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# What are we really doing to market electronic resources?

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## What Are We Really Doing to Market Electronic Resources?

### **Key words:**

Marketing, promotion, electronic resources, assessment, qualitative analysis

### **Category:**

Research paper

### **Abstract:**

**Purpose:** This research identifies which marketing activities libraries are using to promote electronic resources and examines how libraries are measuring the successes or failures of their marketing plans.

**Methodology:** This research analyzes the literature published in library science on marketing techniques for electronic resources in use at libraries; the corpus is composed of 24 documents published from 1994-2009. The literature is qualitatively analyzed to determine the techniques in use, the libraries' goals, targeted groups, budgets, and assessments of their marketing plans.

**Findings:** Thirty-eight unique marketing techniques were discovered in the 24 documents consulted for this research. The four most popular techniques were patron training in a group setting, flyers/brochures, emails to patrons, and surveys. Libraries were generally unclear about stating the goals for their marketing plans but were able to easily identify the target of their marketing efforts. Budgeting was inconsistent among libraries included in this research; nine libraries reported having either no budget for marketing or did not mention budgeting in the article. Assessment was the weakest part of the marketing plans, with four libraries not documenting an awareness of the need for assessment and seven libraries noting an understanding of the need to evaluate their plan but unsure how to do so.

**Value:** Based on this analysis it is clear that as libraries engage in marketing activities they should make themselves aware of general principles before beginning their plan. Special focus should be given to selecting activities that match the goals of the marketing plan and choosing an appropriate evaluation technique before beginning the marketing activities.

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## What Are We Really Doing to Market Electronic Resources?

### **Introduction**

As libraries continue to move more of their resources from print to electronic formats, the challenge of effective marketing of those resources has become apparent. The traditional marketing techniques for print resources, such as putting the new items on a "new book shelf" near the front door or keeping heavily used reference items at the reference desk, do not work for resources in an electronic format because there are no physical volumes to view. How, then, do libraries best connect their patrons to appropriate electronic resources?

Libraries know that marketing, or directing a patron to a resource that is potentially relevant to them, is critical. As noted in Buczynski, "Librarians know that for today's information consumer if it's not online it does not exist" (2007, p. 195). It is therefore important to find out how libraries are marketing resources that their patrons access electronically. This research reviews the library and information science literature on the topic of marketing electronic resources and reports the techniques in use by libraries.

The author employs content analysis to determine what were the libraries' goals, targeted groups, and assessments of their marketing plans. This research gathers the information from individual library case studies and brings them together to learn what libraries are doing as a whole, within a historical context, to market electronic resources.

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### **The literature**

To understand what kinds of marketing techniques are being used by libraries the author turned to the published literature in the field of information and library science. The review of the literature was focused specifically on marketing electronic resources. The search for appropriate literature was not limited by date, in anticipation of gathering the broadest corpus from which to describe marketing techniques.

The earliest article included in the content analysis is 1994; the most recent is 2009. One of the documents in this corpus is an award-winning grant proposal for an electronic resources marketing plan in a public library. It is included in this research because only one other article about marketing for electronic resources in public libraries was discovered in the literature review. The resulting body of literature is built of twenty-four documents.

The documents selected for this research are all case studies in which is described a specific marketing campaign or techniques used to market electronic resources at a library. As the documents were reviewed for this research the author noted the marketing techniques that the library reported using. In addition to the techniques used the author noted the usual components of a marketing plan such as goals, the group they targeted with the marketing, assessment, and budget. The author also considers how marketing electronic resources may have changed in the span of years in this corpus.

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### **Organizing the literature in ATLAS.ti**

To keep organized the notations about the techniques used, the qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti (v5.2) was employed. The text of each of the documents was imported into the software and was then used to identify each time a marketing technique or a distinct component of a marketing plan (as mentioned above) was stated. This software allowed the grouping of the documents by kind of library and the creation of codes for the marketing techniques. Once the articles had analyzed via codes and groups, the data was then exported and summarized.

### Documents and document families

In order to describe which marketing techniques a particular kind of library is using, it is helpful to be able to collate the documents into groups, or families. The *document families* function of ATLAS.ti was used to group documents into four families: university libraries; college libraries; public libraries; and medical libraries (see Appendix A for a list of institution names by library type).

