, or of significant benefit to the library and its users. It may be necessary to embed the activity in regular service delivery, but the terms on which the Reader-in-Residence is currently employed mean that this is not possible. To me, this seems the only way in which the "small but significant success" described by the Literature Development Officer, could be amplified and effectively developed.

4.8.5. Embedded case study C

For my third embedded case study I elected to examine a promotional activity which is often entrenched in the routines of service delivery: display work. Rather than simply conduct interviews with members of senior management as in the main case study, I thought it would be more revealing to speak to those 'out in the field' at branch level, and if possible to introduce an element of practical experimentation into my research.

I contacted the librarian who is Area Co-ordinator of a group of four libraries within Library Service C, and it was agreed that I could carry out my research in one of those branches. I interviewed the Area Co-ordinator and another librarian who was based at the branch, but also had area-wide responsibilities for young people, adult paperback fiction and information (see Appendix for the interview schedule).

The branch is housed in an old Carnegie building and has (as is characteristic of these buildings) an imposing but rather 'closed' aspect i.e. the windows are tall, narrow, high up and not particularly conducive to displays. To compensate for this, a window in the administrative area of the library has been converted and 'boxed-in' to house a small display cabinet. Other than this, the only opportunity to make things visible outside the library is to stick posters and banners directly on the windowpanes. There are several shopping parades in the surrounding area, but the library is situated some distance from all of them: it is next to the fire station and ambulance station, in a primarily residential part of the area. The road in front of the library forms part of a busy bus route.

Inside the library, there is an internal corridor that must be passed through to reach the main body of the library, the walls of which are lined with various posters advertising local events, groups, etc. In the main area of the library, the staff have created several 'niches' of display space. At the time of research, a shelving unit had been adapted to display WWR's *Shaken & Stirred* adult reading promotion: a collection of books from the recommended list was accompanied by bookmarks, and a member of staff had produced a word-processed poster for the backdrop.

Elsewhere, the display sections of fixed shelving housed other displays of both fiction and non-fiction materials, accompanied by hand-produced posters and lettering.

In interview, I was hoping to discuss the following issues:

- how display work was managed in the branch
- where ideas for display work came from
- if displays had clearly defined objectives/purposes
- the resource implications of displays

When asked about the management of display work at branch level, the Area Co-ordinator explained that the responsibility for producing displays was allocated on a rota basis, so that roughly once a month a member of staff (the branch has 6 library assistants (3 FT) and a Senior Library Assistant) would produce a small in-house display, usually on a theme of their choice. He added that some of the displays produced by staff members are circulated around the group, as "a way of maximising use of the display work that goes into it".

The Librarian responsible for young people supported this type of circulation of materials. She had recently spent some time producing a library quiz display for use at a forthcoming local festival and a young person's display for another event:

"If some one else wants to do a book quiz, I'm more than happy to pass that on ... I did quit a lot of work into the young people's display, and it's upstairs and I thought 'this is a shame' it should be somewhere'. Not that I think it's a wonderful display, but it does take a long time"

In this group of libraries there was little evidence to support Hart's (1990) assertion that libraries were insufficiently resourced to take advantage of many exhibition opportunities. At the time of interview, the Librarian had been involved with three separate library stalls in non-library locations within the last month (commenting that this was the busiest time of year for exhibition work). She felt that in these situations, it was particularly important to make display material interactive as well as informative:

"Other than just putting things up, just doing a 'display' of the library, you really need something (as well) for people to do"

She suggested that in an ideal situation, they would be able to join up new members at such events, but this is not technically possible. Nor is it possible to issue the dump-bin of books that are taken along to represent a sample of library stock.

She described the main objective of such events as "letting people know we're here" and suggested that the location of the library resulted in relatively low levels of basic awareness about the location of the library. The Librarian has only been at the branch for about a year, so these out-of-library events also provided her with an opportunity to introduce herself as a "new face" to individuals and groups in the community. She takes a very 'hands-on' approach to display and exhibition work, while the Area Co-ordinator describes himself as "very happy to delegate it!". I more motivated by a personal interest and enthusiasm:

"I enjoy it so long as I've got time to do it, I'm not under any pressure and I'm free to do what I want. It's never in your job description, but I've always enjoyed doing it and I actually used to be a teacher, so I was always used to doing it, and if I didn't do it I think I would miss it, actually."

