

Australian Law Librarian Survey

Conducted using Survey Monkey

Survey Period: 22 March 2010 to 9 April 2010

Number of people who started the survey: 218

Number of people who completed the survey: 191

There were no compulsory questions and the number of responses for most questions was generally between 170 and 190.

Overview of findings:

Subscriptions: The majority of subscriptions are paid for by organisations

Journal Content: Nearly all respondents found the Journal content to be relevant and useful either often (43.2%) or sometimes (55.7%). 34 people responded to the question as to what would make the Journal more relevant in their professional lives. There was a 78.6% positive response to the idea of the journal publishing a survey of the profession, with a further 15.3% indicating they might be interested.

Frequency and Format: Most people are happy with the Journal being published four times a year (84.7%) and 60% would like to see the Journal available in both print and electronic formats.

Professional information: Most job titles include the words *Librarian* or *Manager*. Approximately 50% of respondents work in corporate libraries. 155 people have Degrees/Diplomas in Librarianship and Information Management. The highest percentage for length of time working in law libraries was 32.6% for 10-20 years.

Dorothy Shea
Editor – Australian Law Librarian

5 May 2010

Subscriptions

The majority of subscriptions (approximately three quarters) are paid for by organisations, with individuals accounting for fewer than 10% (see Figure 1), and of that 10% only a quarter paid the subscription themselves (See Figure 2).

It was interesting that 17.4% do not subscribe but thought it worthwhile doing the survey.