### **Coding of the literature**

As the documents were reviewed, the author highlighted the contextual descriptions of the marketing techniques used, giving each technique a name, or code, that she created. When a passage about a library emailing its faculty to alert them to a new electronic resource was discovered, for example, it was highlighted and then coded with "email." All of the documents were analyzed in this manner.

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The following are the codes that were created and how they are defined for use in this research:

-- insert Table 1 about here (codes and their definitions) --

Academic staff as collection developers	Academic staff choose the e-resources that are added to the collection
Assessment/analysis	A measurement of the effectiveness of a marketing technique
Banners/posters	Banners or posters used to describe or promote an e-resource
Blackboard	An e-resource is promoted via the online classroom companion
Bookmarks	Printed bookmarks with a marketing slogan or information about an e-resource
Branding	A specific effort to identify an e-resource as belonging to a library
Budget	A specific amount of money used for marketing of e-resources
Calendar	An annual calendar
Campaign title	The library chooses to title their marketing campaign
Collaboration	The library works with an organization outside the library to promote e-resources
Collection policy	E-texts are a part of the collection development policy and this policy is shared with academic staff
Email (external)	Email sent to patrons
Email (internal)	Email sent to library staff
Faculty/professionals as marketing tool	Faculty or professionals on campus tell colleagues and students about e-resources
FAQ	Created a frequently asked question Web page about an e-resource
Feedback form	The library has a mechanism to solicit feedback about an e-resource
Flyers/brochures	A printed flyer or brochure informs about or describes an e-resource
Giveaways	Pens, pencils, notepads
Goal	Why the institution chooses to market an e-resource
Home/off-campus access	Access to e-resources outside the library
Incentives	Goods traded for time spent in a training workshop (gift cards, for example)
Mascot	A mascot for a marketing campaign was developed
Native language education	Training for an e-resource is done in the patron's native language

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Newsletter	A newsletter that is either exclusively about e-resources or consistently contains a section for e-resources
Newspaper alert	An advertisement about an e-resource is placed in a newspaper
Online social networks	Social networking software like facebook or MySpace is used to alert patrons to e-resources
Patron training (group)	Patrons are trained how to use an e-resource, in a group setting
Patron training (individual)	A patron is trained in a one-on-one setting
Phone call/personal visit	A library staff member calls on the phone or visits the home/office of a patron
Pins	Buttons with a marketing slogan, worn by library staff
Postcards/letters/direct mail	Items sent to patrons or created to send
Screen savers	E-resource descriptions are put on screen savers at public workstations in the library
Slide show/demonstrations	A demonstration of an e-resource, in an interactive or non-interactive setting
Staff training (group)	Staff are trained how to use an e-resource, in a group setting
Staff training (individual)	A staff member is trained in a one-on-one setting
Students as marketing tool	Students on campus tell other students about e-resources
Survey	Patrons are asked questions about their uses of e-resources
Target	The group of patrons to which a library markets
Usage statistics	Usage statistics are used to assess a marketing activity or are used as a marketing tool
Use guide	A guide designed to instruct patrons how to use an e-resource
Web page alert	An announcement of a new e-resource, posted on the library Web page
Web page, customized	Built a customized Web page to describe an e-resource
Word of mouth	A patron tells another patron about an e-resource

### Codes and code families

A code was created each time a unique marketing technique was mentioned in a document. In the twenty-four documents, thirty-eight distinct techniques were noted. A technique was counted just once per document even if it was mentioned multiple times.

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As documents may be grouped in ATLAS.ti, codes may be grouped as well. The *code families* function of ATLAS.ti was used to group codes into two families: *administrative* and *marketing techniques*. The *administrative* family holds codes having to do with the institution's organization of their marketing plan. The *marketing techniques* family is composed exclusively of techniques in use by the institutions to market their e-resources. The *administrative* family has the following four codes: Assessment/analysis; Budget; Goal; Target. The other thirty-eight codes fall into the *marketing techniques* family.

### **Marketing techniques in use**

Once the documents and codes were grouped into appropriate families the data was exported from ATLAS.ti so that the marketing techniques in use by kinds of libraries could be summarized. The *marketing techniques* code family was merged with the four document families, resulting in four data files: techniques used in college libraries; techniques used in medical libraries; techniques used in public libraries; and techniques used in university libraries. These files contained a list of the libraries that fell into each category, along with a list of which marketing techniques were in use there.

