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This paper surveys a sample of public library staff in North Carolina to determine the tools they use most often for readers' services. While many readers' advisory experts in the field have encouraged library staff to take advantage of a number of web-based resources, little research exists to document whether or not library staff are doing so. The resources selected by the respondents were compared against demographic data and data collected regarding respondents' personal reading habits. Results indicate that public library staff in North Carolina rely on readers' advisory databases most often, along with their personal reading and the library catalog.

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MATCHING READERS AND BOOKS: A STUDY OF THE READERS' ADVISORY RESOURCES USED BY PUBLIC LIBRARIANS IN NORTH CAROLINA

by
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Introduction

The notion of readers' services has existed in the sphere of American public libraries since the nineteenth century. Samuel S. Green, a founding father of reference and library services, conceived of librarians cultivating personal relationships with their patrons, learning their educational goals, and constructing a self-directed reading plan by thoughtfully matching books with patrons to help achieve those goals (Green 76). Libraries still maintain the American notion of self-directed improvement and education, but modern public libraries more often cater to patrons' leisure time. Many people enter the library doors simply looking for a good book. From children's weekly story times to local author lectures, public libraries provide a forum for people to acquire and indulge in good stories. Joyce Saricks defines readers' advisory as a "patron-centered library service for adult leisure readers in which knowledgeable, nonjudgmental staff helps fiction and nonfiction readers with their leisure-reading needs" (Saricks, *Readers' Advisory* 1) In short, this valuable library service seeks to connect these patrons to the books that best suit their needs and interests at that point in time.

A brief examination of the library science literature concerning readers' advisory indicates that public libraries have enjoyed nothing short of a readers' advisory renaissance over the past ten years. The rise of the Internet and its ease of presenting and exchanging information, coupled with the explosive popularity of large bookstores, which compete with libraries for customers, encouraged librarians to assert their valuable

expertise. The Internet allowed librarians to not only transmit information to their patrons via online booklists, read-alikes, and discussion questions, but librarians have also been able to discover additional resources themselves for readers' advisory, allowing them to move beyond book reviews from print magazines, *Genreflecting*, and specialized print guides. The web also provided a setting for major readers' advisory databases, such as EBSCO's *NoveList* and *What Do I Read Next?* to become more widely available for librarians and their patrons.

The concurrent increase in the popularity of mega-bookstores also provided an impetus for public librarians to emphasize readers' services. Librarians realized they must assert their valuable skills of organization and classification even in popular reading, or dissatisfied patrons could easily look to bookstores or the Internet to better serve their information needs. While not all libraries house elaborate book displays designed by expert marketing teams or offer an array of gourmet coffee blends, most public libraries are staffed by people who enjoy books and are trained to communicate clearly and effectively with people (Thomas 3).

Librarians with a sincere devotion to readers' advisory are able to use tools to find books that will appeal to patrons' tastes and go beyond mere plot summaries. Not all tools are created equal, however. In addition to the traditional readers' advisory print tools that have migrated online, the Internet hosts a large number of online booksellers that provide professional book reviews and individual user reviews; litblogs – personal online book journals, and additional websites devoted exclusively to discussing books, also offer librarians a wealth of valuable information for readers' advisory. Each of these tools contains a wealth of information, but each tool also has its own strengths and

weaknesses. Even if librarians are aware of all these readers' advisory tools, the odds of choosing the one best suited to the readers' advisory interview every time are slim to none. Researchers need to measure the effects of the large number of prescriptive articles published in library literature recommending the best practices and the best reference sources, so they can discover what tools librarians actually use and the tools' effectiveness in everyday practice.

As Joyce Saricks notes, librarians, no matter how much they read, will never be able to keep up with an entire collection, which is why libraries collect specialized reference tools specifically for readers' advisory (Saricks, "The best" 175). Such tools help reduce the ambiguity and complexity of a readers' advisory transaction by providing the library staff a tangible source to consult (Smith, "Reinventing" 61). In short, the tools are important because they allow librarians to further expand their knowledge of popular literature while providing a higher quality of service to library patrons (Saricks, "The best" 168). Faced with a rapidly changing Internet, however, with its incessant introduction of new litblogs and online booksellers, librarians can barely keep pace with the tools that cover literature, let alone the literature itself. Theoretically, librarians therefore rely on publications like *Library Journal* and *Reference and User Services Quarterly* to review, aggregate, and recommend websites and web-based services for them to consult.

