Survey of Library Services at ENR's Top 500 Design Firms

Implications For Engineering Education

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Before
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Objectives

- Do most firms have a degreed librarian?
- Does size matter?
- How do firms without degreed librarians obtain needed information?
- Are new engineers able to find information without assistance?
- What are the information needs of working engineers?

Methodology

- Developed one survey for principals, one survey for librarians

- Pre-tested the survey

- Purchased mailing list of *Engineering News Record* Top 500 Design Firms

- Sent survey to the heads of all 500 firms

- Return rate was 21.8% (n=109)

About the ENR Top 500

Firms are included in the Top 500 according to revenue for design services performed in millions of dollars.

About The Firms

- Firms ranged in size from 10 to 2000 employees (in local office)

- Firms ranged in size from 95 to 35,000 employees (for all offices)

- 81.6% have a library (self-defined)

Even More About The Firms

- 25.6% have a librarian

- 20.1% of Firms have librarian with MLS

- 11.9% of Firms require MLS

- 3.6% outsource library research

Avg. No. of Employees

- At firms with degreed librarian – 2,115

- At firms without a librarian – 801

- At firms with a non-degreed librarian - 549

20.1% of firms (22 out of 109) said they did not have a librarian because they did not need one, but also said that new engineers cannot find information without assistance

Why They Don't Have A Degreed Librarian

- "Multi-task roles by administrative support staff fills this need."

- "Five offices negate value of librarian."

- "Cannot find one."

- "Our library is Web-driven – we use IT staff & technical writers to populate it and keep it evergreen."

- "You don't understand our business – we do not have a need for any extensive research. We do application engineering and cutting edge work."
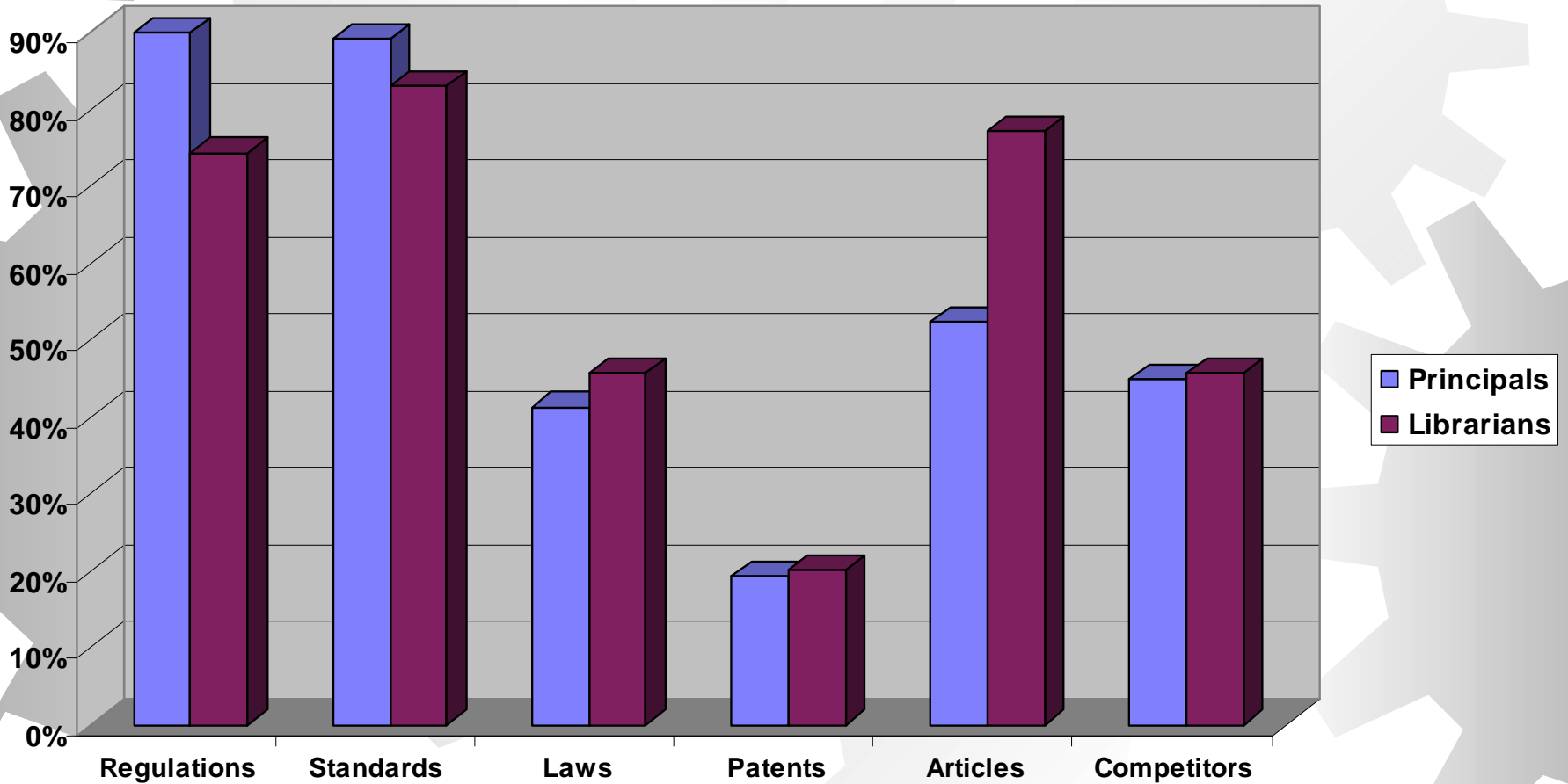
Types of Information Sought

Principals

- 89.9% - Regulations
- 88.9% - Standards
- 52.2% - Articles
- 44.4% - Competitor Info
- 41.2% - Laws
- 19.2% - Patents

Librarians

- 82.8% - Standards
- 77.1% - Articles
- 74.2% - Regulations
- 45.7% - Laws
- 45.7% - Competitor Info
- 20.0% - Patents

Types of Information Sought

Typical Work Week For Librarians

- 17.0% - Administrative Duties

- 16.4% - Cataloging

- 15.2% - Web Searching

- 14.7% - Reference

- 10.0% - Shelving

- 9.7% - Other *

- 7.6% - Non-Library Duties

Databases Subscribed To By Firms With Degreed Librarians

- Dialog   -   25.7%
- LexisNexis - 11.4%
- OCLC   -   5.7%
- STN   -   2.8%

Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."

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Criterion 3. Program Outcomes and Assessment

Engineering programs must demonstrate that their graduates have:

(i) a recognition of the need for, and an ability to engage in life-long learning.

(k) an ability to use the techniques, skills, and modern engineering tools necessary for engineering practice.

Faculty & Students Need to Know

- Most firms do not have librarians

- Firm's librarian may not be degreed

- Librarian may be there part-time or have other primary job duties

- Most principals believe new engineers can find information on their own

- Firms subscribe to few databases