In order to assess the marketing techniques in use it was useful to assemble them into categories, putting similar techniques into categories. Four general categories of techniques resulted: human interaction; e-communication; physical items; and training. The techniques that were placed into the *human interaction* category are: academic staff as collection developers; collaboration; collection policy; faculty/professionals as marketing tools; phone call/office visit; students as marketing tools; surveys; word of



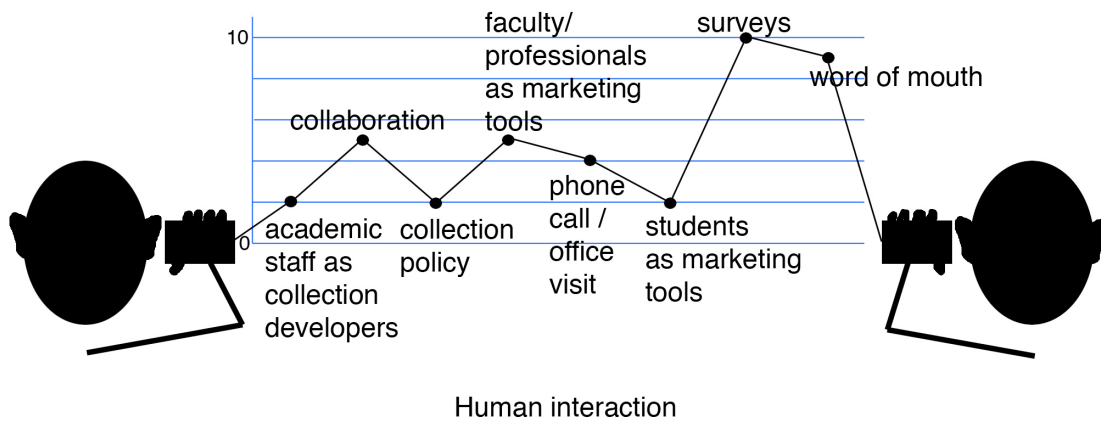
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mouth. The techniques that were placed into the *e-communications* category are:

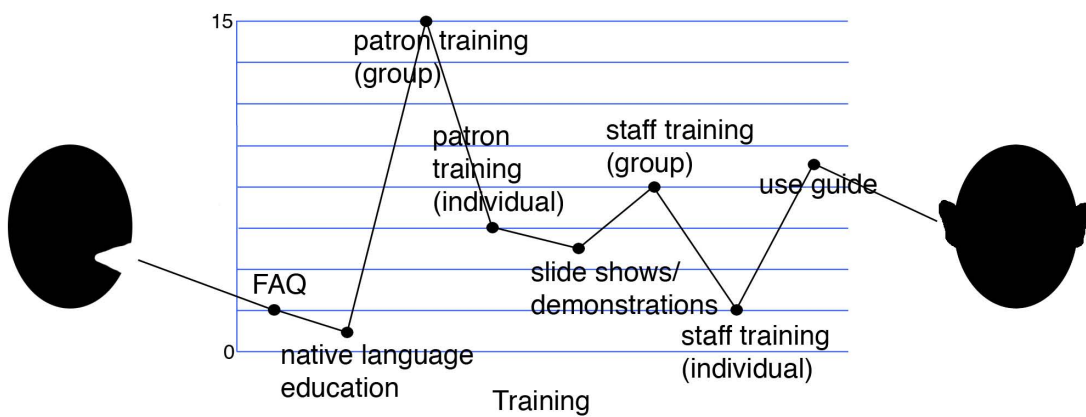
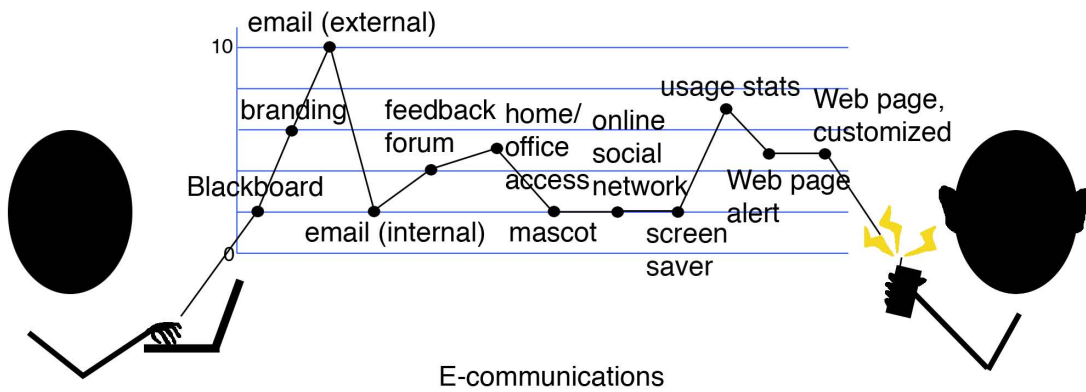
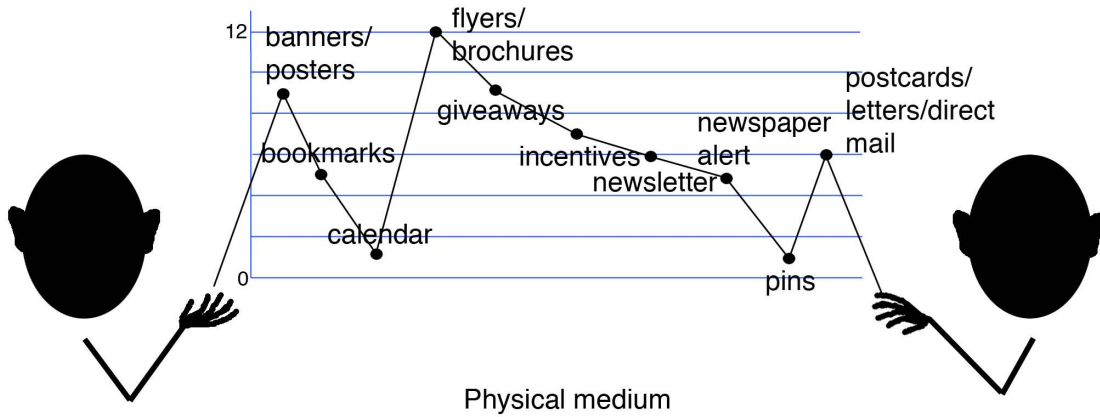
Blackboard; branding; email (external); email (internal); feedback forum; home/office; mascot; online social network; screen saver; usage statistics; Web page alert; Web page, customized. The techniques that were placed into the *physical medium* category are:

banners/posters; bookmarks; calendar; flyers/brochures; giveaways; incentives; newsletter; newspaper alert; pins; postcards/letters/direct mail. The techniques that relate to *training* are: FAQ; native language education; patron training (group); patron training (individual); slide show/demonstrations; staff training (group); staff training (individual); use guide. The resulting figures that illustrate this categorization are seen in Figures 1 through 4. It is clear from these figures that libraries do not choose to market consistently with one category of techniques over another, but rather choose from all of them.

-- Insert Figures 1-4 about here (groups of marketing techniques) --



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If you follow the categories noted in Figures 1 through 4 you will see that libraries choose to perform marketing techniques related to *physical medium* most frequently,

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with ten techniques in use sixty-one times and flyers/brochures being the most frequently used technique in this category. *E-communications* are the second-most frequently used, with twelve techniques in use fifty-three times, of which email (external) is the most frequent. *Training* is the third most frequently used, with eight techniques in use forty-eight times, of which patron training (group) is the most frequent. Eight techniques are mentioned thirty-nine times in the *human interaction* category, with surveys being the most popular technique used.

College. Two of the twenty-four documents were about marketing techniques for e-resources in college libraries. One of the two mentioned having a budget for its marketing campaign. That library spent \$137 on a postcard campaign as, "a simple attempt to get the attention of our patrons" (Cosgrove, 2006, p. 94). Of the thirty-eight unique marketing techniques, that library only used two: *postcards/letters/direct mail* and *use guide* – one of the postcards included a brief description on how to use an e-resource.