Not all readers' advisory, however, takes place face to face. Passive readers' advisory is also an important extension of public library services. Oftentimes, the library staff composes booklists and bookmarks with reading suggestions, constructs book displays, and even selects books for reading groups. While expert readers' advisors, such

as Joyce Saricks and Mary K. Chelton emphasize the importance of a one-to-one interaction, much of the more recent literature recommends supplementing these interactions with prominent displays, booklists, and bookmarks that highlight the collection's variety. Because the librarian does not directly interact with the patron, it is difficult to tailor these services to individuals, but these techniques allow for more people to be reached with less work and help promote a collaborative culture of reading in the public library.

This study attempts to explore the types of resources public librarians in North Carolina use to conduct readers' advisory and how and/or if their reading habits have changed since electronic resources have become so widely available. The next chapter will cover some of the most important literature regarding readers' services in the past twenty-five years. While read has always been a core business of the public library, only recently have field practitioners and experts begun to focus on the topic and its significance to libraries. The next chapter will examine the importance of readers' advisory to the public library, the steps that have been taken to establish "best practices" in this field, and how librarians' actual practices measured up to these standards.

Literature Review

The library literature indicates that readers' advisory is an essential function of library services in the public library. Readers' advisory is most often associated with helping patrons find something to read "just for fun." Kenneth Shearer studied circulation trends in North Carolina public libraries, and assuming that most fiction readers borrowed books to read in their leisure time, he concluded that leisure reading constitutes at least sixty-five percent of a public library's circulation (Shearer, "Readers'" 114). If this statistic is widely applicable, librarians should be well-versed in using readers' advisory tools to effectively design book displays and construct booklists in addition to using them in personal interviews to connect readers and books.

Research highlights the reality that most librarians and library staff, however, when faced with a readers' advisory question, regard the query as insignificant by making cursory suggestions, trying to rely on their own memories instead of turning to reference tools that could help in that particular instance. Or when librarians do offer suggestions, they do not align closely with the reader's tastes or appeal to the reader in the least.

Ten years ago, when the readers' advisory movement began gaining momentum, Robert Burgin administered a survey to public librarians in North Carolina to determine how librarians handled readers' advisory questions in everyday practice. The survey indicates that most respondents relied on their own reading experiences to suggest other titles, as opposed to even running a cursory search on the library's online catalog. Also,

few respondents read serial publications containing book reviews on any regular basis. Instead, these respondents relied mostly on word of mouth and personal conversations to recommend titles to patrons (Burgin 77).

Kenneth Shearer demonstrated these findings to be true when he sent his library school students to public libraries around North Carolina with readers' advisory queries. With the first series of unobtrusive interviews, the students all posed the same query, asking for a title similar to *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. The second series of interviews involved the students asking for assistance locating a book they had already read and enjoyed. Shearer's casual experiment revealed that oftentimes, patrons are confused as to whom to approach for readers' advisory services. Also, in many cases, the library staff was overwhelmed with other requests for information, and therefore, they neglected to conduct a thorough interview or elicit feedback from the patron. In addition, the patrons were more satisfied with the interview if the library staff asked what the patron enjoyed about Lee's novel, which occurred rarely (Shearer, "The nature" 19).

Anne K. May corroborated Shearer's findings and further highlighted the shortcomings that persisted in many readers' advisory transactions with her unobtrusive study of Nassau County Public Library in New York, by modeling a readers' advisory interaction on a reference interview. Few librarians approached readers' advisory methodically. Most library staff, in fact, relied on serendipity to inspire and supply them with a title that matched perfectly. In some cases, this arbitrary method produced satisfactory results, but oftentimes, the service was unprofessional. Indeed, out of fifty-four unobtrusive readers' advisory transactions, not a single librarian engaged in the

formal comprehensive readers' advisory interview the experts describe and recommend (May 146).