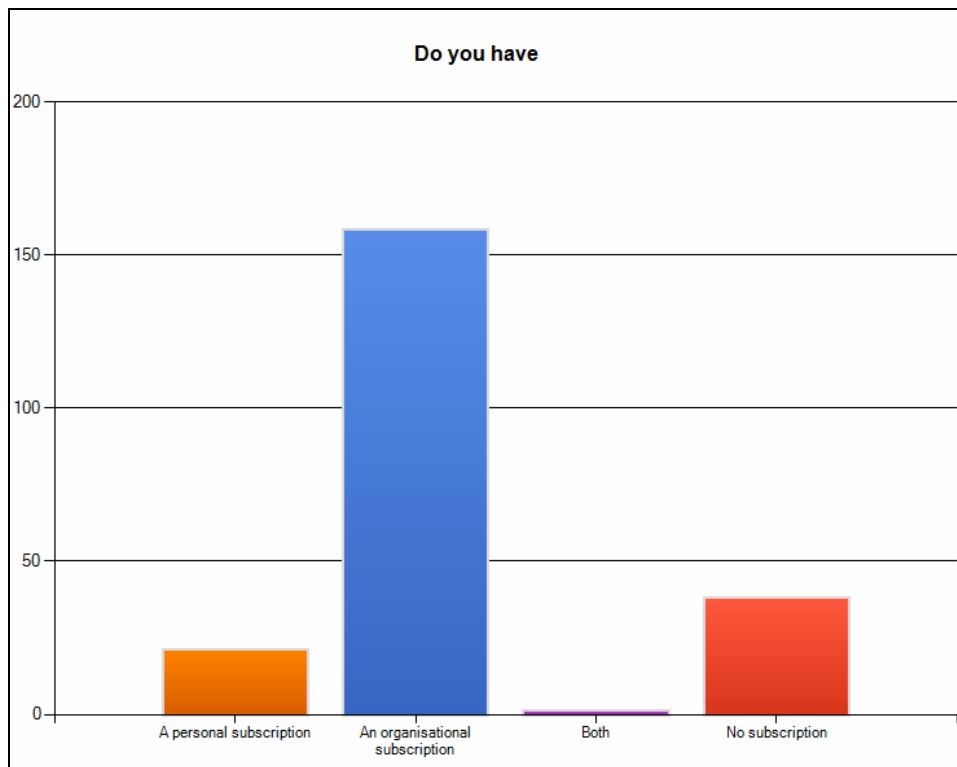


Figure 1. Type of subscription

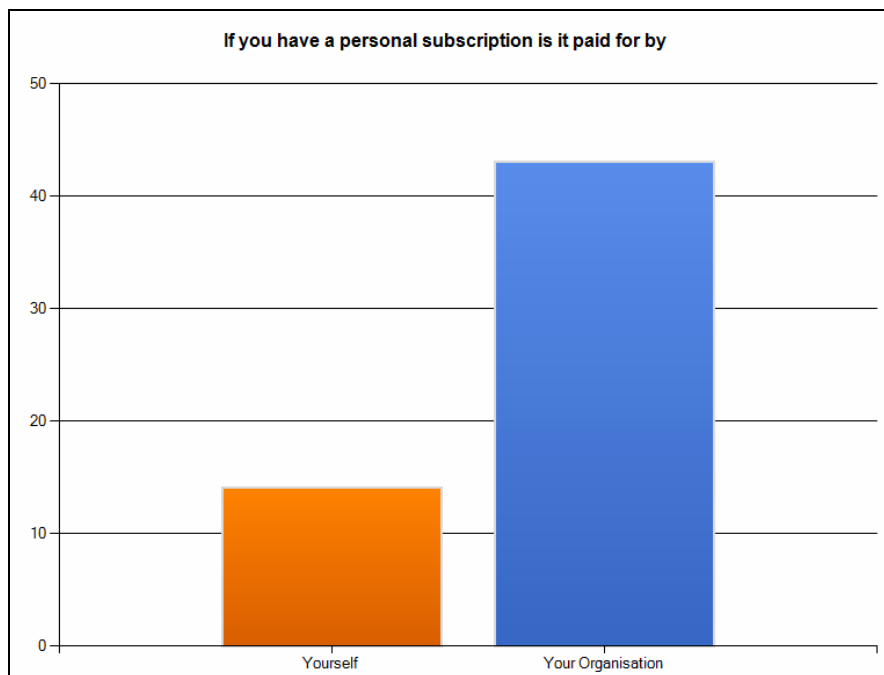


Figure 2. Who pays for personal subscriptions

One third skipped the question about whether payment was directly to ALL or through a subscription agent. The majority of responses indicated that subscribers generally deal directly with the *Australian Law Librarian*. This question was never going to produce information that could not be extracted from our accounting software.

Relevance and Usefulness of Content

As to the relevance and usefulness of articles there were 43.3% who said often and 55.7% sometimes and 2 never; 26 people skipped the question (See Figure 3). If we take this as the benchmark then any future survey will be able to measure whether we are increasing our relevant to readers and subscribers.

