

Mary Bryson. Public Library Services to the Romance Reader: An Online Survey of Romance Readers. A Master's paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. May, 2004. 57 pages. Advisor: Barbara B. Moran

This study describes the results of an online questionnaire survey of romance genre fiction readers. The survey was conducted to determine the behaviors and needs of romance genre fiction readers and how well public libraries are meeting those needs.

Research shows that popular public library services to romance genre readers, has not kept pace with trends in the fiction reading patron base. Services to romance readers are, or should be, essentially the same that exist for any fiction genre: pertinent readers' advisory, conscious collection development, and access to collections through cataloging records. North American public libraries are failing to support the reading interests of 51.1 million readers (Romance Writers of America, Inc 2003, 3-6).

Headings:

Fiction

Fiction—statistics

Romance novels

Reader guidance

PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES TO THE ROMANCE READER:
AN ONLINE SURVEY OF ROMANCE READERS

by
Mary K. Bryson

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

May 2004

Approved by

Barbara B. Moran

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction: Romance Readers and Public Libraries..... | 4 |
| Literature Review..... | 6 |
| Methodology..... | 15 |
| Results..... | 19 |
| Conclusions..... | 32 |
| Suggestions for Further Study..... | 34 |
| References..... | 36 |
| Acknowledgements..... | 39 |
| Appendix A: Online Survey and Cover Letter..... | 40 |
| Appendix B: List of Romance Genre Websites..... | 47 |
| Appendix C: Supplemental Bibliography..... | 49 |

Table of Tables and Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1: If you read romance fiction on a regular basis, do you consider yourself a romance reader?..... | 20 |
| Figure 1: Average Books Read Per Month..... | 21 |
| Figure 2: Romance Sub-Genres Read by Surveyed Readers..... | 21 |
| Figure 3: Book Selection Methods..... | 22 |
| Figure 4: Methods of Book Acquisition..... | 23 |
| Figure 5: Are you a member of any book club or group? By percent of responses... .. | 24 |
| Figure 6: Fiction Genres Read by Book Clubs..... | 25 |
| Figure 7: Do you discover new things to read through your book club? | 25 |
| Figure 8: Book Clubs Structured by One Title per Meeting..... | 26 |
| Figure 9: Readers' Comfort Levels Discussing Romance with Librarians | 27 |
| Figure 10: Libraries Offering Romance According to Surveyed Readers..... | 28 |
| Figure 11: Separation of Romance from General Fiction..... | 28 |
| Figure 12: Libraries Collecting Category Romance..... | 29 |
| Table 2: Is your library located in a rural or urban area?..... | 29 |
| Figure 13: How Much Surveyed Readers Rely Upon their Library..... | 30 |
| Figure 14: Descriptions of Local Libraries..... | 31 |
| Table 3: Surveyed Readers Familiar Enough to Describe Libraries..... | 31 |

Introduction: Romance Readers and Public Libraries

There can be no denying the sheer size and appetite of the romance genre readership. According to the Romance Writers of America, Inc.'s *2003 Romance-Fiction Sales Statistics, Reader Demographics and Book-Buying Habits*, sales of romance fiction have been steadily increasing to \$1.63 billion in 2002 (1). Of all popular fiction sales, 34.6% were romance in 2002 (Romance Writers of America, Inc., 2003, p. 3). This romance sales figure topped mystery and thriller fiction's 23.1% and general fiction's 24.1% (2003, p. 3).

But, according to the Romance Writers of America, Inc., only 14% (2003, p. 6) of 51.1 million North American romance readers (2003, p. 3) use their local libraries to access romances. What is the explanation for this low percentage of use? Retail bookstores certainly recognize the buying power of the romance reader and are rewarded with 44% of readers purchasing from bookstores and 13% from used bookstores (RWA, 2003, p. 6). At a time when libraries are comparing themselves to bookstores, online or off (Brisco, 2004; Rippel, 2003; Tenopir, 2003; Fialkoff, 2003), why are they ignoring such a major reading interest?

The Romance Genre

In *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction*, Saricks (2001) explains the emotional appeal of the romance genre—an appeal that is sometimes difficult for readers to articulate. This is both the charm and the stumbling block of the genre. This aspect of the genre also leaves it vulnerable to criticisms of writing quality and formula dependence, factors that are often secondary to the writer's ability to capture the romance reader's emotional investment in the story and characters. Saricks explains,

We experience the story on an emotional level, and this makes our satisfaction in its outcome hard to explain to someone unfamiliar with the genre. In school we are neither taught nor expected to appreciate stories on this emotional level. (2001, p. 203)

This emotional investment in the romance leads to an important characteristic of romance fans: they expect a happy ending that fits within the romance genre formula (Saricks, 2001, p. 220).

Ann Bouricius's *The Romance Reader's Advisory: A Librarian's Guide to Love in the Stacks* (2000) explains the diversity in sensuality levels within the romance genre. In addition, romance publishers usually provide clues as to a book's sub-genre and sensuality level, another important element of romances for the librarian to understand. While series or category romances, the most formula-dependent sub-genres of romance, are easy to identify by sensuality level due to publisher labels (such as Harlequin's *Blaze* or *Temptation* series), single-title publications are less clear. Bouricius provides a key for translating words that commonly appear in reviews or plot summaries of romances (2000, p. 53). Some are self-explanatory, such as "innocent" as opposed to "explicit".

Others are familiar to fans of the genre, such as “sweet” or “spicy.” Lists of publisher’s category or series lines, with characteristic details to differentiate among them are available in Bouricius’s *The Romance Reader’s Advisory* (2000) and in Ramsdell’s *Romance Fiction* (1999). Ramsdell’s *Romance Fiction* (1999) also provides an historical overview of the romance novel’s evolution over the last two centuries, providing a valuable illustration of how stereotypes of romances are simply outdated.

The romance genre has a loyal and prolific following of readers and writers. A rich and diverse romance readers’ community exists online, where webzines, listservs, newsletters, reviews, and even publishers’ guides to writing the romance (such as www.eharlequin.com’s “Learn to Write” online magazine) can be found. The Harlequin site also features a “Community” network of reader discussions. Appendix C includes a selected list of online resources.

Jayne Ann Krentz, prolific best-selling romance author and librarian, edited and contributed to *Dangerous Men & Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of Romance* (1992), a collection of essays. Other reference books originating from romance authors and readers include *Words of Love: A Complete Guide to Romance Fiction* (1984), Facts on File’s *Love Lines: A Romance Reader’s Guide to Printed Pleasures* (1983), and *North American Romance Writers* (1999), which includes essays about how and why these selected authors chose to write romance.

Romance in Libraries

The previously mentioned *2003 Romance-Fiction Sales Statistics, Reader Demographics and Book-Buying Habits* (RWA, 2003) provides a statistical perspective on some common issues of romances in library fiction collections. When asked to rank shopping factors, romance readers chose selection as the most important factor influencing their purchases from bookstores (RWA, Inc. 2003, 6). This puts significant pressure on collection development efforts for romance genre titles, as it is impossible to expect libraries to keep up with the annual publication of over 2,000 romance titles alone (RWA, 2003, p. 2), many of which are paperback-original titles.

Over fifty-three percent of all paperback sales in 2002 were romance fiction (RWA, 2003, p. 2). Paperbacks have long been considered a library collection problem due to poor durability and shelving issues. This assumption often leads to a dangerous corollary that paperback-only publications are not as well written as original hardback releases, with the result that paperback romances are excluded from “quality” collections. If durability and physical integrity are an issue, then hardcover format wouldn’t be privileged either, given the examples in the Publisher’s Hall of Shame (<http://www.powerlink.net/wyvern/shame.htm>). This website, created by librarian John R. Clark, seeks to hold publishers accountable for new books that literally fall apart.

Some librarians point out that they collect romances based upon patron donations. As one romance-researching librarian points out, “[r]eaders do not

generally donate the books they like best...instead they donate the books they don't want to keep" (Bouricius, 2000, p. 38). Using donations as a major collection development technique will produce a handicapped collection of any genre.

Romance may not be an individual librarian's personal reading preference, resulting in a claim of ignorance of the genre. Does ignorance of any subject preclude a librarian's inclusion of that material in a library collection? This argument died with Duncan Smith's eloquent introduction to the "Reinventing Readers' Advisory" chapter in *The Readers' Advisor's Companion*.

Imagine witnessing the following scenario: A young man approaches the library reference desk and says, "I've just learned that my brother has diabetes. I'd like to learn more about it and find out what I can do to support him. What do you suggest?" To this the librarian responds, "Oh, that's too bad. I've never had diabetes, so I don't know anything about it." (Smith, 2001, p. 59)

Similarly, librarians try to excuse their lack of investment in romance fiction collection development by claiming that romances are difficult to identify for labeling or inclusion in a separate genre fiction section. A search of the PUBLIB listserv archive (<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/PubLib/archive.html>), an online discussion list for public librarians, shows that this is an expressed concern for many librarians. It is true that many general fiction books contain multiple genre elements, and authors crossing genres is common. But, romances are often characterized by stereotypical covers and assumed telltale shallow plot formulas. Joyce Saricks's *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction* (2001) provides an entire chapter defining romance, including showing how a romance is not just

any book with a love story. Romance readers and writers have long publicized their definition of a romance, and it usually involves a happy ending.