I asked about the availability of training for display work. To the best of the Librarian's and Area Co-ordinator's knowledge, none of the staff had received any specific training, though they thought such opportunities were available. The Area Co-ordinator added that there were no written guidelines for producing in-house displays.

The Librarian felt that access to word-processing facilities had greatly enhanced her own display work, and she acknowledged the importance of achieving quality similar to that found in commercial contexts, stating that "people expect a high quality display, don't they, and I think we've got to match that".

When asked about the planning and objectives of particular displays, the Librarian pointed out that countywide promotions are often planned to tie in with "national events", and that these decisions are often taken at management rather than branch level:

"In a way, quite a few things in the library are actually not necessarily our choice. It's sort of a central 'this is what you're going to do, these are the themes' and we can interpret them as we want to, but it's sort of seen as a corporate theme."

It would seem that sometimes these service-wide promotional directives are not always disseminated with adequate information or materials to support them i.e. in support of the National Year of Reading, the Librarian said that "all we got was some banners ... and that's it."

More positively, the group had decided to take the *Shaken & Stirred* and *Made in Britain* promotions. These had been accompanied by bookmarks, reader response cards (albeit in limited numbers) and an information sheet for staff. I asked what resource and stock implications this type of 'off the peg' promotion has at branch level. The Librarian explained that for these promotions the group had actually bought in the relevant stock to support the promotion and that it was possible to buy the full list of titles, complete with dump-bin. The whole set of stock and materials are then circulated within the group, and the stock divided between the four libraries at the end of the promotion.

The librarian suggested that while the objective of the *Shaken & Stirred* promotion was to "promote fiction, just purely fiction, and authors", the purpose of *Made in Britain* was to "get people to look at something different". The Area Co-ordinator also drew a distinction between the objectives of different promotions

"The *Shaken & Stirred* one, that's good contemporary fiction and non-fiction, but it's relatively popular. Some of the others like this Black and Asian display .. we've got two at the moment actually, one is just African-Caribbean and one is Black and Asian [*Made in Britain*], they may not go so well ... but we think

it's important to have those authors represented and those communities, and books represented about those communities. So the issues is not the first priority with those. We would expect lower issues with something like that.

I asked the Area Co-ordinator if display work in the group was subject to any kind of evaluation. Speaking specifically about circulating displays, he replied:

"It's entirely up to us if we want to evaluate or not. There are two ways of doing it, of just checking the date labels ... because we have it for two months, then everything gets collected in and sent on to the next library. We just count the date issues, it's the easiest way in many respects because they don't all come in at the same time. We do also have a list and we can check the history, but in this area this library is the only one where issues are actually on computer, so we can only check at [redacted] on the computer history. The other libraries, you just check on the date stamps... we don't set any targets, and we don't have any concrete comparisons, you see, it depends on purpose."

I asked the Librarian if any evaluation was attempted of out-of-house exhibition work. She replied that "it's very hard to monitor, you can say how many people come and look at the stalls, but then you can't say what they got out of it". She felt that this type of statistical data gave no indication of the "depth of the visit", but added that at future events she may try monitoring the number of membership forms given out and those returned to the library (identifying them with a mark).

Experiment

After consultation with the Area Co-ordinator and the Senior Library Assistant it was agreed that I would conduct an experiment, to test if: *the conspicuous 'display' of library materials can increase their use.*

Details of experiment

Loanable book stock rather than reference materials were chosen because it is easier to track patterns of 'borrowing' rather than reference use. Fiction stock seemed appropriate because again it seemed unlikely this would be used 'in-house' by borrowers.

The branch library in question was suitable for this kind of experiment because loan procedures are automated on the library management system, rather than on the old 'brown issue' system. This meant that I could track the loan history on the computer system rather than relying on date labels. It also meant that I could check the details of books, which were still on loan at the end of the experimental period.

I decided to focus on 'low issuing' stock for the experiment, because it would be easier to register a distinct change in the loan history on a book which had been relatively underused. For this reason I set a criteria for all books which were included in the experiment: that they had been issued no more than twice in the six months preceding the experiment.