Such observations indicate that perhaps readers' advisory had found itself in the same position as reference, a mere twelve years earlier, with the publication of Peter Hernon and Richard McClure's alarming fifty-five percent rule. These researchers sent trained university students to twenty-six libraries, thirteen academic and thirteen public, recognized as official repositories by the Government Printing Office, to compare their responses to a pool of fifteen predetermined questions to the responses of specialized government documents personnel. The answers to these questions could be answered by referring to government documents. Hernon and McClure found that librarians answered the questions correctly only 61.8% of the time, and their shortcomings did not stop there. The other 38.2% were marked by incorrect information, claims that the library does not carry that type of information, refusal to refer the patron to another source, and claims that the librarian simply did not know the answer without even trying to find the information. After comparing their findings to other studies, the researchers concluded that most reference librarians' accuracy rates tend to fall between fifty and sixty-one percent, a statistic that upset many professionals but also led to a professional recommitment to accuracy and excellent customer service (Hernon & McClure 40).

Mary K. Chelton has been a long-time advocate of constructing a map of best practices for the readers' advisory transaction. Her research and astute observations suggest that the lack of such standards is largely responsible for the poor readers' advisory service often documented in library literature. After leading a readers' advisory workshop for public librarians in Minnesota in 2000, Chelton summarizes the consensus

at which the attendees arrived concerning basic competencies librarians should master to properly conduct readers' services. First of all, library staff should have a passionate enthusiasm for books, with a strong background in fiction and nonfiction, staying current with recently popular and recently released titles, while also having an understanding of genres and their corresponding authors. Additionally, librarians ought to be able to relate to readers, understanding that patrons operate under a variety of influences and opinions and patrons' tastes may not correspond to established patterns. Also, librarians should be capable of talking about books to heighten their appeal to readers. Finally, librarians should realize how readers' advisory interviews differ from reference interviews; readers' services librarians need to be comfortable posing and responding to open-ended questions, while suggesting titles without offending patrons (Chelton, "Talking" 135-142).

Again, in 2003, Chelton highlighted the best practices in readers' advisory by describing the worst readers' services encountered in her research and offering alternatives to the poor services received. Some of her recommendations include: taking the time to clarify what the patron is looking for, asking what the patron enjoyed about previous books, and being familiar with the appeal factors often described in library science literature. Chelton noted that it is also important to use readers' advisory reference tools, instead of relying on personal memory or judgment, and maintaining eye contact throughout the interaction. Another practice librarians often neglect is to follow up with the patron to ensure he/she found a suitable title. Chelton's research is based on observations made by her library students throughout her teaching career (Chelton, "Readers'" 38).

Another important practice to consider concerns the resources used for readers' advisory. A number of print tools and even more websites describe and summarize books, with lists of similar titles. In her master's paper for the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Christine Quillen evaluated four readers' advisory web-based services. Quillen found each of these sources to possess its own unique strengths and weaknesses. Since no service was without deficiencies, she suggests that librarians should use a combination of resources to fully serve readers and completely answer their queries (41).

While suggesting a good book is a much more nebulous and ambiguous task than answering most reference questions, the same basic principles apply: clarifying the patron's question, using the best possible sources to meet the patron's information need, while demonstrating how to use sources to find information, and following up with the patron to ensure the information need was adequately met. Duncan Smith asked three librarians to write a brief report, recommending titles to the same patron after reading a brief profile of the patron, her previous reading interests, and her background. After presenting the librarians' reports, Smith articulates the four common tasks associated with readers' advisory these librarians employed. 1) The advisor should ask questions to determine the reader's interests. 2) Before any interaction with a reader takes place, the advisor should already be able to look for associations and links among titles, authors, and characters. 3) The advisor should apply this ability to the reader's summation of interests. 4) Finally, the advisor should suggest titles that the reader might enjoy based on what has been shared and explain how the title might match the reader's interests (Smith "Librarians'" 103).