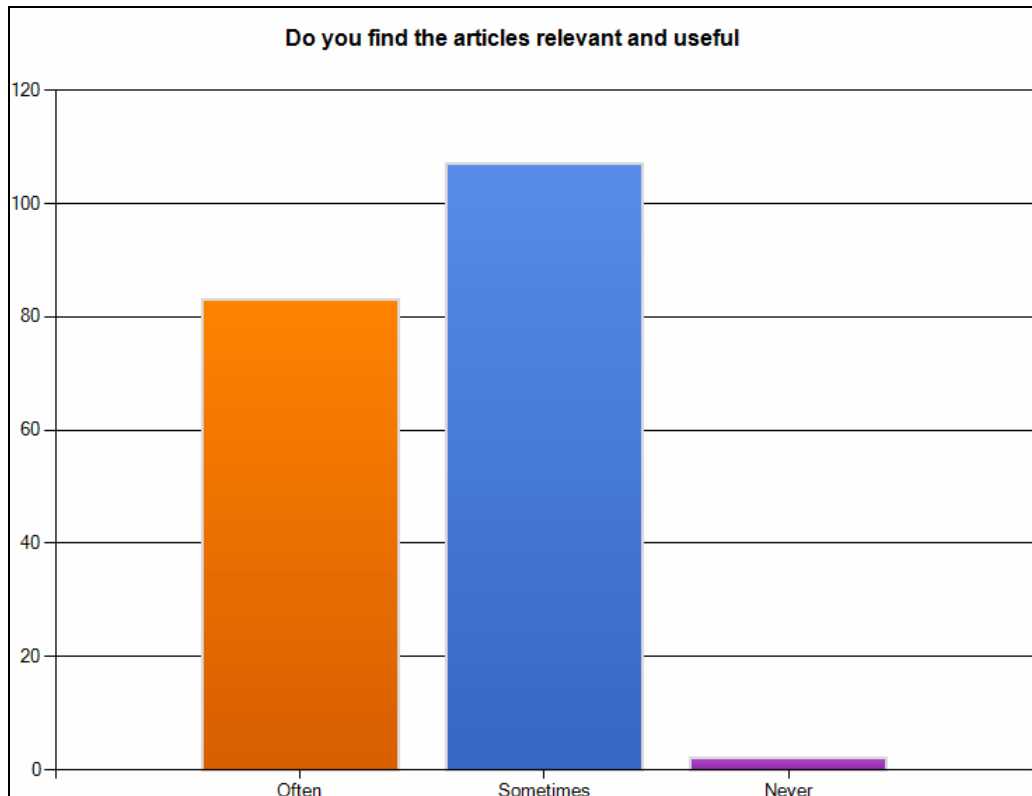


Figure 3. Relevance and usefulness of the Journal articles

Non-subscribers were asked if they checked the contents pages of the Journal. 45 people responded, with 60% using the ALLA web site or other current awareness services, 15.6% using services like AGIS or Hein, and 24% not bothering to check (see Figure 4).

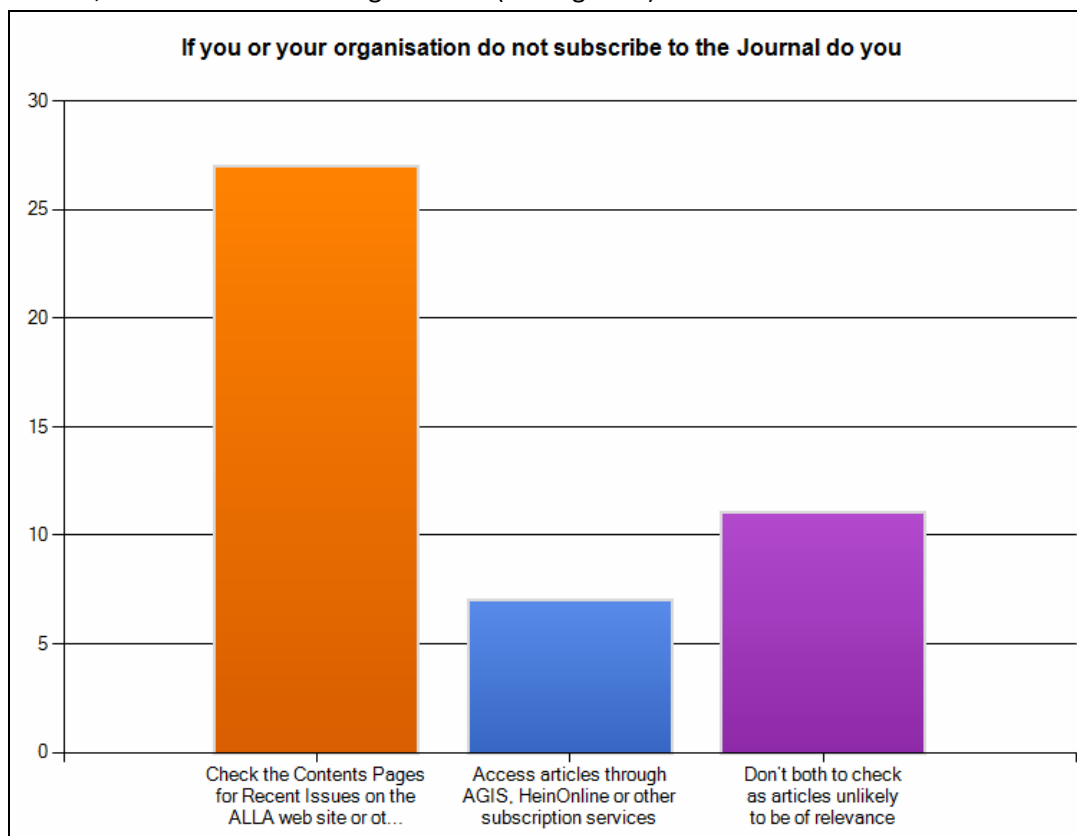


Figure 4. Non-subscribers awareness of the Journal

There were 34 responses to the question as to what content would make the Journal more relevant? These are summarised below:

Table 1. Content to make Journal More Relevant

Subject	Sub categories	No of responses
Book Reviews	Greater range of books to be included	1
Columns	Rare materials, contributions from lawyers on subjects such as copyright, censorship, internet filtering, trends, future directions in law, legal developments, legal research, practical tips and hints	8
Current Awareness	How to, setting up, what other ALLA groups are doing	5
Customer service	Engaging clients, take up of new services	3
Library procedures	Developing trends, RDA, cataloguing	4
Library Technologies	wikis, rss, twitter, intranets, blogs, metadata, emerging trends, adoption by clients, useful websites and blogs	11
Research	Strategies, legal, best practice,	3
Problem solving	War stories, overcoming difficult challenges, dealing with problem issues	4
Staffing	Moving between sectors, job titles, salaries, basic skills, training and study, single person, small libraries, leadership, management, encouraging library students to become law librarians, practical training for new and junior level staff, perspectives of librarians from different sectors	21
Subscription databases and free access databases	Assessments, comparisons, changes, updates on new products, reviews, copyright issues, license restrictions	7
Technical	Managing subscriptions, balance between print and electronic, competing expectations of clients	3
Training	Teaching strategies, new ideas, developing trends	4

A range of staffing issues and library technologies top the list of subjects that people would like to see in the Journal. There is also some demand for more columns on specific subjects.

Figure 4 shows considerable support for a survey of the profession. 196 people responded to the question as to whether the Journal should publish a survey of the profession, including a salary survey, with 78.6% being in favour, 16.3% possibly in favour and only 5.1% against the idea. I see this as an endorsement of the idea and will be discussing with the Communications sub-committee ideas

for how we should proceed. I would expect to report on this to the National Executive at the June teleconference.

50% favoured the survey being done every 2 years, 43.6% every year and the remaining respondents mostly favoured every three to five years. The usefulness to government libraries was questioned by some.