The other college library used ten of the thirty-eight marketing techniques mentioned to market NetLibrary e-books to their School of Health Studies students. They noted that "integration and contextualization do not simply mean 'placement', i.e. e-journals on reading lists, linked within virtual learning environments, but rather are based upon interaction, an understanding of their role within the curriculum, and are linked to learning needs and outcomes" (Appleton and Roberts, 2003, p. 84). They used the following techniques to market the e-books: academic staff as collection developers; collection policy; FAQ; flyers/brochures; newspaper alert; patron training (group); staff

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training (group); survey; usage statistics; Web page, customized. None of these techniques overlapped with the other college library in this research and as a result it cannot be determined which is the most popular marketing technique for electronic resources in use at college libraries. See Table 2 for the techniques in use at each college library.

-- Insert Table 2 about here (college library techniques used, number of times) --

Table 2: Marketing techniques used in college libraries (1: in use, 0: not in use)

	library #1	library #2	TOTALS:
<b>Academic staff as collection developers</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Collection policy</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>FAQ</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Flyers/brochures</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Newspaper alert</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Patron training (group)</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Postcards/letters/direct mail</b>	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Staff training (group)</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Survey</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Usage statistics</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Use guide</b>	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Web page, customized</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>

Medical. The five medical library institutions used an average of 12.6 marketing techniques (MIN: 3, MAX: 21). The most frequently used marketing technique among these libraries is patron training; four libraries reported using both group and individual training sessions with patrons. One library remarked that, "Effective training is one of the most valuable promotional tools of an electronic collection, because training helps to limit anxiety associated with electronic searching" (Kendall and Massarella, 2001, p. 31).

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Among these medical libraries, thirty-four marketing techniques were used. None reported using Blackboard, a calendar, individual staff training, or students as a marketing tool. See Table 3 for the techniques in use at each medical library.

-- Insert Table 3 about here (medical library techniques used, number of times) --

Table 3: Marketing techniques used in medical libraries (1: in use, 0: not in use)

	library #1	library #2	library #3	library #4	library #5	TOTAL S:
<b>Academic staff as collection developers</b>	0	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Banners/ posters</b>	1	1	0	1	0	<b>3</b>
<b>Bookmarks</b>	1	1	0	1	0	<b>3</b>
<b>Branding</b>	0	0	0	1	1	<b>2</b>
<b>Collaboration</b>	1	0	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Collection policy</b>	0	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Email (external)</b>	0	1	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Email (internal)</b>	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Faculty/ professionals as marketing tool</b>	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>FAQ</b>	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Feedback form</b>	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Flyers/brochures</b>	1	0	0	1	1	<b>3</b>
<b>Giveaways</b>	0	1	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Home/off-campus access</b>	0	0	0	1	1	<b>2</b>
<b>Incentives</b>	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Mascot</b>	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Native language education</b>	1	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Newsletter</b>	1	0	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Newspaper alert</b>	1	0	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Online social networks</b>	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Patron training (group)</b>	1	1	1	1	0	<b>4</b>
<b>Patron training (indiv)</b>	1	1	1	0	1	<b>4</b>
<b>Phone call/personal visit</b>	1	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Pins</b>	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Postcards/letters/direct mail</b>	1	0	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Screen savers</b>	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Slide show/demos</b>	0	1	0	1	0	<b>2</b>

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<b>Staff training (group)</b>	1	1	1	0	0	<b>3</b>
<b>Survey</b>	1	0	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Usage statistics</b>	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Use guide</b>	1	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Web page alert</b>	0	1	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Web page, customized</b>	1	0	0	1	1	<b>3</b>
<b>Word of mouth</b>	1	1	0	1	0	<b>3</b>

Public. The two public libraries used an average of 13.5 marketing techniques (MIN: 12, MAX: 15). The techniques in use by both institutions are banners/posters, giveaways, incentives, staff training (group), and use guide.

Among these public libraries, twenty-five techniques are in use. Neither institution reported using academic staff as collection developers, Blackboard, calendar, collaboration, collection policy, faculty/professional as marketing tool, native language education, newsletter, online social networking, pins, screen savers, slide show/demos, or Web page alerts. See Table 4 for the techniques in use at each public library.