Serendipitously, the Senior Library Assistant had just changed one of the regular displays, because the adult paperback fiction spinners were full to capacity and she felt that they needed to have more of this stock on loan at any one time. She had produced a small display using coloured art paper, word-processed lettering and simple clipart graphics, and arranged a random selection of the library's paperbacks on the shelves beneath it. She agreed that this display could be used as the basis for my experiment, and she allowed me to replace the random selection of paperbacks with 'low-issuing' ones (as described above).

The date labels of these books were marked with a star so that the library assistant would be able to identify them when they were returned by the borrowers, and place them back on the display for the duration of the experiment. However, as the time scale of my research was limited, and moreover because I did not want to interfere with the normal display schedule, the experiment was restricted to a one-month period. As the basic loan period was three weeks, it was more a case of monitoring whether the items issued at all, rather than how many times. A total of 26 low-issuing paperbacks were used in the experiment, all of which were in good or fair physical condition. It was agreed that the library assistants could replenish the display with other books if it began to look rather empty.

Photograph of display used for experiment.



Results

- By the end of the experiment, 12 of the 26 books had been issued. On the last day, 9 were still on loan.
- Only 1 book had been issued more than once during the period, this being a renewal.
- The results are tabulated overleaf:
 - P** represents an item on loan
 - R** represents an item returned.
- The tabulation of results needs to be approached with caution. When tracking the progress of the books via the computer records, it became evident that once an item was returned, the issue date was not displayed. (It was an unfortunate oversight that I did not find the available books and check the date labels as well at the time of the experiment). The net result is that there ought to be more **P**s than actually appear in the table.

Table C1

Conclusion

I was keen to do this experiment on display work because it allowed me to test (albeit in a very limited way) one of the most pervasive and habitual acts of promotion that occurs in public library work. I suspect that display work often escapes any kind of sustained scrutiny because it is so deeply and embedded in traditional library practice. This is not to suggest that displays often don't work, just that purely historical reasons for engaging in an activity that demands time and resources, are simply untenable. Quite clearly, displays can and do work, but it is vital that we understand why and how, if we are to be able to repeat and amplify success.

The experiment was based on a very simple premise, which seemed appropriate, because the objective of the display (as the SLA originally conceived it) was itself very simple: to encourage library users to borrow paperback fiction. Uncontrollable variables ought to be mentioned. It is possible that: the quality of the display may have affected the response positively or negatively, that more paperbacks were issued because the experiment coincided with the summer holiday period and that despite their history of low issues, the selected books may have been taken even if they had not been on the display.

While I have no means of eliminating the influence of these variables, the fact remains that, of 26 books which had issued twice or less in the preceding six months, twelve were borrowed within four weeks of being on display. Within the context of the library, the only thing that had changed was their presentation and location i.e. they were more conspicuously displayed. It was not a sophisticated display (or a sophisticated experiment), but it did seem to go some way to fulfilling a simple and short-term objective: to 'shift' a particular format of stock. This may seem more akin to product-centred rather than user-centred promotion (disapproved of by Cronin 1981), but there was an element of targeting: as you can see from the photograph, the SLA had worded the display to encourage people to borrow paperbacks "for your holiday", adding that they were "easy to pack"!

It may be that the relative simplicity and informality of this display actually increased the number of books borrowed (as suggested by Usherwood 1981b), but this is speculation. Of the 14 books that did not issue, it may be that they are candidates for weeding, or circulation to another branch in the group.

With more time allowing, I think my research into display work could have been further developed. It would have been possible to conduct a user survey, and perhaps an observational exercise repeated over a period of time. Using these instruments, I would have collected data about users' perceptions of display work and the degree to which displays actually register on users' awareness, and influence their use of the library. The attitudes of the other staff members who produce the displays would also be of research interest. Because my research was mainly focused on conducting the experiment, I am reluctant to make any further inferences or recommendations based solely on the interview data, as these were primarily conducted to arrange the experiment and to produce contextual data about the general situation and practises of the library.