Evaluating the effectiveness of readers' advisory services in public libraries is of paramount importance. As Sharon Baker noted in 1992, when she plead for more research to be conducted on readers' advisory, if librarians cannot point to quantitative evidence that the service is implemented effectively and enjoys extensive usage, readers' services will most likely fall prey to budget cuts and staff reassignments. Baker recognized the profession's growing interest in readers' advisory, but she cautioned that the services would be extraneous to the administrators who allocated the budget if librarians could not point to proof that libraries and their patrons benefited from the service ("Readers'" 167).

Besides the research of May and her colleagues in Nassau County, New York, little research has been conducted in the past few years, however, to document whether or not librarians are following the recommended guidelines for readers' advisory or whether they take advantage of the sources that have proliferated since the inception of the internet. May and her team of researchers were dismayed when only forty-six percent of the librarians they approached used any kind of source to help them find a good book. In most cases, the librarians relied only on the online catalog (May 143). This research ignited yet another wave of practical, "how-to" articles in various library journals, reviewing the basic steps of composing a booklist for patrons, a rough guideline for how to conduct a readers' advisory interview, and catchy ideas for promotional displays. May, *et al's* research also alluded to another important aspect of readers' advisory: the passive readers' advisor.

Librarians can advise readers outside of the readers' advisory interview. Eye-catching book displays, booklists, bookmarks, reading groups, web design, and the very

arrangement of the collection itself all help to connect books to readers. Many studies have documented the effectiveness of arranging the fiction collection in a manner more conducive to browsing. In 1992, at the Cliffdale branch of the Cumberland County Public Library system in North Carolina, the library administration approved a "genrefication" plan for the library's fiction collection. Jeffrey Cannell and Eileen McCluskey described the effects of genrefication on the branch's circulation statistics. After examining the reading habits of the branch patrons, library staff arranged the fiction collection by genre: general fiction, short stories, mysteries, thriller/espionage, horror, fantasy, science fiction, romance, westerns, and teen fiction. Cannell and McCluskey documented a thirty-six percent increase in Cliffdale's fiction circulation as a result of the collection's genrefication (Cannell & McCluskey 164). This research indicated that patrons are better able to connect with books of their interest if the collection is grouped by genre.

Amy J. Richards corroborated these findings in 1999 at the main branch of the Durham County Public Library. While she did not detect a significant increase in circulation, patrons reported the fiction collection was easier to navigate, it was easier for them to find books, thereby decreasing "information overload," and overall patron satisfaction increased (29). Kerri L. Huff re-examined circulation statistics in 2006 at the same branch and found that fiction circulation had steadily increased at Durham County since the genrefication of the fiction collection, and patrons continued to be satisfied with the arrangement of the collection (19).

Another important aspect of passive readers' advisory is the manner in which the books are described in the catalog. In 1983, Annalise Pejtersen and J. Austin noted that

readers most often search for books based on concepts, such as subject matter, emotional experience, and readability. The researchers therefore constructed a library catalog that described novels based on five dimensions: subject matter, setting, the author's intention, accessibility or readability, and other notable features ("Part I" 237). After testing the pilot system on a sample of users, Pejtersen and Austin discovered that users prefer more information in the catalog, including subject headings for fiction novels and more non-traditional access points. Overall, the system with more information about fiction novels was ninety-six percent more effective in helping readers find a book they might enjoy ("Part III" 39). Pejtersen and Austin's research suggests that cataloging novels more precisely not only helps patrons find books on their own, but it would also help librarians during readers' advisory interviews.

An additional means of passive readers' advisory is that of book displays. Bookstores are able to capitalize on this method of marketing, with face-outs of books on the end of every aisle and on special tables and shelves at the store entrances. In fact, Sharon L. Baker studied the effects of book displays in three public libraries' circulation statistics. She found that books from displays near the circulation desk circulated 300%-1000% more frequently than books on the shelf ("Why" 63). Books displayed behind the fiction wall circulated 60% more frequently than the books on the shelf. A number of articles supply fresh ideas for book displays in libraries, citing this method as the most effective in drawing attention to new and old titles, alike (Outlaw 9). These physical displays provide indirect assistance for patrons who are too timid to ask for library assistance, and they also help those patrons who are not technologically inclined and intimidated by seemingly complicated databases and webpages (George 31).