Librarians can no longer argue that most romance readers are reading category or series romance, which result in multiple titles released in paperback monthly. Publisher-designed category or series lines are a publishing and marketing phenomenon uniquely associated with romance publishing (see Jensen's *Love's Sweet Return* for the story of Harlequin's introduction of this successful marketing technique). The surveys commissioned by the Romance Writers of America, Inc. and conducted by Corona Research indicate 37% of romance readers read only single-title romances, and 45% read a combination of series and single-title romances. That amounts to 82% of surveyed romance readers who would benefit from public library collections of single-title romances (RWA, 2003, p. 3).

The availability of reliable romance fiction reviews has increased in recent decades. *Library Journal* has been reviewing romance since 1995. *Publishers Weekly* and *Booklist* include romance titles, and *Booklist* devotes an entire issue each year to romance. *Romantic Times* is a monthly magazine boasting hundreds of reviews of romance titles in each issue. Further, *Romantic Times* doesn't limit its reviews to romance; it also includes science fiction, fantasy, and mystery title reviews and incorporates a ranking system that makes selection that much easier. *Romantic Times* has the potential to serve as a valuable popular collection development tool. In addition, Romance Writers of America, Inc. has a Library Liaison and an affiliate program to provide services to librarians. The

Romance Writers of America, Inc. website offers a special menu just for librarians (http://www.rwanational.org/librarians_menu.cfm), which includes current releases, award-winning romance titles, and explanations of the genre and its many sub-genres.

A Closer Look at Romance

Attitudes towards romance fiction, along with the books themselves, have changed in recent decades. Scholars who once considered the genre as patriarchy-buttressing pap are studying the novels and the readers. As romance becomes more mainstream, there is more reason for libraries to recognize the genre as a legitimate facet of the popular reading collection. Services to romance readers are, or should be, essentially the same that exist for any fiction genre: relevant readers' advisory, conscious collection development, and access to collections through cataloging records. Are librarians investing as much time and energy in developing these services for romances as they do any other genre or general fiction collection, and if so, why? Or do romance readers have characteristics that make them a hard audience to satisfy?

Reading romance fiction can be an intimate experience, one that readers are shy to explain to strangers, such as a librarian behind a desk. Do romance readers collect their own personal libraries of romance? Do they build their own reading communities to share their reading experiences and materials? Are they any more prone to these activities than readers of any other genre?

This paper describes an online questionnaire survey of romance readers to determine their needs, how their local public libraries are meeting those needs,

and what they think about their public libraries. It is hoped that the results of this survey will begin to answer some of the above questions and improve the relationship between libraries and romance readers.

Literature Review

Relevant research falls into three main categories: research focusing on popular literature and reading habits in relation to libraries; research about the romance genre and its readers; and finally, research that examines romance within the library context. There is very little research on romance readers' use of public libraries.

Popular Literature and Libraries

The following is only a small selection of available research and publications focusing on popular literature and libraries.

The increased popularity of book clubs and community reading programs has led to more literature addressing social aspects of reading, further legitimizing fiction reading. The community-wide reading and discussion phenomenon taking place in public libraries is supported by the Library of Congress's Center for the Book state affiliate offices. Elizabeth Long's *Book Clubs: Women and the Uses of Reading in Everyday Life* is a scholarly examination of women's use of social reading interactions. Another scholar of reading within the social context is the library historian Wayne Wiegand, whose articles "Missing the Real Story: Where Library and Information Science Fails the Library Profession" (2001) and "Misreading LIS Education" (1997) focus on the librarian's responsibility to learn about readers and the act of reading.

Bouricius begins the professional advisory section of *The Romance Reader's Advisory* (2000), by reminding the reader of the public library's long history of debating the inclusion of popular literature with an 1884 quotation, "the library is in existence by the grace of the public, and it is its duty to cater to *all* classes that go towards making up the community in which it is established" (p. 36).

Study of Romance Readers

Scholarly research of romance fiction and readers has increased since the 1970s, recognizing a shift in the romance publishing industry from books with only victim-heroines to a wildly diverse genre. The research also reflects an increase in feminist scholarship in disciplines from social sciences to literature. Although romance fiction is now on academe's research radar, very little related scholarship is published in books or journals. Academic treatments include *The Alienated Reader: Women and Popular Romantic Literature in the 20th Century* by Bridget Fowler (1991), *Good-bye Heathcliff: Changing Heroes, Heroines, Roles, and Values in Women's Category Romances* by Mariam Darce Frenier (1988), *Reading the Romantic Heroine: Text, History, Ideology* by Leslie W. Rabine (1985), and *Feminism and the Politics of Reading* by Lynne Pearce (1997). A selected bibliography of related resources is available in Appendix C.

The most detailed social science scholarship on a specific group of romance readers can be found in Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (1991). Radway analyzed the responses of a controlled set of romance readers in over 60 hours of interviews

in 1980 and 1981. She discusses how these readers judge and enjoy the romance fiction they choose, guided by the advice of a well-read bookseller in a local bookstore. Her work challenges previous assumptions that romance fiction is anti-feminist and presents a more realistic view of how readers use their reading experiences. Radway also offers detailed analysis of publisher's tactics and textual meanings in romance fiction.

The RWA statistical survey (2003) is another valuable study of romance readers. The survey is updated annually and includes both a demographic study of readers and a commercial sales component. The data is intended for all professional or personal interests in the romance publishing and writing industry, including academics, librarians, booksellers, and media.

Romance in the Library

There is a lack of scholarly research related to romance fiction in the library and information science discipline, but this is being slowly remedied by an increase in scholarly emphasis on popular culture inclusion in collections and readers' advisory research. "The Librarian as Effete Snob: Why Romance?" in *Wilson Library Bulletin* (Mosley et al, 1995, p. 24), lists typical criticisms and stereotypes of romances and romance readers, then provides astute responses. The authors then explain reasons for including romance in a library collection. Finally, they point out something that should make every public librarian sit up and evaluate his or her professionalism:

Romance novels are the last genre that librarians feel comfortable censoring. In fact, many librarians seem to view this as a social obligation. They censor romances using direct methods: refusal to purchase, refusal to catalog. They censor

romances using indirect methods: negative attitudes, comments from staff.

But censorship is censorship. The bottom line is, even if you don't like romances, you have a professional obligation to defend the rights of others to read them. (Mosley et al, 1995, p. 25)

Mary K. Chelton offers more evidence to support romances in libraries in her article "Unrestricted Body Parts and Predictable Bliss: The Audience Appeal of Formula Romances" (1991).

The readers' advisory renaissance in recent years has boosted library science research and public library services for fiction genres. Tools such as Joyce G. Saricks's *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction* (2001), Diana Tixier Herald's *Genreflecting: A Guide to Reading Interests in Genre Fiction* (2000, 5th ed.), and Kristin Ramsdell's *Romance Fiction: A Guide to the Genre* (1999, soon to be in its second edition) are now standard reference sources located at library service desks.

These books define romance and break the genre into its typical appeal factors. Ramsdell's *Romance Fiction* (1999) describes sub-genres within romance that appeal to individual interests of readers. Ramsdell provides an overview of the genre's development to help inform collection development and readers' advisory efforts. Ramsdell not only provides the information to make educated collection and service decisions that keep pace with contemporary romance movements, she offers important considerations for these decisions, including issues, cataloging and processing practices, displays, shelving, and maintenance (Ramsdell, 1999).

In *The Romance Reader's Advisory* (2000), Bouricius systematically breaks down the traditional rationales used to dismiss romance as a legitimate part of library fiction collections. Excuses and short-cuts often used in processing romances, such as not cataloging romance, not purchasing paperback romance, and not including romance genre titles in collection development efforts, are not only discussed in her book, but practical remedies are offered to restore equal treatment in a fiction collection.

The above areas of study and publication have informed the survey design and its goals. This study looks at current romance readers and asks how libraries fit into their reading and book acquiring habits. The literature suggests that libraries are not meeting the needs of romance readers, and this study attempts to determine if and how this may be true. No research project of this nature has been conducted on romance readers and their use of libraries.

Methodology

The survey (see Appendix A) was designed to identify the romance reader's reading preferences, reading rate per month, and book club activities. The reader was asked to answer questions about how their local public library provided romance fiction and to evaluate that library's romance fiction collection.

This survey also sought to evaluate how much romance readers rely upon libraries, what other resources they rely upon, and if they discuss their reading preferences and needs with library staff. Questions addressing their activity levels in book discussion groups relate to the possibility of improving service to romance readers by offering librarian-led reader's advisory book discussions.

Survey questions were designed to provide basic information about romance readers and their use of libraries. The original survey was pre-tested on MSLS candidates and avid readers. Based upon pretest participant feedback, minor changes were made, such as the inclusion of larger numbers for average books read per month and location of library in either suburban or urban areas.

Converting the survey to an HTML form allowed faster and more targeted distribution. Electronic distribution also took advantage of a rich online community of romance readers. Possible online venues for the survey were researched, by keyword web searching, reading site purposes, and exploring site contents, to ensure a focus on avid romance readership. Letters of introduction

and requests for permission to circulate the survey were sent to the administrators of twenty listserv accounts and message boards (refer to Appendix B for a complete list of these URLs).

