

Interview with Nancy Presley, Reference Librarian Santa Monica

use World Book for telephone reference - it has excellent indexing and is quite concise (the conciseness turns into its opposite, superficiality, depending on how deeply you need to go)

patrons and librarians have had a lot of trouble with new format of Britannica. She, however, feels that once she got used to Micro/Macro etc. she kind of likes it; she has learned how to maneuver between them quite well

the bibliography in the EB is quite useful; however it is hard to get patrons to use it

in this library there seems to be a more even distribution between encyclopedia use for fact reference (probably has a slight edge) and use for an overview or intro to a subject - World Book is always the first choice for fact reference; for an overview or intro it really depends on the ability of the user which is determined in the user interview - students often request Britannica because their teachers have urged them onto it

could see a lot of use for a disc (or tape) on how to use a library; how to find something out; how to research a question etc.

most libraries have no funds for building expansion, therefore they have zero growth projections in terms of the total number of volumes they can keep; she sees a lot of value in video materials which might take up much less room (my note: given the amount of room that it will be necessary to devote to player carrels etc, it's not likely that there will be much of a net savings)

library spends approximately \$225,000 per year for new books (this is plus \$36,000 for periodicals) - reference dept. gets funds approximately proportional to the percentage of reference books in the overall collection which is 12,000/260,000.

in explaining that kids today are television reared and that this makes them particularly, if not exclusively, receptive to materials in a video format, she gave an example of kids who come in and ask for info on elephants and refuse to deal with an article entitled 'pachyderms.'

she believes very strongly that in order to serve clientele
you have to put materials in a form that they can
relate to

Ms. Presley seems to fit what is an emerging pattern among
the librarians I have been talking with. On the one
hand she recognizes the future of her work as being
very tied up with new technologies of one sort or another.
Of paramount importance to her (as to others) is the
computerization of much of the libraries record keeping,
cataloguing etc. She is not all that excited however
about actual materials, video, computer software etc.
It's not that she is resistant, it's just that she
doesn't have a real developed sense of exactly what
sorts - problems such materials might solve, ie what
their ultimate value would be. I sense that a demonstration
or two could convert people like her into enthusiastic
promoters of much of the new technologies applications.
She really cares about what she does and has no vested
interest to speak of in holding on to only the old
established formats etc.