Janet Nottingham documents the effectiveness of annotations accompanying book displays. When a new public library branch opened in Ohio, the library staff invited authors to send congratulatory messages to the library via email, which were then placed next to their titles. Additionally, staff made quick annotations about books they had read, which were displayed near the "Staff Picks" book displays. Nottingham observed that in a three-week period, 250 books from an annotated display circulated, whereas only 91 books circulated from a display without annotations (338). Adding the brief descriptions allows librarians to better define the appeal of a book and entice the patron to read the book.

A fairly recent innovation in readers' advisory is the idea of reading maps. Neal Wyatt describes a reading map as a visual representation of all books and topics related to or similar to a particular title. Because of the sprawling nature of the maps, they are probably better suited as virtual book displays on the library website, with book covers and links to the record from the online catalog (39).

An additional means of passive readers' advisory involves librarians creating topical booklists of suggested titles with brief annotations and the corresponding call numbers. The lists help reduce information overload and allow the patrons to make a more informed decision about what to read. Read-alike lists, which list books specifically similar to one particular book or author, allow readers alternatives to unavailable titles and highlight books in the collection that might otherwise be overlooked, thereby increasing circulation and patron satisfaction. Posting the lists online allows the library to extend its influence and services beyond the patrons who enter the library building. A number of articles have been published suggesting themes

for the booklists, and Fiction_L, a listserv discussion group focused on readers' advisory in public libraries, frequently develops lists centered around creative themes and read-alikes for specific titles.

A growing number of practitioners claim that public libraries need to increase their presence online and offer more readers' services virtually. Barbara Hoffert, in particular, noted that since readers' advisory is such an ambiguous task, perhaps the best solution to make it more concrete is to offer remote-access readers' advisory services. In addition to providing topical booklists, public libraries can also distribute newsletters about new and upcoming acquisitions via email and offer a forum online for book discussion groups. Hoffert encouraged libraries to make their readers' services pages more prominent and increase access to readers' advisory databases by providing links to them on the library's homepage (45).

Barry Trott speculated that the reason most libraries maintain web-based passive readers' advisory services is to develop an environment that supports the reading experience and entices readers to enter the actual library and ask library staff for assistance. Trott acknowledged the importance of these passive services, like booklists and linked book reviews, but these services are not enough. Trott claimed libraries need to be more aggressive in the virtual services they provide. He endorsed using any type of virtual reference, whether it is conducted via email or live chat, as a means to interact with patrons about books and point them to web resources they might find helpful. He also noted that since most virtual library services archive these transactions, the queries could be used in staff training and also serve as quantifiable evidence of the library's reach (210-215).

Neil Hollands claims that readers' advisory queries are most completely answered in an online readers' advisory system. He described the virtual readers' advisory system at Williamsburg Regional Library, which encouraged patrons to complete standardized forms asking them about their reading tastes and preferences and previous favorite authors and titles, and the answers were forwarded to a library staff member whose reading tastes most closely align with the tastes of the survey respondent. The staff member then contacted the patron, usually via email, with an annotated list of eight to twelve titles that the reader might enjoy. This method allowed staff to archive their annotations and lists in a database, which provided a rich training tool for library staff, along with a number of ready-made book reviews and annotated booklists for future use. An added benefit of this service was that it was personalized to each reader. Each patron received a detailed response from a library staff member with similar reading interests and with adequate time to construct a list of possible titles (205-212).

Library staff have an array of resources, both print and electronic, that are helpful for conducting readers' services. Readers' advisory experts have described and recommended those resources they deem most helpful and how to incorporate them into a face to face interview and how to use them for passive readers' advisory. Little research, however, documents the tools library staff actually use for readers' services and whether or not they follow the recommendations set forth by the field's experts. This study is an attempt to meet that need.

Methodology

The study described in this paper is an effort to determine whether librarians' readers' advisory practices and reading habits have changed since information about readers' advisory has become so widely available. The renaissance in readers' advisory has resulted in an explosion of freely available resources on the Internet, along with developing technology that has allowed librarians access to a wealth of information about books they previously could not access. This increased access allows them to provide more precise readers' advisory services without investing so much personal time reading across the fiction genres.