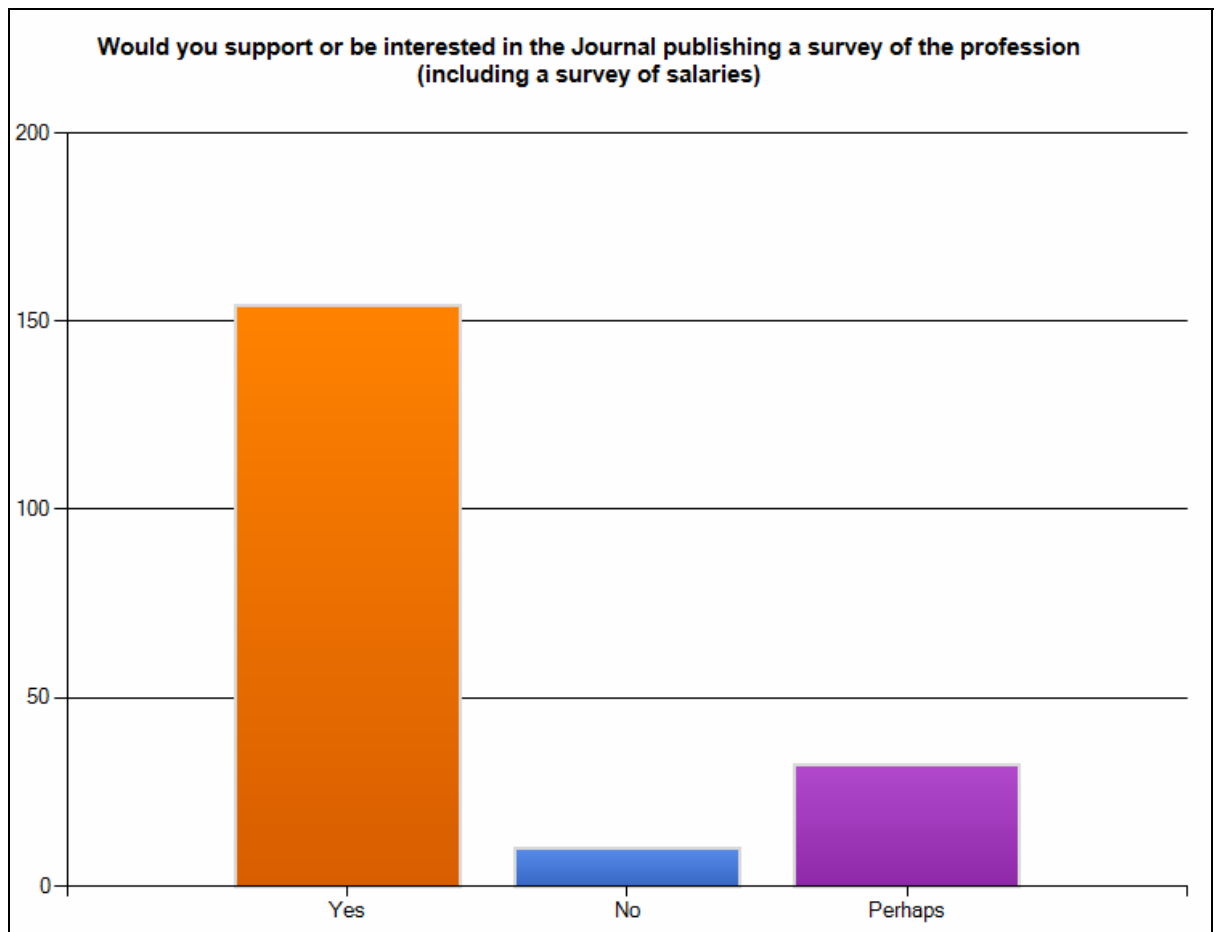


Figure 4. Interest in Survey of the profession

Frequency and Format

On the question of publication frequency the preference is for maintaining the status quo, with 84.7% happy with the Journal being published four times a year.

Over half of the respondents (60.6%) expressed a preference for the Journal to be available both in print and electronic form, with the remaining 40% being almost equally split on having it as only in print or only electronic. This is something that the Editorial Board will need to look at to see what would be involved in making the Journal available electronically. One solution would be to make all issues, except for the current subscription year, available on AustLII.

Comments from previous questions in the Survey also indicate the need for some parts of the Journal (State News and other regular columns in particular) to be published electronically. Timeliness is often an issue for this material as by the time the information is published in print it is no longer relevant or useful. The Editor will report on how this might be done at the next National Executive Committee meeting in June 2010.

Table 2 sets out the responses to the question "What is Your Job Title?" By far the most common job description titles include the words Librarian and Manager.

Table 2. Job Titles

Major Title	Sub categories	No
Adviser	Law Library	1
Analyst	Business Systems, Intelligence	2
Assistant	Library, Research	4
Consultant	Information, Research, knowledge	6
Coordinator	Knowledge, Information, Library Resources	4
Director		1
Librarian	Academic, Acquisitions, Binding, Cataloguing, Client Services, Electronic Services, Faculty, Law, Liaison, Outreach, Readers Services, Reference, Resources Coordinator, Systems, Technical, Training, User Services	85
Manager	General, Information, Knowledge, Know How, Library, Precinct	56
Officer	Readers Service, Research and Information	3
Specialist	Information	3
Team Leader	Electronic Applications	1
Technician	Information, Library	9
Trainer	Library, Research	2

Professional Information

Figure 5 shows the sectors where law librarians are employed. Corporate libraries make up almost half of the employers with a 48.4% response. 'Corporate Libraries' was perhaps not the best term to use as responses from the 'Other' option included various references to Law Firms, Law Libraries and Barristers Chambers. When these are added in we are looking at over 50% of law librarians working in this sector.

Government accounts for 20.2% which the Courts and Academic libraries are almost equal with 13.3% and 12.2% respectively.

Very few run or own their own business.