Each of these potential distribution sites was chosen because of their target audience of romance readers or avid general readers. Only the following sites actually responded with permission and encouragement to distribute the survey URL using their site: FictionL (<http://www.webrary.org/rs/flmenu.html>), Romance Readers Anonymous (<http://www.toad.net/~dolma/>), and the Romance Readers Connection (<http://www.theromancereadersconnection.com>).

The online survey was available from March 12 to March 20, 2004, and a total of 244 readers submitted their response results. Four responses were eliminated because the respondents said they were not romance readers. A few results were included from readers who indicated they did not consider themselves romance readers, but provided sufficient explanatory text that they preferred romances. The assumption is that those who prefer to read romance would pay more attention to how the genre is presented and treated in their library.

The survey was in HTML form code and used “gform” codes for anonymous email response delivery. This response delivery method does not report any electronic source identifiers, preserving participant privacy. All responses arrived in the researcher’s email account addressed from HTTPD Daemon <httpd@web1.isis.unc.edu>, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill campus email server.

The sampling method was a convenience set based on as wide a distribution as possible, with the sampling size undetermined due to blind circulation via listserv and web posting. It can safely be assumed that female adults represented the bulk of respondents (hence female pronoun usage), although none of the participating listserv accounts or web sites were gender-specific.

The goal of this survey was to gain more data about romance readers to inform proposals to improve public library services that directly benefit romance readers. By extension, this survey will benefit popular genre readers and readers' services in public libraries.

Results

Romance readers responded with warm enthusiasm to this online survey. Many respondents emailed the researcher directly to share their comments or took advantage of the survey's free text fields to offer detailed commentary. The following graphs and tables depict the percentages of surveyed readers who marked choices offered in response to specific questions. Of 244 returned responses, 240 were usable, although many of these usable answers included some minimal missing data. The survey can be broken into two parts, the half that focuses on the reader's behaviors and that which describes their public library. See Appendix A for the actual survey questions and cover letter.

The first question asks the survey-taker if she considers herself a "romance reader" and is designed to determine if these readers of romances commit themselves to the genre. One affirmed "romance reader" respondent still answered the "If not, please tell why?" part of the question with this comment, "I would have said "No" but then I had to be honest about it!" Another reader who did not consider herself a "romance reader" responded, "[b]ecause there is almost a negative feeling 'admitting' you read romance...It seems so unprofessional, so dull, so girly." As can be seen in Table 1, thirteen respondents qualified their romance reading habit in this "If not, please tell why?"

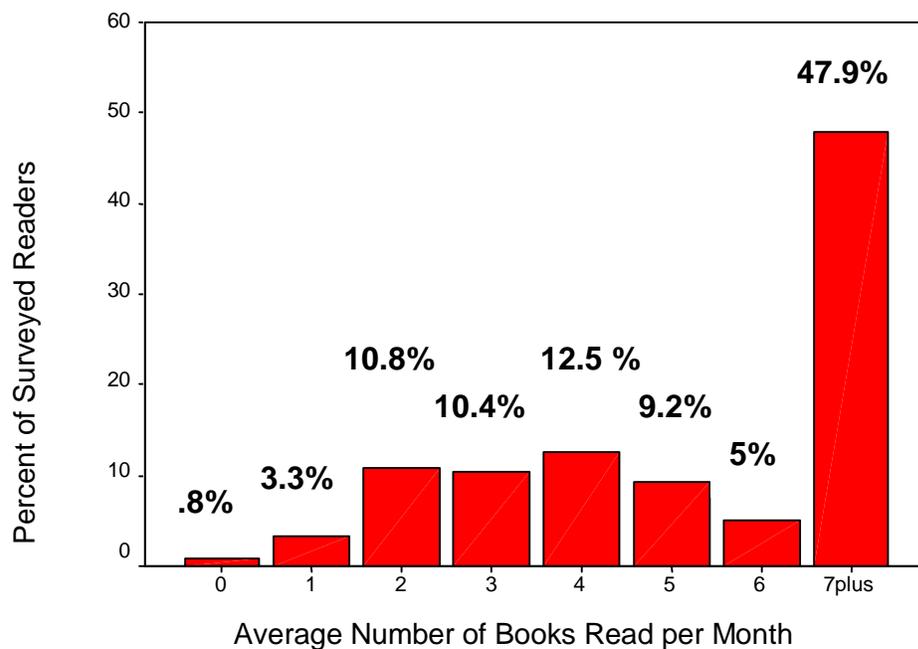
free text field by explaining that romance was just one of many genres in which they read avidly.

Table 1: If you read romance fiction on a regular basis, do you consider yourself a romance reader?

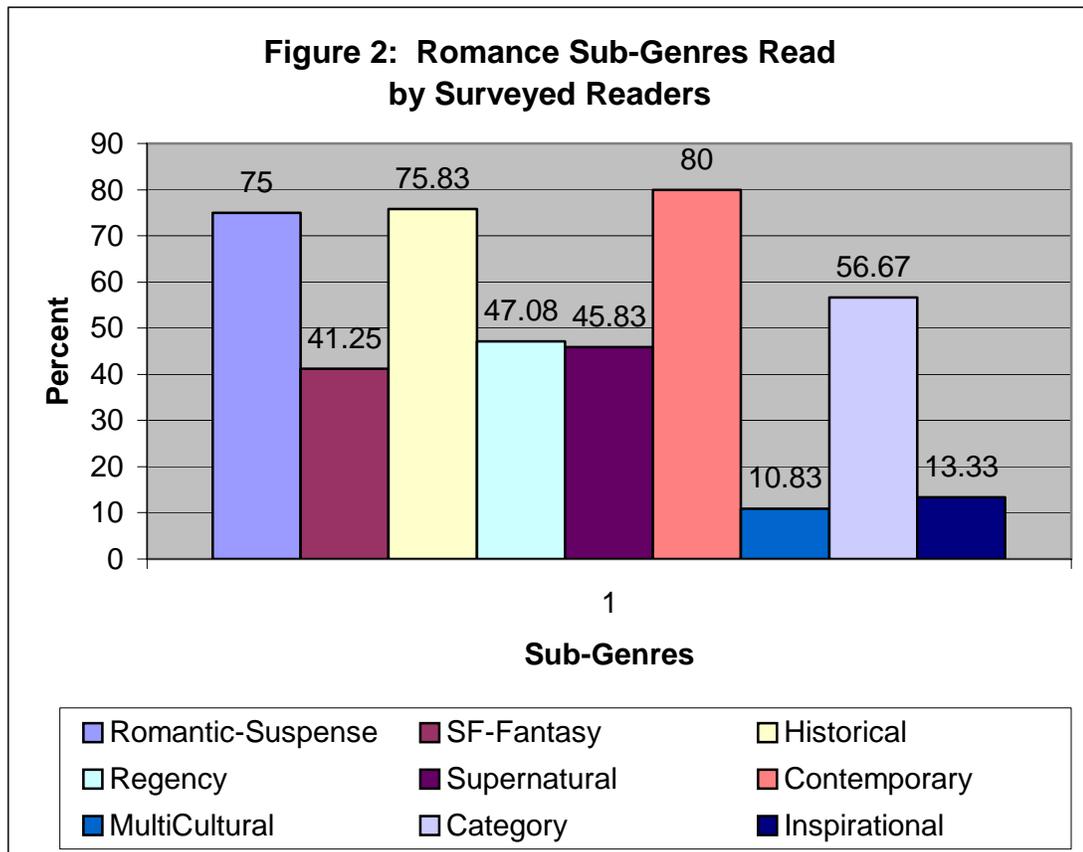
| Total Respondents | Respondents who consider themselves romance readers | Respondents who qualified their affirmative response |
|-------------------|---|--|
| 244 | 240 | 13 (of total 244) |

Figure 1 illustrates the reading appetite of the romance reader respondents. Almost forty-eight percent of the respondents are avid readers of more than seven books per month.

Figure 1: Average Books Read per Month

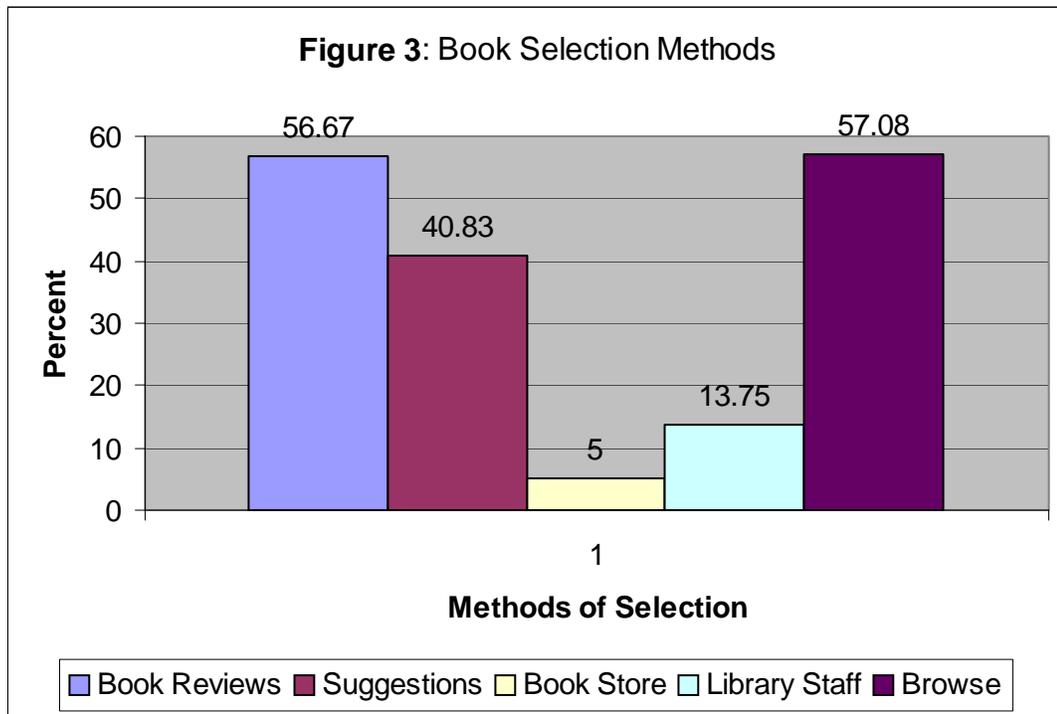


The third question asked respondents to indicate sub-genres of romance that they enjoy reading. Most respondents indicated they read three or more sub-genres, as can be seen in Figure 2. The most popular sub-genres are romantic suspense, historical, and contemporary.