-- Insert Table 4 about here (public library techniques used, number of times) --

Table 4: Marketing techniques used in public libraries (1: in use, 0: not in use)

	library #1	library #2	TOTALS:
<b>Banners/ posters</b>	1	1	<b>2</b>
<b>Bookmarks</b>	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Branding</b>	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Email (external)</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Email (internal)</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Flyers/brochures</b>	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Giveaways</b>	1	1	<b>2</b>
<b>Home/off-campus access</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Incentives</b>	1	1	<b>2</b>
<b>Mascot</b>	0	1	<b>1</b>

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<b>Newspaper alert</b>	1	0	1
<b>Patron training (group)</b>	1	0	1
<b>Patron training (individual)</b>	1	0	1
<b>Phone call/personal visit</b>	0	1	1
<b>Postcards/letters/direct mail</b>	0	1	1
<b>Staff training (group)</b>	1	1	2
<b>Staff training (individual)</b>	1	0	1
<b>Survey</b>	0	1	1
<b>Usage statistics</b>	0	1	1
<b>Use guide</b>	1	1	2
<b>Web page, customized</b>	0	1	1
<b>Word of mouth</b>	0	1	1

University. The fifteen university libraries used an average of 6.73 marketing techniques (MIN: 1, MAX: 15). The most frequently noted marketing technique is patron training (group), used in nine libraries. Among these libraries, thirty techniques are in use. None of the university libraries reported using academic staff as collection developers, collection policy, email (internal), FAQ, mascot, native language education, pins, or Web page, customized. See Table 5 for the techniques in use at each university library.

-- Insert Table 5 about here (university library techniques used, number of times) --

Table 5: Marketing techniques used in university libraries (1: in use, 0: not in use)																
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TOTALS:
<b>Banners/ posters</b>	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
<b>Blackboard</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Bookmarks</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Branding</b>	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Calendar</b>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Collaboration</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Email (external)</b>	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	8
<b>Faculty/professionals as marketing tool</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	4
<b>Feedback form</b>	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Flyers/brochures</b>	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	7

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Giveaways	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
Home/off-campus access	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Incentives	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Newsletter	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Newspaper alert	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Online social networks	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Patron training (group)	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	9
Patron training (indiv)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Phone call/personal visit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Postcards/letters/direct mail	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Screen savers	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Slide show/demos	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3
Staff training (group)	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Staff training (individual)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Students as marketing tool	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Survey	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	6
Usage statistics	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	4
Use guide	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
Web page alert	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Word of mouth	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	5

## Goals, Targets, Budgets, Assessments

A standard marketing plan includes several steps that an institution moves through as part of the process: it identifies to whom it markets (the target); it justifies why it is marketing (the goal); and it evaluates the marketing techniques (assessment). As the documents were analyzed, these three clear steps were sought, and as they were found they were coded with "goal," "target," and "assessment/analysis." Any mention of budget was also sought, which standard marketing plans have (Lindsay, 2004). These codes were



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grouped into a family that was titled *Administrative*, in order to distinguish them from the marketing technique codes.

Goals. The reasons for marketing, and what the library hoped to gain from marketing, vary from vague to specific in the twenty-four documents. Some of the more ambiguous goals for performing marketing tasks are, "a simple attempt to get the attention of our patrons" (Cosgrove, 2006, p. 94), "improve the acceptance of the new service" (Ellis, 2004, p. 57), and "enhance awareness of what is available and its value to users" (Leong, 2007, p. 91). The more specific goals noted are, "The purpose was to improve patient health and health care by providing training to access reliable health information" (Broering et al., 2006, p. 5) and, "Teaching faculty and librarians alike observed that students were prone to search the free Web first rather than the library's paid content, and we realized that a multitude of approaches were required to help guide students to the appropriate resources" (Millet and Chamberlain, 2007, p. 97).

Targets. The libraries represented in these documents were very clear about the groups of patrons to whom they wanted to communicate in their marketing. All of the university libraries either noted faculty or some level of student as their targets. Library staff is also a popular target, noted in five of the documents. One library was so specific about its target audience that it named it: Chair of the Research Committee.