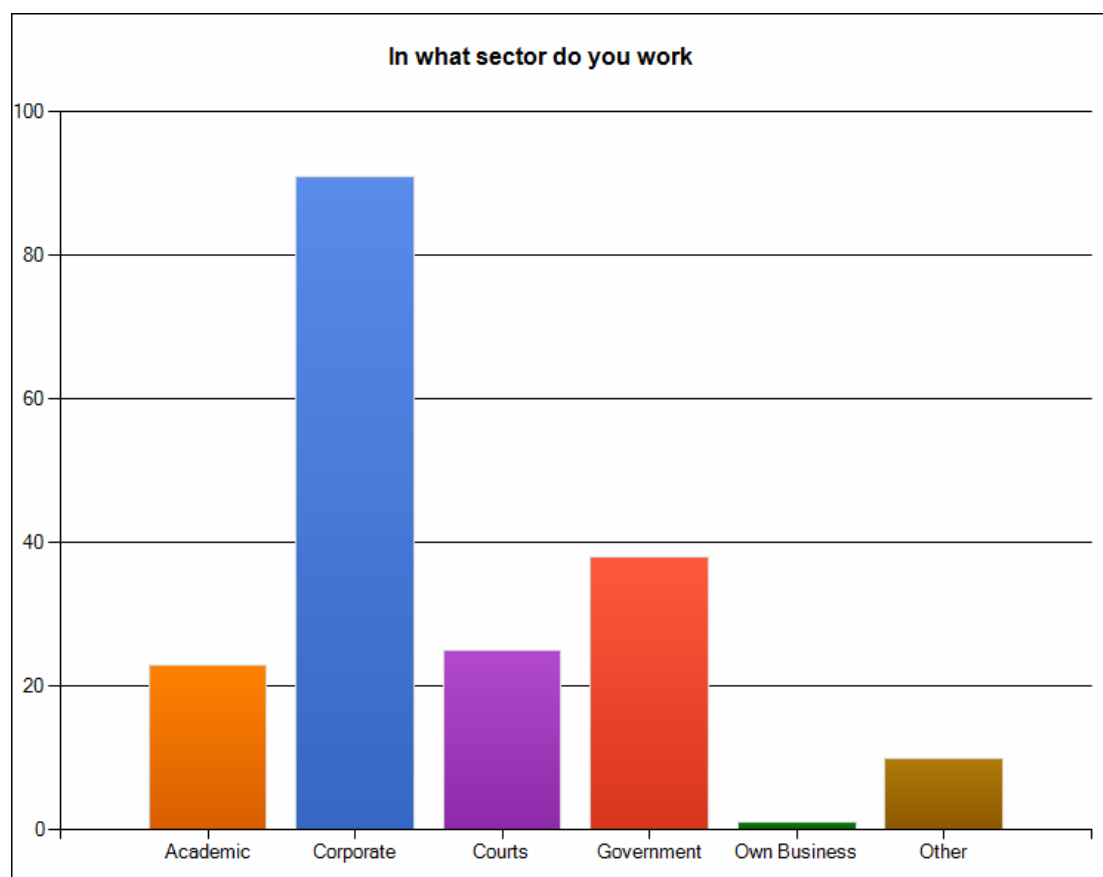


Figure 5. Where do law librarians work

The response to what kind of qualifications people have (see Figure 6) shows that the majority of law librarians have specific library related degrees with 175 of respondents having Library/Information Management Degrees and/or Graduate Diplomas. 24 people have Law Degrees and 24 have TAFE or College qualifications.

Responses to the 'Other' question included 15 Bachelor of Arts, 12 Postgraduate qualifications (Mostly Masters), 6 Teaching degrees, 5 Bachelor of Science, and one each for Law Studies, Library Technician and Registration.

Figure 7 shows how long people have worked in law libraries. The largest group was the 10-20 years range (32.6%) with 0-5 years and 5-10 years being almost equal with 22.3% and 21.8% respectively. Nearly one quarter of respondents has worked in law libraries for more than 20 years; 5.7% are in for the long haul with more than 30 years' experience.

With approximately 55% having worked in law libraries for 10 years or more it appears that there is a solid base of experience in the profession.