4.9. Other findings

Two other issues arose from the case studies, which were not featured in the general questionnaire: the concept of corporate identity, and the pros and cons of 'centralising' promotional activities. I have already mentioned (section 4.5.2.) that in Library Service C, the marketing section of the *Development, Environment & Leisure* department imposed a strict 'house style' on all printed publicity materials. Similarly, the Operations Officer for Library Service C explained her responsibility for ensuring consistency and quality in print:

"I have to have a corporate overview of the qualitative performance of what's going out to the public. I mean, I'm not this sort of 'Big Brother is watching over you', but if anything goes wrong, if they don't use the logo correctly or anything like that, it falls on me. So what I'm trying to do is encourage people to send everything through to me for printing, so that at least I get a view of what's going on'

The Publicity & Marketing Officer for Library Service B perceived in her work a similar responsibility for ensuring continuity and promoting corporate identity. She uses the budgetary allocation for building refurbishment to disseminate the corporate identity, likening it to the consistency we have come to expect from commercial models:

"The refurbishment, I'm actually involved in that because we've got nobody that would take the corporate theme through: we just said 'okay, we'll refurbish that library' and the staff were picking colours, so we'd got pink and peach libraries, and so on. So now our corporate colours are grey, white and green, and every library is done in grey white and green, unless you've got a really good reason not to do it like that. So thought that's not marketing directly, it is ... you know if you walk into Dillons, most Dillons, whichever town you're in, look similar, don't they? It's all part of that."

However, neither staff in Library Services B or C wanted to see the complete centralisation of all elements of promotion. While welcoming the concept of the a marketing officer, the Operations Officer for Library Service C felt that it

was equally important that staff at district and service-point level should be allowed to retain "the responsibility for organising and doing their own events". Library Service B's Publicity & Marketing Officer also caveats at the prospect of having all promotional work pass through her hands for approval. She felt that the degree of central co-ordination afforded by the reading promotions group was enough:

"The county's so big in , it's so diverse. I wouldn't want libraries to stop doing individual promotions because I think that's quite important. One of the roles of the group librarian is to build community links, so if they want to do a promotion in conjunction with a local school or a local theatre, that type of thing, and I haven't got enough time to help them, I think it does them good, doing those things. Then I act as a support, for advice and things.

It would appear that staff with service-wide responsibilities for promotion view themselves as enabling, rather than regulatory. There is evidence of some appreciation of the fine balancing act demanded by promotional work, of providing an assurance of consistency and quality while avoiding the stifling of creativity and local relevance.

5 Summary and conclusions

Fairly late on in the process of researching this project, I was struck by the idea that the functional objective of the study was to understand the methodology of promotion. This was confirmed when I looked up the exact definition of methodology in *Chambers English Dictionary* (1993): "a system of methods and rules applicable to research or work in a given science or art". Whether library promotion is a science or art is a moot point indeed, but this definition sums up perfectly what was underpinning the entire investigation: I was looking for (and sincerely hoping to find) evidence of a robust rationale upon which all promotional thought and action was predicated. It is akin to the synthesis of paradigm and practice that Cronin (1981) refers to as 'the logic of promotion'. Perhaps I am preoccupied with the specific concept of 'methodology' because it has been a constant cause for concern in the wider context of the research; throughout the study I have been acutely conscious of the need to justify and explain all of my own research decisions.

I have outlined the problems encountered during the research process and have tried to relate them to the findings that they effected. In order to develop a general overview of the management of promotion in public libraries, I sometimes sacrificed depth for breadth of data. As a result, in some areas the research provoked at least as many questions as answers. To summarise, I think that the following topics would warrant more sustained and focused research:

- The practical value of documentation relating to promotion. How is it used to inform library practice and development?
- Staff attitudes (at all levels) to promotion and marketing, and the impact of these attitudes on promotional performance.
- The benefits of developing promotional partnerships between public library services.
- Promotional expenditure: the proportion of total library expenditure, how it is calculated and allocated, what qualifies for promotional funding, etc.

I think that the exceptionally high response rate (79.07%) to the general questionnaire suggests a considerable level of interest in and enthusiasm for this area of library development, or at the very least an acknowledgement of its increasing importance. It also allowed me access to a broad range of data that I have discussed at some length. Though perhaps slightly frivolous, I would like to depict the key findings from this data for the last time, in the form of an 'average' service profile.