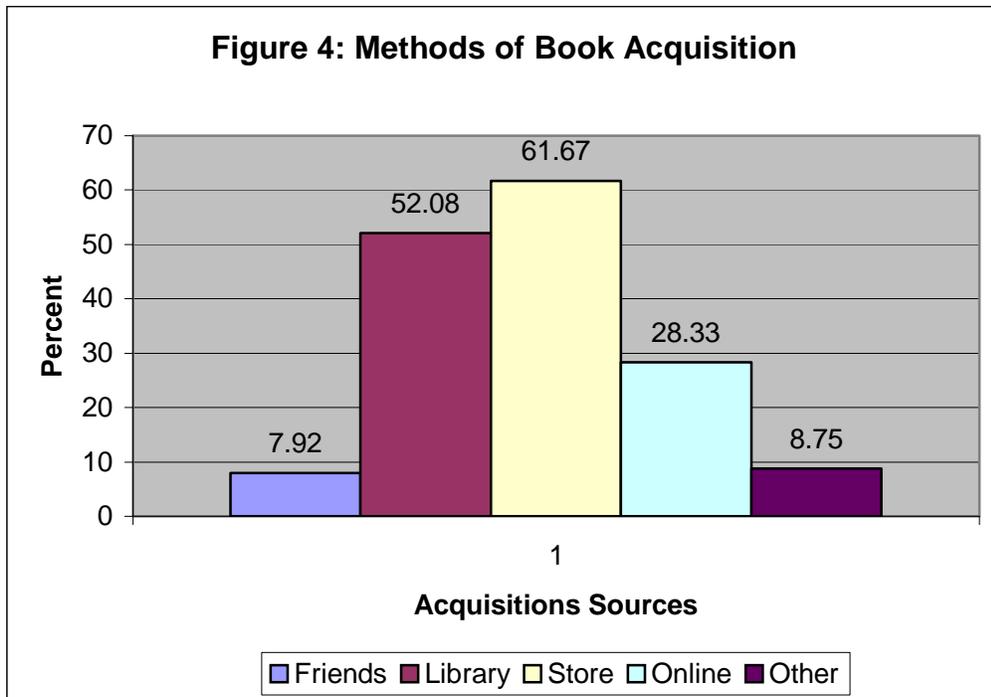
In the fourth question, readers were asked to specify the methods they use to choose their reading material. As can be seen in Figure 3, referring to book reviews and browsing were the most common methods of selection. This question included an “Other?” option where eighty-four respondents added other selection techniques and commentary. It was clear from these responses that author loyalty and name recognition were the other common methods of

selection. Forty-four of the eighty-four text responses mentioned keeping track of specific author's publications.



The text responses also show the participants usage of online review and reader networking sites to guide their book selection. Thirty-eight of these free text responses mentioned online services that provided reader reviews, recommendations, or publisher summaries.

The fifth question asked respondents to choose the most common method they used to acquire books. As seen in Figure 4, over half of the surveyed readers marked libraries as one of their sources. Although respondents were encouraged to mark the most common method of acquisition, this question format did allow respondents to mark as many as applied, so these percentages reflect how many readers marked any one option. The most common method of acquisition, used by over sixty percent of respondents was store purchase.

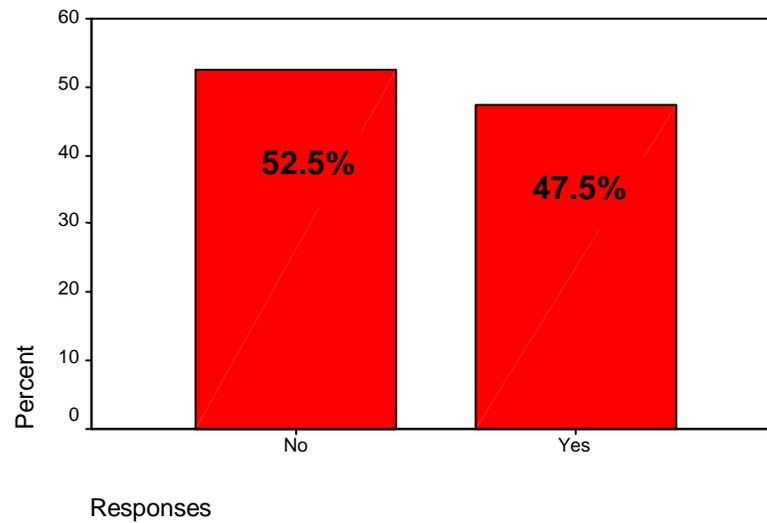


In addition, this fifth question offered a free text field, which thirty-nine respondents used. Nineteen readers explained that they patronized used bookstores, in part or exclusively. Other methods included purchasing used books from library sales, trading (online and off), and publisher-direct sales.

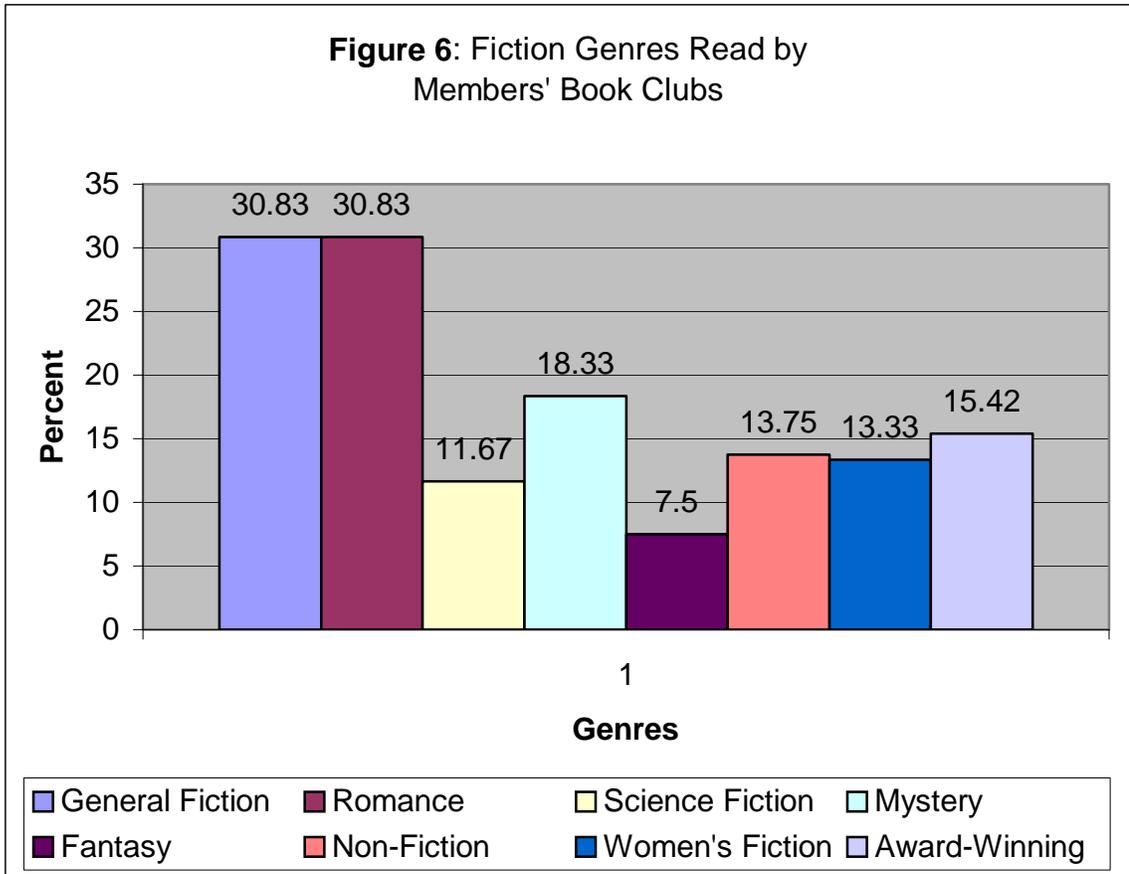
The survey not only asked if respondents were book club members, but what genres they read with the group, if they tend to discover new titles through the group, and if the club was structured around the discussion of a single, pre-determined title (a typical book club structure).

Figure 5 shows the percentage of book club members among the survey respondents. Although a majority reported they were not active in book clubs, a significant forty-eight percent are book club members.