The study observed various facets of the current practices associated with readers' advisory in public libraries in North Carolina. Using the survey instrument in Robert Burgin's research article, "Readers' Advisory in the Public Library", as a model, a thirteen-question online survey was created using the Qualitrics software and distributed to library directors via email (Burgin 86-87). The survey gathered demographic information (gender, age, education, experience) in addition to personal reading habits, the frequency of readers' advisory queries, the sources consulted for face to face and passive readers' advisory activities, and whether the librarians have participated in any professional development related to readers' advisory.

Burgin's survey was modified to more accurately reflect the current public library environment. The original demographic information was retained, and an additional

question was included regarding the respondents' gender. Additionally, respondents were asked whether they had attended any readers' advisory training events over the past five years to ascertain their awareness of best practices for readers' advisory transactions. To understand the interaction between the library staff's reliance on personal reading and their reliance on readers' advisory tools, questions were asked about the respondents' reading habits. These questions were also slightly modified to increase precision and more accurately reflect library staff's behavior. To increase accuracy, instead of being asked how many fiction titles they read per year, survey respondents were asked to indicate how many books they read in the past month to increase accuracy.

Also, the list of popular titles from question seven on Burgin's questionnaire was modified to provide a selection of more current titles. Respondents were asked to indicate all the books they had read from a given list. The titles were chosen from the Quills 2006 nominations, since these are largely recognized as the "People's Choice" award for books, and the list includes a title from each genre, except for westerns and literary fiction; in the case of literary fiction, the 2006 Pulitzer Prize winner was included. Finally, respondents were asked to indicate the top three tools they used for readers' advisory; one question asked respondents to indicate the tools used for face to face transactions, and an additional question was asked about the tools used for passive, behind the scenes readers' advisory.

The survey instrument, invitation, consent form, and reminder were submitted to the Behavioral Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. (See Appendices A, B, and C.) After receiving approval from the board, an invitation to the survey containing the hyperlink to the web-based survey was sent to a

systematic sample of public library directors in North Carolina via email. The library directors were systematically selected using the 2006 Directory of North Carolina Libraries. Out of 403 library system and branch directors, every other individual was contacted, and he or she was asked to either complete the survey themselves or forward the survey link to the staff members most qualified to answer the questions. Email addresses for Columbus, Franklin, Halifax, and Robeson counties were not available in the directory, so they were omitted when devising the random sample. The survey was made available for four weeks after the survey invitations were sent out on 19 February 2007. To increase the response rate, on 12 March 2007, a week before the survey closed, the library directors were sent an email message, reminding them of the survey's closing on 19 March 2007 and asking them to forward the survey link to their staff if they had not already done so. Of the 197 invitations sent, 103 surveys were completed, resulting in a response rate of 52.3%. The data was analyzed using the Qualitrics survey software.

Findings

The survey instrument measured demographic data pertaining to the respondents' age, gender, educational level, M.L.S. status, and public library experience. Tables 1 and 2 display the general characteristics of the survey respondents. As the tables indicate, the large majority of respondents were female, and nearly half were female, and nearly half were over the age of fifty.

Table 1. Respondents' age

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Less than 20		0	0%
2	20-29		7	7.14%
3	30-39		19	19.39%
4	40-49		24	24.49%
5	50+		48	48.98%

Table 2. Respondents' gender

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Male		9	9.28%
2	Female		88	90.72%

The survey asked respondents to indicate the highest level of education they had obtained. As indicated in Table 3, the respondents were, in general, highly educated. Eighty-three percent held college degrees, and nearly two-thirds had some formal

education after college. None of the respondents had less than a high school education.