Budgets. Of the twenty-four institutions represented in this research, nine of them reported having either no budget for marketing or did not mention budgeting in the

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article. This is surprising because a standard marketing plan includes a budget as part of the design. Lindsay found in a 2004 survey, however, that "the library's annual budget does not usually include funding specifically for marketing" (p. 10). Of the five libraries that mentioned a specific dollar figure for their budget, the least was \$137 (a postcard campaign), the greatest \$3000 (laptops purchased for on-site marketing of electronic resources).

Assessments. It is generally agreed that assessment or evaluation of a marketing plan is critical to understanding if the marketing was effective. Evaluation is part of the cycle of marketing, and the results of that monitoring of activities assist in guiding the next steps in a marketing plan. In the review of the literature for this discussion, however, more than half of the libraries did not document a clear assessment plan as part of their cycles of marketing. To gauge the sophistication of the assessment done by the libraries in this literature, the author subjectively ranked their evaluation efforts on a 3-point Likert scale, with 1 being none/not aware, 2 being aware of the need for evaluation but seemingly uncertain how to measure their marketing activities, and 3 as demonstrating a clear understanding of how to evaluate their marketing activities. Four libraries were placed into the 1 category, nine were placed into the 2 category, and eleven were placed into the 3 category. Given the uneven assessment across these libraries it cannot be determined if the use of one kind of marketing technique may generally be considered more successful than another.

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An example of a marketing plan with a clear goal, appropriate techniques, and assessment is in Betz (2009). The goal of the marketing plan was to "increase the awareness and use of the Scopus database" (p. 250). The techniques chosen furthered the goal; the main focus was in training students to act as advocates and trainers for other students. They used other techniques that could be considered appealing to students, such as incentives and giveaways. The assessment the library chose was to look at usage statistics for the Scopus database; they noted that "the number of Scopus searches doubl[ed] in five months" (p. 251).

### **Marketing of electronic resources, in context**

The body of literature used in this analysis spans fifteen years (1994-2009), and it is informative to consider how marketing electronic resources may have changed during that time. The author reviewed the twenty-four documents for how marketing is defined and looked for mention of a major marketing campaign launched by the American Library Association in 2001, expecting to see a homogenization of stated purpose and techniques in the later years of the span of publications.

It is clear from the body of literature referenced in this research that libraries do not rely on only one definition of or approach to marketing. Five of the documents used in the analysis point to external definitions of marketing; two of these quote Kotler's work on marketing (Kotler and Levy 1969). Roberts and Appleton (2003) describe marketing as "embedding skills" (p. 83), an active approach that differs from the passive approach described in Woods (2007), to "promote and strengthen awareness" (p. 109). These

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different understandings of what marketing is will naturally lead to variation in how marketing techniques are applied.

In 2001 the American Library Association (ALA) began an advocacy program to create a public awareness of libraries and its issues. The author questioned if the ALA "@ your library" campaign (ALA, 2007) had an effect on a library's understanding of marketing electronic resources. Sixteen of the twenty-four documents used in this analysis were written after the "@ your library" campaign launched. The author reviewed these for a mention of the ALA campaign. Only one document specifically mentions this campaign (Delgado and Wood, 2007), though it may have had an impact on at least one other institution; Woods (2007) cites the use of the phrase "@ your library" in marketing materials but does not credit it as being inspired by the ALA campaign. It is surprising to learn that more libraries are not using the ALA's "@ your library" materials to market electronic resources, and this may reveal a weakness in that program. It is possible that libraries think of marketing 'the library' differently than marketing a library's electronic resources.

Libraries have adopted the tasks of marketing in an individualized manner over time. Koontz et al. (2007) summarize Kotler and Levy's (1969) argument that in order for marketing to be effective it "requires a consumer orientation instead of a product orientation" (p. 224). This evolutionary process of a library's rethinking its objective takes time, and some libraries move more quickly than others to accepting a new model of purpose. Lee's paper (2003) describes a process that a library may go through in order

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to "lay a foundation" for marketing. Acknowledging the variation in adoption of marketing as part of a library's operation, the marketing plans reviewed in this research are uneven; one library may not understand why or what it should market, whereas another may demonstrate a sophisticated plan for electronic resources in context with the library's larger marketing goals. Lindsay's (2004) report supports this by noting, "Although most libraries agree that marketing and public relations activities benefit their library, they do not yet understand that a formalized approach would add focus and direction to their activities, with a more effective outcome that could be measured" (p. 10).