To recapitulate, the 'average' respondent:

- has some form of documentation relating to promotion, either self-produced or possibly bought 'off the peg' from another service.
- is unlikely to have any personnel whose work is solely concerned with promotion: it is much more likely that promotion is an adjunct to wider managerial responsibilities, or else the logical extension of specialisation i.e. children's services.
- explicitly mentions promotion in at least some professional-level job descriptions, and to a lesser extent in the job-descriptions of non-professional staff.
- offers some form of training in promotional skills, probably within the last year.
- has a discrete promotional budget, though it is more likely to have decreased or remained stable than increased.
- has access to graphic design and public relations personnel/facilities, but has to share these resources with the whole council, or at least the other services in the same department.
- does not have a marketing manager/officer or equivalent, or a marketing plan/strategy.
- undertakes some form of evaluation of promotional work
- articulates the objectives of promotion primarily in terms of increased levels of use and awareness.
- engages in wide range of activities and measures of 'promotional' value.

Though ostensibly true, this description illustrates the difficulty of relying on 'averages' to develop an accurate sense of the truth; clearly it masks a great deal of diversity and variation among respondents. It is a composite profile, and as such it does not express the full range of circumstances and practices that emerged from the data.

Another important finding not communicated by this average profile, is the correlation that emerged between the data and the expenditure status of the respondent. The data yielded by 'highest spending' and 'lowest spending' services were by no means exclusive. However, there was enough consistent variation between the two categories to allow me to suggest with some confidence that significant correlation was evident. To summarise, 'highest spending' services were more likely than 'lowest spending' services to have: promotional documentation, mentions of promotion in all job descriptions in both professional and non-professional staff, discrete promotional budgets, access to graphic design and public relations resources and some form of evaluation in place. Findings were not so polarised as to suggest that a 'have' have not' situation exists between 'highest' and 'lowest' spending authorities; it seems more a case of 'have' and 'have less'.

The research clearly demonstrated the value of attempting a symbiotic approach to collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Both questionnaires (general and case study) threw up statistics that would have been inscrutable and (more seriously) misleading if they had not been accompanied by qualitative data. I hope that the conjunction of the questionnaire with case studies was equally symbiotic, bridging the general and specific. Though the generalisation of findings from the case studies is questionable, they offered a depth of engagement and 'richness' of data that was unavailable to a self-administered postal questionnaire. Moreover, case studies allow the authentication of data i.e. it is possible for the researcher to develop an appreciation of the unique context within which those findings operate. Comparability of the embedded case studies with each other is also questionable, but this was not one of the objectives of the exercise. In this instance, the diversity of the subjects seemed a bonus: it allowed me to look at three events/activities that were diverse in terms of scale, objectives, staffing and resource implications, and effectiveness.

To conclude this study, I return to my explanation of why I believe so strongly that promotional work in public libraries ought to be predicated on a robust methodology. Put most succinctly, a more effective methodology would complete the promotional loop, so that any thought and action on this topic would feed back into the cycle of promotional performance. I would suggest that the basic components of an effective methodology for promotion would be:

- clearly defined structures of responsibility
- some form of documentation or guidelines, that has been produced with its intended audience strongly in mind
- an amount of funding 'reserved' for promotion
- realistic training opportunities that are available to all levels of staff
- co-ordinated evaluation of all aspects of promotional work, based on explicit benchmarks or targets

The absence of any of these elements is likely to have a deleterious effect on promotional performance. Some services may be daunted by the prospect of a vigorously applied, scrupulous methodology, because it would point up inefficiencies as well as successes, but I believe that a more systematic approach to promotion would protect rather than threaten a library service's interests. Similarly, some may criticise these recommendations because of their perceived resource implications. As promotion already consumes a considerable amount of money, and that money comes from public funds, there is an obligation upon the service to use that money in a way that contributes to service development.