Figure 5: Are you a Member of any Book Club or Group?



Question 7 asked readers to mark all the genres that their book club selects to read. The range of their book club reading interests is clear in Figure 6. Since the respondents were all romance readers, it follows that their book clubs would reflect their main reading interest. General fiction and romance were both read in 30.83% of the respondents' book clubs. Mystery fiction was only included in 18.33% of book clubs.



The eighth question asked readers to consider if they discovered new things to read through their book club.

Figure 7: Do you Discover New Things to Read Through your Book Club?

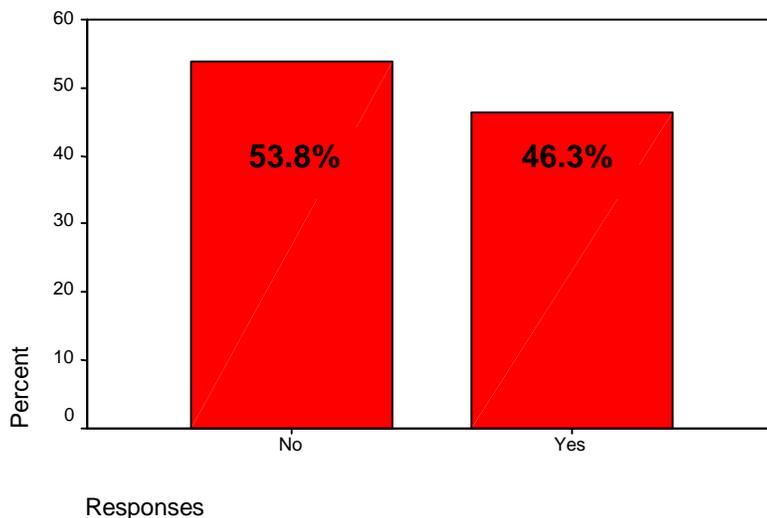
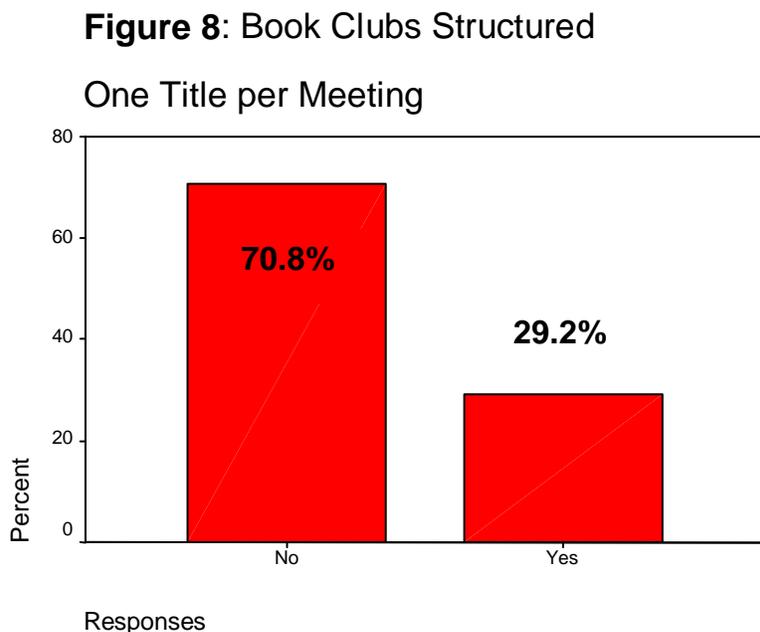


Figure 7 shows that 46.3% of the book club members do discover new titles in their book club meetings.

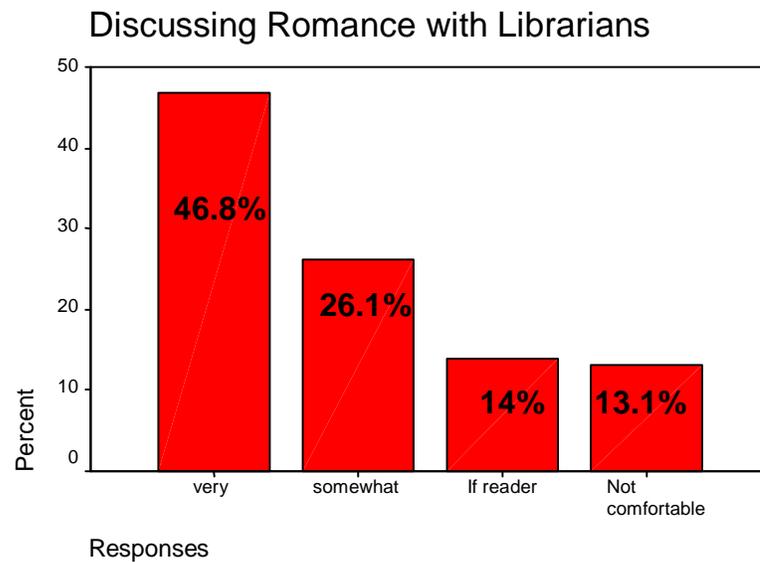
Responses to the ninth question indicate that these readers were mostly members of book groups that did not focus each meeting on a single title pre-selected for discussion. Figure 8 shows less than thirty percent of the book groups stuck with the one title-one meeting structure.



The last part of the survey asked readers to consider their local library's role in their romance reading behaviors. In the tenth question, readers indicated their comfort level discussing romance reading with library staff from the following options: "very comfortable;" "somewhat comfortable (depends on who is available);" "comfortable only if I know the person reads romance, too;" and "not comfortable at all." About forty-seven percent are very comfortable discussing their romance reading with library staff and only thirteen percent are not at all comfortable discussing this reading interest (see Figure 9). As mentioned in the

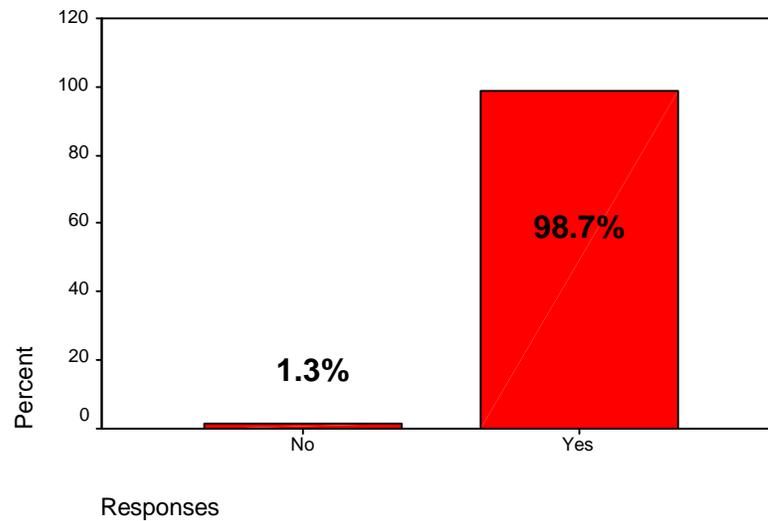
methodology, some librarians would have taken the survey based upon its distribution via the FictionL listserv, but all participants indicated their romance readership and those who admitted to not reading romances for personal pleasure were excluded from the final calculations.

Figure 9: Readers' Comfort Levels



It is assumed that most public libraries do collect some romance titles, but the eleventh question sought to confirm this assumption. Figure 10 indicates that over ninety-eight percent of the local libraries do offer romance books to patrons. Seven percent of the total respondents did not mark a response to this question, which may mean they are not familiar with what their library collects.

Figure 10: Does your Library Offer Romance Books?



In questions twelve, thirteen, and fourteen, respondents described their local libraries by indicating that 58.8% separate romance fiction from general fiction collections (Figure 11), 59.2% collect some category romances (Figure 12), and 73.2% of them are located in urban areas (Table 2).

Figure 11: Are Romances Separate from General Fiction in your Local Library?

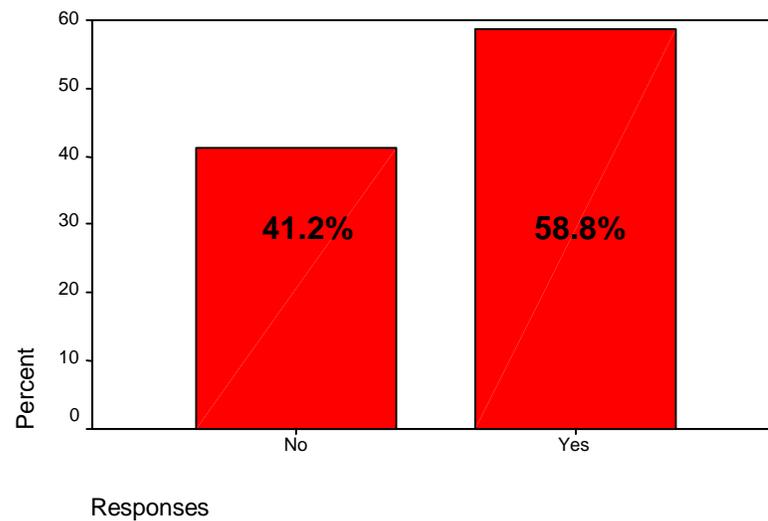


Figure 12: Does your Library Buy Series / Category Romance?