The author expected to find some homogenization in the documents written toward the end of the span of time in the corpus selected for this research, but this was not supported when examining how a library defined marketing or looking for an effect from the ALA campaign, "@ your library." With the variation in the definition of marketing and the unclear source of where libraries learn how to market it may be helpful to create a trusted resource for this type of information. There is an exciting wealth of opportunity for libraries to collaborate to create and test methods of marketing electronic resources and then to deposit the results in a repository where other libraries may come to learn about them and how they may apply to their own institutions.

### **Discussion and future research**

Buczynski notes that it is difficult for libraries to move away from "a 'library as place' marketing mindset" (2007, p. 196), and it is evident from this research that his comment

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is true. The most frequently used marketing techniques fall into the category of physical medium, or items that libraries put in locations to try to connect patrons to particular resources. These items range from pens and pencils to banners and posters, all of which ultimately tie an electronic resource to the physical library. The author expects the e-communications category of marketing to rise exponentially over the next few years as libraries as a whole begin to understand how to better communicate with patrons who may never use the physical building of the library to access their resources.

A possible argument to this expectation is found in the surprising discovery of Gerke and Maness (2010), who found a significant correlation between patron perception of electronic resources available and the physical library he uses. "Newer facilities with more study space, regardless of a patron's age, discipline, or frequency of use, were significantly related to patron perceptions of e-resources" (Gerke and Maness, 2010, p. 25). It will be informative to follow research in the area of patron satisfaction as correlated between physical space and electronic resources in order to determine how – and where—to market appropriately.

Based on this analysis it is clear that libraries that engage in marketing activities should make themselves aware of general principles before beginning their plan. There are several authoritative texts on this topic, such as Dubicki (2007), Duke and Tucker (2007), Koontz et al. (2006), and Lee (2003). The development of any marketing plan may be applied to the marketing of electronic resources if the goals of the plan are clearly defined to promote electronic resources.

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## **Summary**

For this research literature related to marketing electronic resources was analyzed. The resulting corpus was composed of twenty-four documents. In those documents thirty-eight unique marketing techniques in use in libraries were discovered. The four most popular techniques among all kinds of libraries are patron training (group), flyers/brochures, email (external), and surveys. The most popular technique in use at college libraries could not be determined. The most popular technique in medical libraries is patron training (both group and individual). The most popular technique in public libraries is a tie among five techniques: banners/posters; giveaways; incentives; staff training (group); and use guide. The most popular technique in university libraries is patron training (group).

## **Appendix A: Institutions by library type**

College:

Edge Hill College of Higher Education (Appleton and Roberts, 2003)

Lucy Scribner Library at Skidmore College (Cosgrove, 2006)

Medical:

Pacific College of Oriental Medicine (PCOM) in San Diego (Broering et al., 2006)

Weill Cornell Medical College (Delgado and Wood, 2007)

Morehouse School of Medicine Library (Henderson et al., 2009)

Mount Sinai Hospital (Toronto) (Kendall and Massarella, 2001)

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National Health Service (NHS) in England (Turner et al., 2004)

Public:

Denton Public Library (Brannon, 2007)

Library System of Lancaster County (Library System of Lancaster County, PA, 2002)

University:

Washington State University (Bancroft et al., 1998)

University of Connecticut (Betz et al., 2009)

University of Sunderland (Edwards and Webb, 1999)

State and University Library, Bremen, Germany (Ellis, 2004)

Texas A&M University (TAMU) Libraries (Hart et al., 2001)

Wayne State University (Holley and Powell, 2004)

University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales, Australia (UNE) (Leong, 2007)

Tanzanian academic and research institutions (Manda, 2005)

University of South Florida (Metz-Wiseman and Rodgers, 2007)

Trinity University (Millet and Chamberlain, 2007)

University of Arkansas (Parker-Gibson, 1994)

Science & Engineering (S&E) Library at UCSC (Soehner and Wei, 2001)

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Song, 2006)



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Abilene Christian University, Eastern New Mexico University, New Mexico Highlands University, New Mexico State University, Texas Tech University, University of New

Mexico (Townley and Murray, 1999)

Brock University (Woods, 2007)

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