In conclusion, the contribution of the study to knowledge in this subject area is modest: I have simply identified some general trends in the approach to promotion, and have encouraged those holding a stake in promotion to consider some ways in which they could increase their dividends. Promotion sometimes seems to survive on little more than enthusiasm and positive assumptions. Enthusiasm is always to be welcomed, but assumptions that result in having nothing written down, no money set aside, no networks of support, and no-one in a position to commit all of their time and effort, can leave promotion very vulnerable indeed

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Appendix General questionnaire to public library services

Dissertation: Promotional Activities

Interview Schedule

Library Service Staff

Library Service:

Name:

Position:

Based at:

Topics for discussion:

1. **Role and responsibilities of interviewee**
2. **Policy, planning and decision-making** (*groups, committees, written policy*)
3. **Staff** (*structure and allocation of responsibilities, promotion as a recruitment issue, training needs, role of paraprofessional staff*)
4. **Budgeting for promotional activities** (*including trends*)
5. **Pressures** (*Is promotion a priority? Is it more or less important in times of decreasing funding?*)
6. **Marketing vs. promotion** (*perceived differences, marketing plan, targeting promotion through market research*)
7. **Objectives/Outcomes** (*why promote?*)
8. **Evaluation** (*measuring effectiveness of promotional activities*)
9. **Perceptions** (*do librarians possess relevant skills, and show willingness & enthusiasm?*)
10. **Specific promotional activities engaged in by the library service** (*past, present, future; successes and failures, collaboration with other organisations*)

Allocation of topics:

- I anticipate that these topics will elicit a mixture of factual and more 'perceptual' data in response. It may be sufficient to seek the factual data relating to these topics from a single individual in each library service; however, data consisting of attitudes/perceptions/opinions will be sought from all interviewees.

Used 17/05/99 in Library Authority A

28/05/99 in Library Authority B

15/04/99 and 23/04/99 in Library Authority C

Appendix Embedded Case Study B visitor questionnaire

Interview schedule
Literature Development Officer
Library Authority B

General:

1. Interviewee's job description and responsibilities
2. Working relationship to libraries - are all roles and objectives compatible?
3. Discuss specific work undertaken in libraries

About specific event observed:

1. Whose idea was event - planning involved?
2. Was there a defined set of objectives - those of LDO?
3. Where those objectives achieved?
4. What did interviewee get out of it - was it useful/informative to work? Will it inform future work/events?
5. What did library users get out of it?
6. Press and publicity for event - paid advertising or press releases - did it work?
7. Why was event not taken out of library as discussed?
8. Will event be repeated - what will be done differently?
9. Does interviewee view it as a promotional event?

Used 15/07/99

Interview schedule

Library service C

Displays

1. Job title and responsibilities of interviewee
2. Involvement and responsibilities in this area - part of job specification / personally developed interest
3. Decision-making - who decides themes etc.?
4. Objectives of displays - varied, clearly defined or ad hoc/intuitive
5. Is there a distinction between displays and exhibitions - explain
6. Is it possible to evaluate the effect of displays and exhibitions - how?
7. Does it require special skills, qualifications - availability of training
8. Availability of resources
9. Recommend and changes in current practices?
10. 'Bought-in' promotional displays
11. Discuss recent work on displays and exhibitions

Used 21/06/99, and 09/07/99.

Appendix Embedded case study C: list of books used in experiment

Books used in display experiment in Library Authority C

1. Baldwin James If Beale Street Could Talk
2. Ballard, J. G. Hello America
3. Beagle, Peter S. The Innkeeper's Song
4. Bear, Greg Legacy
5. Bronte, E. Wuthering Heights
6. Carr, Rocky Brixton Bwoy
7. Chandler, R. The Big Sleep
8. Crane, Teresa The Raven Hovers
9. Davis, Margaret Davis Burning Ambition
10. Diski, Jenny Monkey's Uncle
11. Drakulic, Slavenka Marble Skin
12. Gunn, Rufus A Friendship of Convenience
13. Limb, Sue Dulcie Dishes the Dirt
14. Llosa, Mario Vargas The Storyteller
15. Logan, Jake Slocum and the Snake Gulch Swindlers
16. Love, Rosaleen Evolution Annie & Other Stories
17. McCaffrey, A. & Scarborough, Elizabeth Anne
Power Play
18. McDonald, Ian Speaking in Tongues
19. Maupin, A. Maybe the Moon
20. Rogers, Jane Mr Wroe's Virgins
21. Shusaku, Endo Foreign Studies
22. Taylor, Andrew The Four Last Things
23. Thomas, Leslie Stand Up Virgin Soldiers
24. Updike, John The Complete Henry Beech
25. Walker, Alice In Love and Trouble
26. White, Edmund Sketches from Memory

Dedication

For David. Good luck.