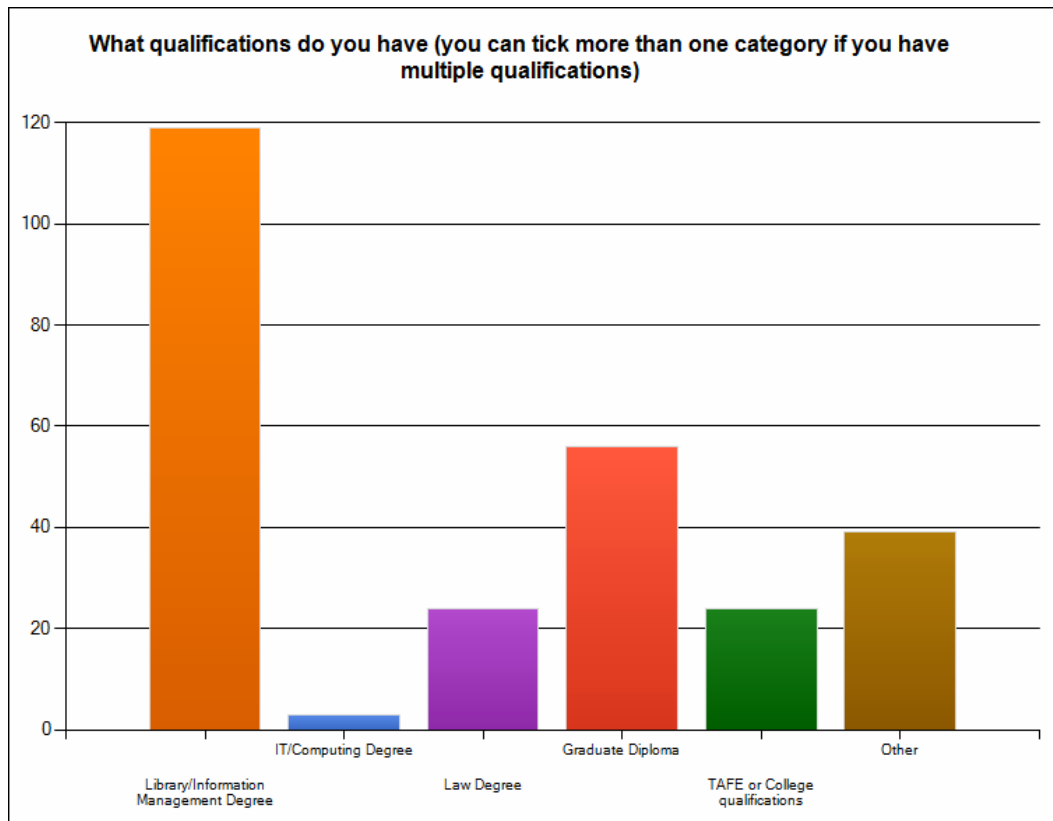


Figure 6. Qualifications

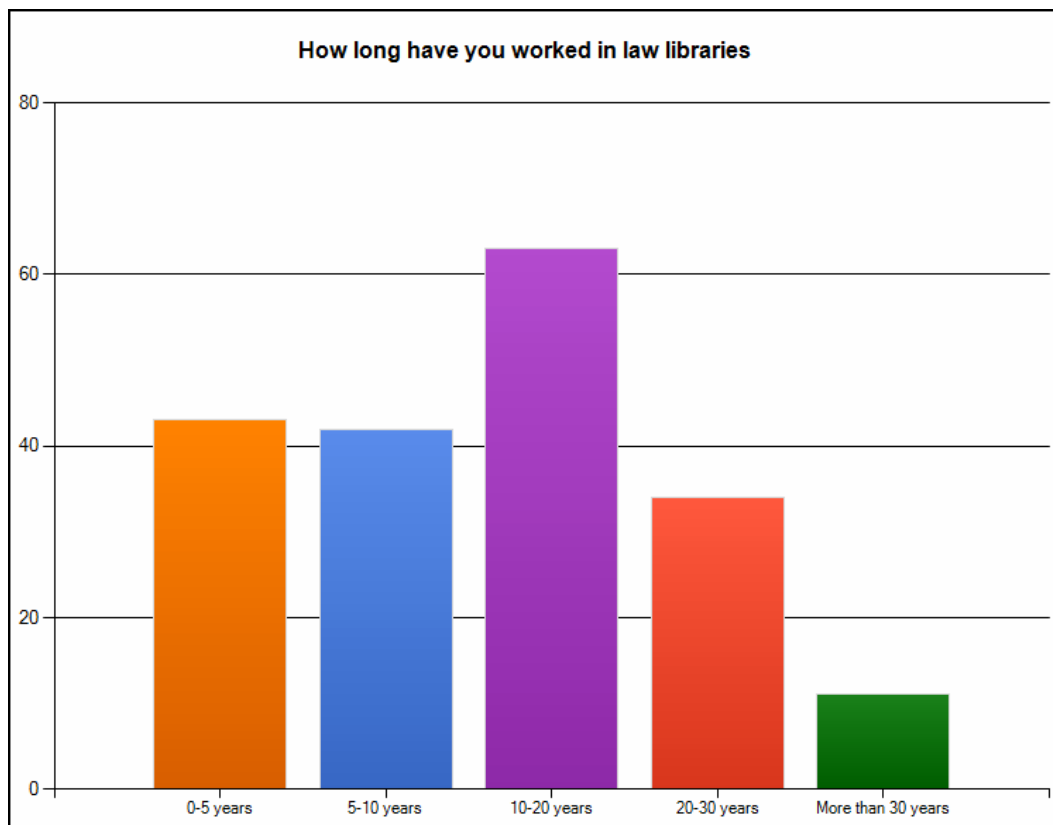


Figure 7. Length of service