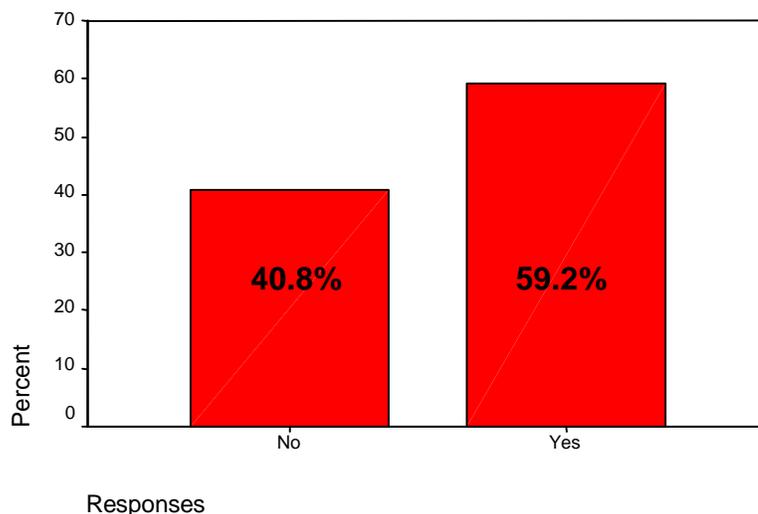
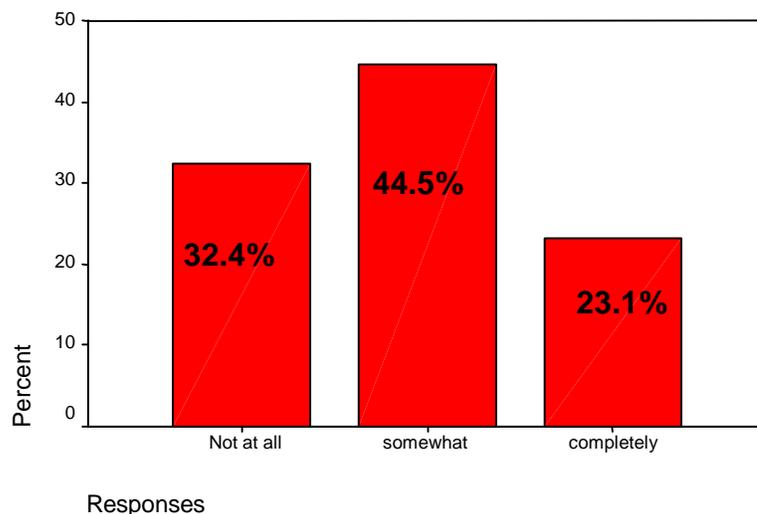


Table 2: Is your library located in a rural or urban area?

| Rural | Urban |
|-------|-------|
| 26.8% | 73.2% |

The fifteenth question asked respondents how heavily they rely upon their library's romance collection. As can be seen in Figure 13, most were "not at all" or only "somewhat" dependent upon their library's romance collection for their reading materials. The "somewhat" option was explained within the survey as: "you buy the special titles you want, but sometimes browse to see what's available." Only 23.1% were completely dependent upon their library's offerings.

**Figure 13: Reliance of Surveyed Readers
Upon their Library's Romance Collection**



Finally, respondents were given a list of descriptive terms and asked to mark all that apply to their library's romance fiction collection: outdated or up-to-date (indicating currency); sparse or well-stocked; unbalanced or well balanced (indicating diversity); too few titles or lots of titles; hidden or easily located (indicating convenience). Respondent selection of these terms is displayed in Figure 14. Librarians will be relieved to find that the largest numbers of readers considered their library's collection up-to-date (37.5%) and easily located (33.33%). Unfortunately, a significant number found the library collections to be outdated (26.25%), sparse (27.91%), unbalanced (28.33%), and containing too few titles (26.25%).

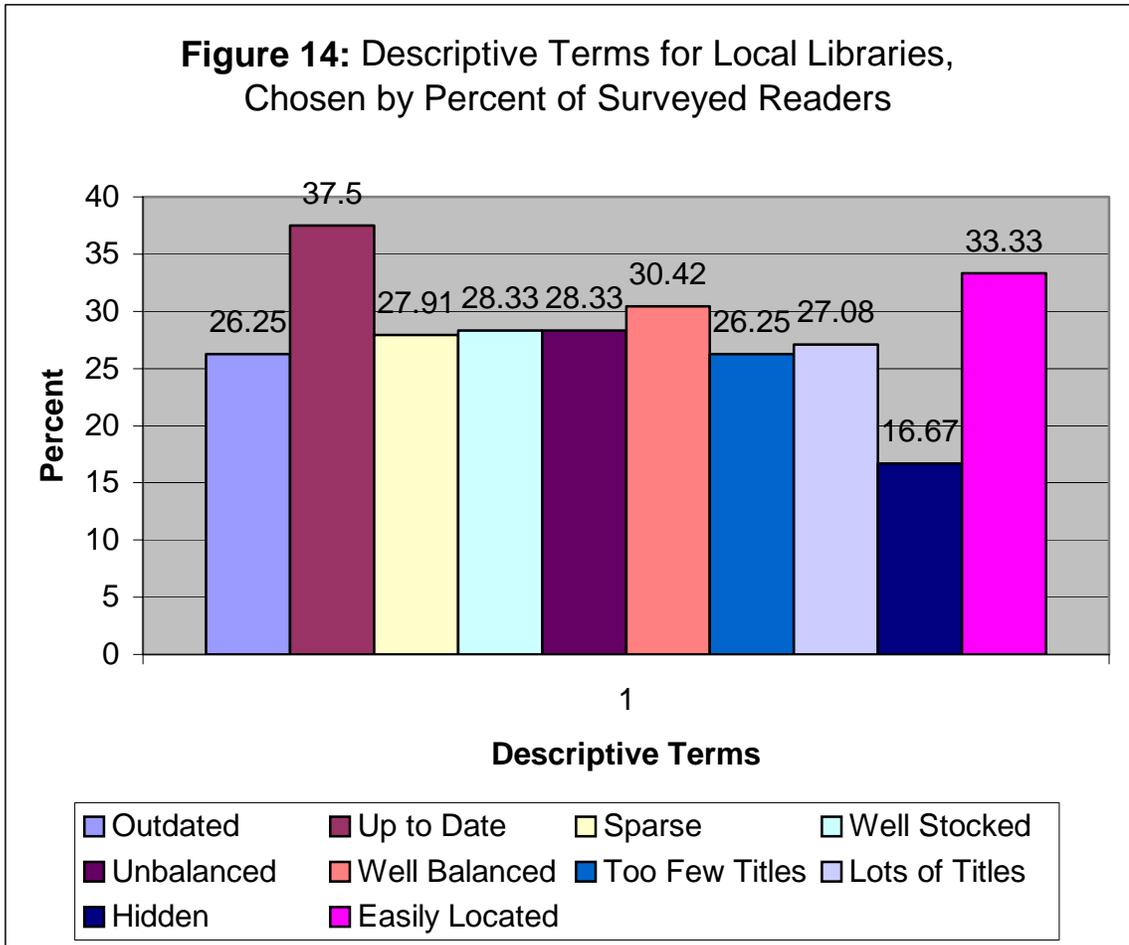


Table 3 shows that 9.6% of the surveyed readers were not familiar enough with their local libraries to answer specific questions about it, according to their responses to the last question.

Table 3: Surveyed readers familiar enough to describe their local libraries

| Familiar Enough | Not Familiar |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 90.4% | 9.6% |

The survey garnered attention and responses even after it was removed. Personal emails shared support for the research project and interest in the results. Conclusions based on this study's findings are only a fraction of what could be discovered about this large patron base.

Conclusions

The heavy response to this small survey that was only available for eight days indicates that the online community of romance readers is ready to work with their libraries to improve services to their readership. It is in the best interest of librarians to acknowledge the romance genre readership and educate themselves about this diverse fiction genre.

The Romance Writers of America, Inc.'s statistical report shows that selection is the most important shopping factor for romance readers (2003, 6). According to the readers surveyed here, libraries still need to improve the currency and diversity of their selection to attract more romance readers. Only two free text responses to the survey question of readers' most common acquisition methods said they like to keep their favorite books. But, with a reading habit of seven-plus books a month, the majority of these readers would benefit from the library's collection and readers' advisory services. The evidence of author preference and wide reading interests found in this survey should encourage librarians to thoughtfully build their romance collections to reflect the diversity of the genre and to make author backlists available.

Libraries that limit their paperback budgets should consider expanding the budget to at least relatively match their hardcover budget according to price differences. Paperback prices are increasing, especially with the popularity of

trade paperbacks, which are more expensive than mass-market paperbacks. In addition, many independent publishers and unique imprints publish paperback originals, such as Harlequin's Red Dress Ink imprint, which publishes popular "chick-lit" fiction. Librarians need to reassess their paperback collection policies to ensure materials are not being purchased for superficial format reasons that fail to give due consideration of content.

Based on the large percentage of surveyed readers who are active in book clubs and find new directions for their reading through their book club discussions, readers' advisory services should consider book clubs as a proactive service technique. Genre-specific discussion groups would allow deeper exploration of popular genres, attract genre fans who may not feel comfortable in the "general" book clubs that tend to focus on "literary fiction," and present an opportunity for librarians to learn about a genre and create a network of readers that will support ongoing readers' advisory efforts.

Another result of this survey is the discovery of a rich online community of romance readers and genre resources. There is a wealth of reader review sites, discussion lists, author websites, and publisher resources, including direct print and electronic-book ordering. The web is ripe for library readers' advisory efforts and some librarians are already taking the readers' services into the virtual frontier, such as Montgomery County Public Library's online Readers' Café (<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/libraries/readerscafe/>).

Suggestions for Further Study

Future study may focus on exactly why romance readers prefer to purchase their books. Does the desire to keep favorite titles explain why the Romance Writers of America, Inc. found 44% of romance readers purchased their romance new (2003, p. 6)? Considering how voraciously these romance readers consume books, are the library collections so sparse that they have to actually purchase their books or form reader networks on their own to access books? Either way, these readers are circumventing the library's role as a low-cost and convenient supplier of reading material for a reason.

Since Radway's 1980-81 study (1991) of romance readers, the romance publishing industry has changed and it can be assumed romance readers have as well. A new study of current romance industry trends and romance readers' behaviors would serve both social science and library science scholarship. Most of the available literature on the romance publishing industry and textual analysis of romance books also dates from the 1980s, so a contemporary profile of romance industry marketing, production, and writing trends would be valuable. This research might also consider the new partnerships being formed between romance writers and libraries, such as the presence of Romance Writers of America, Inc. representatives at Public Library Association conferences and the formation of a library affiliate program within the RWA.

An updated survey of public library collection development and technical processing practices for romance fiction titles would also provide insight into how romance readers are being served. Are the bad habits mentioned in Bouricius's

The Romance Readers' Advisory (2000) still being practiced? How are new publishing industry trends affecting collection development policies and budgets?

More work is needed to answer these questions to help librarians understand the needs and better serve romance-reading patrons. This study has found a ready patron base with a strong reading habit, and a versatile connection with this population through the Internet. Librarians and researchers have a rich starting point for investigating romance readers and the best services to meet their needs.

References

- Berkeley Digital Library SunSITE. (1997). General information. *PUBLIB Electronic Discussion List*. Retrieved April 11, 2004, from <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/PubLib/index.html>
- Bouricius, A. (2000). *The romance readers' advisory: the librarian's guide to love in the stacks*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Brisco, S. (2004). Dewey or Dalton? An investigation of the lure of the bookstore. *Library Media Connection* 22 (4), 36-7.
- Chelton, M. K. (1991). Unrestricted body parts and predictable bliss: the audience appeal of formula romances. *Library Journal* 116, 44-9.
- Clark, J.R. (2004). *Publishers Hall of Shame*. Retrieved April 11, 2004, from <http://www.powerlink.net/wyvern/shame.htm>
- Fallon, E. (1984). *Words of love: a complete guide to romance fiction*. New York: Garland.
- Fialkoff, F. (2003). Amazon dreams. *Library Journal* 128 (19), 52.
- Fowler, B. (1991). *The alienated reader: women and popular romantic literature in the 20th century*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Frenier, M. D. (1988). *Good-bye Heathcliff: changing heroes, heroines, roles, and values in women's category romances*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Guiley, R. (1983). *Love lines: a romance reader's guide to printed pleasures*. New York: Facts on File.
- Herald, D. T. (2000). *Genreflecting: a guide to reading interests in genre fiction* (5th ed.). Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Hoffert, B. (2003). Taking back readers' advisory. *Library Journal* 128 (14), 44-6.
- Jensen, M. A. (1984). *Love's \$weet return: the Harlequin story*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.

- Krentz, J. A. (Ed.). (1992). *Dangerous men & adventurous women: romance writers on the appeal of the romance*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Long, E. (2003). *Book clubs: women and the uses of reading in everyday life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mosley, S., Charles, J., & Havir, J. (1995). The librarian as effete snob: why romance? *Wilson Library Bulletin* 69, 24-5.
- Mussell, K. & Tuñón, J. (Eds.). (1999). *North American romance writers*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Pearce, L. (1997). *Feminism and the politics of reading*. London: Arnold.
- Rabine, L. W. (1985). *Reading the romantic heroine: text, history, ideology*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Radway, J. A. (1991). *Reading the romance: women, patriarchy, and popular literature*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Ramsdell, K. (1999). *Romance fiction: a guide to the genre*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Rippel, C. (2003). What public libraries can learn from superstores. *Australasian Public Libraries and Information Services* 16 (4), 147-55.
- Romance Writers of America, Inc. (2003). *2003 Romance-Fiction Sales Statistics, Reader Demographics and Book-Buying Habits*. Retrieved April 11, 2004, from <http://www.rwanational.org/StatisticsBrochure2003.pdf>
- (2004). *Welcome to Romance Writers of America, Inc.* Retrieved April 11, 2004, from <http://www.rwanational.org/>
- Saricks, J. G. (2001). *The readers' advisory guide to genre fiction*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Smith, D. (2001). Reinventing readers' advisory. In K. D. Shearer & R. Burgin (Eds.), *The Readers' advisor's companion* (pp. 59-76). Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Tenopir, C. (2003). Running with the amazons. *Library Journal* 128 (20), 34.
- Wiegand, W. (1997). Misreading LIS education. *Library Journal* 122, 36-8.

----- (2001). Missing the real story: where library and information science fails the library profession. In K. D. Shearer & R. Burgin (Eds.), *The Readers' advisor's companion* (pp. 7-14). Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

Acknowledgements

In addition to the dedicated reading scholars that have come before me, certain individuals and groups deserve attention for their contributions to this paper. First of all, my husband, who did not judge my master's paper topic against his own (pharmaceutical chemistry research and development), but who did provide support and patience throughout my years of study. My advisors, Drs. Barbara B. Moran and David Carr, who opened my eyes to the legitimate study of reading and the courage to stand by what I read. Romance Readers Connection, Romance Readers Anonymous, and FictionL welcomed my online survey and helped spread the word to romance readers. Thank you to all the romance readers who took the time to take my survey. Finally, to my very first library director, Louise Dorton, who brought a pink "Romance Reader Friendly" pin back from PLA, just for me.

Appendix A:
Online Survey and Cover Letter

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

AT

CHAPEL HILL

School of Information and Library Science

Phone# (919) 962-8366

Fax# (919) 962-8071

The University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill

CB# 3360, 100 Manning Hall

Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599-3360

Public Library Service to Romance Readers

11 March 2004

Dear Reader,

I am writing to invite your participation in a survey of romance readers. This survey is part of my research study for a Master's of Science in Library Science degree at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's School of Information and Library Science. I'm exploring why libraries are one of the last places romance readers seem to go to find their books. According to the Romance Writers of America, Inc's 2002 Romance-Fiction Sales Statistics, Reader Demographics and Book-Buying Habits , only 14% of the 51.1 million North American romance readers regularly get their romance books from libraries. Are libraries ignoring the largest fiction readership? Or are traditional reader's advisory and service techniques not successful with the romance genre reader? Your responses may help me determine what libraries can do to better welcome and serve romance readers.

I am inviting participants from visitors to the following web sites or members of the following listserv accounts or discussion boards: *All About Romance* (

www.allaboutromance.com); *Romantic Times Book Club* (www.romantictimes.com); the Romance Writers of America (www.rwanational.org); *Romance Readers Anonymous* listserv (RRA-L); *The Literary Times* (www.tlt.com) chat rooms; *Romance Readers at Heart* chat lists (www.romancereaderatheart.com); *The Romance Reader* forums (www.theromancereader.com); or *The Romance Reader's Connection* discussion boards (www.theromancereadersconnection.com).

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may skip any specific questions that you choose, for any reason. The survey takes less than five minutes to complete. Your responses, once submitted, are emailed anonymously to me. I will not know who has taken the survey, but you may request the results after 1 May 2004, by emailing me at mbryson@email.unc.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact me at mbryson@email.unc.edu or 919-693-1121, or my advisor, Dr. Barbara Moran, at moran@ils.unc.edu.

The Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board (AA-IRB) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has approved this study. If you have concerns or questions regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, please contact the AA-IRB at 919-962-7761 or at aa-irb@unc.edu.

Thank you for your time and your valuable thoughts.

Please scroll down to take the survey.

Sincerely,

Mary Bryson

Romance Readers & Libraries

A Survey to Improve Service

Please mark or type the best answers that apply to you and your reading habits. Any opinion or comment is welcome! Email me your questions: mbryson@email.unc.edu.

What You Read...

If you read romance fiction on a regular basis, do you consider yourself a romance reader? Yes No

If not, please tell why:



How many romance books do you read on average per month?

less than 1

1

2

3

4

5

6

7 or more!

What romance sub-genres do you read (please mark as many as needed):

Romantic-suspense

SF or Fantasy

Historical

Regency

Supernatural

Contemporary

Multi-Cultural

Series or Category Romance

Inspirational

Choosing Books...

How do you select the books you read (please mark the most common method):

Book Reviews

Personal Suggestions from Friends

Bookstore Staff

Library Staff

Browsing by Genre

Other?

How do you acquire the books you read (please mark the most common method):

Borrow from Friends

Borrow from Library

Purchase at Store

Purchase Online

Other?



Book Clubs...

Are you a member of any book club or group? Yes No

If so, please mark ALL the genres your club/group selects to read:

General Fiction

Romance

Science Fiction

Mystery

Fantasy

Nonfiction

Women's Writing

Award-Winning Fiction

Do you discover new things to read through your book club? Yes No

Does your book club decide on a single title to read for each meeting? Yes

No

Your Local Library...

Please mark your comfort level with discussing romance reading with library staff:

Very Comfortable

Somewhat Comfortable (depends on who is available)

Comfortable Only if I know the person reads romance, too

Not Comfortable At All

Does your library offer romance books? Yes No

Are romances separated from general fiction? Yes No

Does your library buy series (category) romance? Yes No

Is your library located in a rural or urban area?

Rural

Urban

How heavily do you rely upon your library's romance collection (please mark the best response)?

Not at all

Somewhat (you buy the special titles you want, but sometimes browse to see what's available)

Completely (you only get your books from the library)

Please mark all the terms that best describe your library's romance fiction offerings:

Outdated

Up-to-date

Sparse

Well-stocked

Unbalanced

Well balanced

Too few

Lots of titles

Hidden

Easily located

If you don't feel familiar enough with your library to answer any of the above questions,

please check here

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="submit" value="Submit"/> | <input type="submit" value="Startover"/> |
|---------------------------------------|--|

Appendix B:

List of Romance Genre Websites

All About Romance (<http://www.allaboutromance.com>)

Book Connection (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bookonnection/>)

Category Romance Book Mailing List
(<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cata-romance/>)

Dallas-Ft. Worth Romance Readers and Authors
(<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dfwtea/>)

eHarlequin (<http://www.eharlequin.com>)

Fiction L (<http://www.webrary.org/rs/flmenu.html>)

The Literary Times (<http://www.tlt.com>)

Love Romance Books
(<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Loveromancebooks/>)

Medieval Love (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MedievalLove/>)

Readers Anonymous (<http://www.readersanonymous.com>)

Regency Forum (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Regency/>)

Romance Books (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/romancebooks/>)

Romance Books & Readers List via Writers Space
(<http://www.writerspace.com>)

The Romance Reader (<http://www.theromancereader.com>)

Romance Reader at Heart (<http://romancereaderatheart.com>)

Romance Readers Anonymous Listserv (<http://www.toad.net/~dolma/>)

The Romance Readers Connection
(<http://www.theromancereadersconnection.com>)

Romance Writers of America, Inc. (<http://www.rwanational.org>)

Romantic Times (<http://www.romantictimes.com>)

RomExList (<http://www.dm.net/~jules/romexlist.html>)

Appendix C:

Supplemental Bibliography

Reference Works

- Bouricius, A. (2000). *The romance readers' advisory: the librarian's guide to love in the stacks*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Brackett, V. (1999). *Classic love & romance literature: an encyclopedia of works, characters, authors, & themes*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Fallon, E. (1984). *Words of love: a complete guide to romance fiction*. New York: Garland.
- Guiley, R. (1983). *Love lines: a romance reader's guide to printed pleasures*. New York: Facts on File.
- Henderson, L. (Ed.). (1990). *Twentieth-century romance and Gothic writers* (2nd ed.). Chicago: St. James Press.
- Mann, P. H. (1974). *A new survey: the facts about romance fiction*. London: Mills & Boon Ltd.
- Massie, S. & Greenberg, M. H. (Eds.). (1996). *The Janet Dailey companion: a comprehensive guide to her life and her novels*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Mussell, K. & Tuñón, J. (Eds.). (1999). *North American romance writers*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press.
- Ramsdell, K. (1987). *Happily ever after: a guide to reading interests in romance fiction*. Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- (1999). *Romance fiction: a guide to the genre*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Vasudevan, A. (Ed.). (1994). *Twentieth-century romance and historical writers* (3rd ed.). London: St. James Press.

General Titles

- Andrews, M. & Talbot, M. M. (Eds.). (2000). *All the world and her husband: women in twentieth-century consumer culture*. London: Cassell.
- Cadogan, M. (1994). *And then their hearts stood still: an exuberant look at romantic fiction past and present*. London: Macmillan.
- Cohn, J. (1998). *Romance and the erotics of property: mass-market fiction for women*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Dixon, J. (1999). *The romance fiction of Mills & Boon, 1909-1990s*. London: UCL Press.
- Dobbe, S. N. (1986). *Romances I have read*. Appleton, WI: S.N. Dobbe.
- Eriksson, H. (1997). *Husbands, lovers, and dreamlovers: masculinity and female desire in women's novels of the 1970s*. Stockholm, Sweden: Uppsala University.
- Fowler, B. (1991). *The alienated reader: women and popular romantic literature in the 20th century*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Frenier, M. D. (1988). *Good-bye Heathcliff: changing heroes, heroines, roles, and values in women's category romances*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Gornick, V. (1997). *The end of the novel of love*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Hazen, H. (1983). *Endless rapture: rape, romance, and the female imagination*. New York: Scribner.
- Hughes, H. (1993). *The historical romance*. London: Routledge.
- Jensen, M. A. (1984). *Love's Sweet return: the Harlequin story*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.
- Johnson, V. M. (1998). *All I need to know in life I learned from romance novels*. Los Angeles: General Pub Group.
- Kaler, A. K., & Johnson-Kurek, R. E. (Eds.). (1999). *Romantic conventions*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.

- Krentz, J. A. (Ed.). (1992). *Dangerous men & adventurous women: romance writers on the appeal of the romance*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Mann, M. (1977). *The reading habits of adults: a select annotated bibliography*. London: British Library.
- Mussell, K. (1984). *Fantasy and reconciliation: contemporary formulas for women's romance fiction*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Paizis, G. (1998). *Love and the novel: the poetics and politics of romantic fiction*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Pearce, L. (1997). *Feminism and the politics of reading*. London: Arnold.
- , & Stacey, J. (Eds.). (1995). *Romance revisited*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Rabine, L. W. (1985). *Reading the romantic heroine: text, history, ideology*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Radford, J. (Ed.). (1986). *The progress of romance: the politics of popular fiction*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Radway, J. A. (1991). *Reading the romance: women, patriarchy, and popular literature*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Weisser, S. O. (Ed.). (2001). *Women and romance: a reader*. New York: New York University Press.

How to Write Romance

- Baker, D. (1998). *Writing a romantic novel, and getting it published*. Chicago: NTC Pub Group.
- Barnhart, H. S. (1983). *Writing romance fiction for love and money*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books.
- Blake, J., et al. (1984). *Your first romance*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Burack, S. K. (1983). *Writing and selling the romance novel*. Boston: Writing, Inc.
- Clair, D., & Donald, R. (1999). *Writing romantic fiction*. London: A&C Black.

- Estrada, R. C., & Gallagher, R. (1999). *You can write a romance*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books.
- Falk, K. (Ed.). (1990). *How to write a romance and get it published: with intimate advice from the world's most popular romantic writers*. New York: New American Library.
- Kent, J. S., & Shelton, C. (1984). *The romance writers' phrase book*. New York: Putnam.
- Laudermilk, S. H., & Hamlin, T. L. (1989). *The Regency companion*. New York: Garland.
- Lowery, M. M. (1983). *How to write romance novels that sell*. New York: Rawson.
- Michaels, L. (1999). *Writing the romance novel*. Ottumwa, IA: PBL Ltd.
- Pianka, P. T. (1988). *How to write romances*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books.
- Wibberley, M. (1987). *To writers with love: on writing romantic novels*. London: Buchar & Enright.

Websites

All About Romance: The Back-Fence for Lovers of Romance Novels
<http://www.likesbooks.com/home.html>

Harlequin/Silhouette Publishers: The Ultimate Destination for Women's Fiction
<http://www.eharlequin.com>

The Romance Readers Connection: The On-Line Magazine for Readers
<http://www.theromancereadersconnection.com/>

Romance Writers of America's Reader Menu
http://www.rwanational.org/old_site/ReaderMenu.htm

Romantic Science Fiction and Fantasy:
<http://www.romanticsf.com/>

Romantic Times Book Club
<http://www.romantictimes.com/>

Suspense Romance Writers
<http://www.suspenseromancewriters.com/>

Articles

Bargreen, M. (1996, July 7). Romance & R-E-S-P-E-C-T. *Seattle Times*, M1.

Beam, A. (1997, November 5). The soft-focus feminism of romance novels. *The Boston Globe*, F1.

Carpenter, B. (1995, November 6). Living the fantasy. *U.S. News & World Report*, 119 (18), 78.

Darbyshire, P. (2002). The politics of love: Harlequin romances and the Christian right. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 35 (4), 75-87.

DeCandido, G. A., & Borck, H. (1994, September). I'll take romance: librarians face romance writers at conference. *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 69 (1), 13.

Fialkoff, F. (1992). Romancing the patron. *Library Journal*, 117 (21), 118.

----- (1995). Are we dumbing down the book review? *Library Journal*, 120 (7), 60.

Little, M. (2002, August 3). Modern romance: Harlequin woos a new generation. *Vancouver Sun*, H15.

Muldoon, M. (2002, July 26). Romancing the tome: a well-written romance novel? Yes, there is such a thing. *The Austin American Statesman*, E1.

Serials

Arabella Romances Magazine (bimonthly)

Romance Writer's Sourcebook (biennial)

Romantic Times Book Club (monthly)

Review Sources

Booklist

Library Journal

Publishers Weekly

Romantic Times Book Club