Table 3. Respondents' education

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Less than high school graduate		0	0%
2	High school graduate		7	7.14%
3	Some college		10	10.2%
4	College graduate		16	16.33%
5	Post-college		65	66.33%

Over half of the respondents held a masters degree in library science, as depicted in Table 4, and well over half of the respondents have significant library experience in a public library setting, as Table 5 illustrates. Sixty-one percent had been working in a public library for at least ten years, and eighty-six percent had at least five years of public library experience. Cross-tabulations were calculated comparing the tenures of the professional respondents' tenures in public library and the paraprofessional respondents' tenures in the public library, and chi-square calculations reveal that no significant difference existed between the two. A little over half (fifty-one percent) of the respondents with an M.L.S. degree have been working in public libraries for over five years. A little over a third (thirty-five percent) of the paraprofessional respondents had been working in public libraries for over five years.

Table 4. Respondents' M.L.S. status

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		55	57.29%
2	No		41	42.71%

Table 5. Respondents' public library experience

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Less than 1 year		3	3.06%
2	1-4 years		12	12.24%
3	5-9 years		23	23.47%
4	10+ years		60	61.22%

Table 6 illustrates that a large majority of the respondents were from small and medium-sized public libraries. For the purposes of this study, small public libraries are defined as those with collections of 50,000 volumes or less; medium-sized public libraries hold between 50,001 and 200,000 volumes, and large public libraries are those holding 200,001 volumes or more. One-quarter of respondents were from public libraries with collections of 25,000 or less. Cross-tabulations comparing the respondents' education with the size of their respective collections revealed that none of the respondents from large public libraries had less than a bachelor's degree. Additionally, the category for institutions with 25,000 volumes or less was the only category in which the respondents without an M.L.S. outnumbered the respondents who did hold an M.L.S.

Table 6. Size of the library collection

#	Answer		Response	%
1	25,000 volumes or less		25	26.04%
2	25,001-50,000 volumes		17	17.71%
3	50,001-100,000 volumes		25	26.04%
4	100,001-200,000 volumes		8	8.33%
5	200,000 volumes or more		21	21.88%

Survey respondents were also asked questions pertaining to their personal reading habits, including the number of books read in the past month and the types of books read

in the past six months. Additionally, they were asked to indicate which books they had read from a list representing nearly all of the genres, which was taken from the list of 2006 Quills nominees.

When asked how many books they had read in the past month, the data revealed that most respondents read at least two books per month, as table seven indicates. Additionally, the respondents were asked to indicate all the genres of fiction they had read over the past six month. As illustrated in Table 8, the most popular genres were general fiction, mystery, and romance. These were the only genres read by over half of the respondents. Westerns constituted the genre read the least frequently, and other genres in which fewer than half of the respondents had read in the past six months include fantasy, inspirational fiction, science fiction, and horror.

Table 7. Number of books read in the past month

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		8	8.25%
2	2-3		43	44.33%
3	4-5		18	18.56%
4	6+		28	28.87%

Table 8. Genres read within the past six months

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Fantasy		33	9.59%
2	General Fiction		85	24.71%
3	Horror		13	3.78%
4	Mystery		63	18.31%
5	Romance		54	15.7%
6	Science Fiction		21	6.1%
7	Western		3	0.87%
8	Inspirational Fiction		24	6.98%
9	Other		48	13.95%

A closer look at the data indicates that about three-quarters of the respondents had read between two and four genres in the past six months. Table 9 points out that the most frequently occurring number of genres the respondents had read was three. The mean was 3.34, and the median number of genres read in the past six months was also three. Additionally, as would be expected, heavy readers, those who had read at least four books for pleasure in the past month, tended to read across more genres than light readers, those who had read three or less books for pleasure in the past month. The mean number of genres read in the past six months by light readers was 2.94, the mode was two, and the median three genres. For heavy readers, the mean was 3.86 genres, the mode was evenly split between three and four genres, and the median was three genres.

Table 9. Number of genres read within past six months

#	Answer	Response	%
1	1 genre	5	5.15%
2	2 genres	24	24.74%
3	3 genres	27	27.84%
4	4 genres	24	24.74%
5	5 genres	9	9.28%
6	6 genres	2	2.06%
7	7 genres	5	5.15%
8	8 genres	0	0%
9	9 genres	1	1.03%

The survey also asked respondents to indicate which books they had read from a selection of titles, largely composed of the 2006 Quills nominees. Table 10 summarizes the findings associated with this question. The top two most widely-read titles from the list were mysteries, *Twelve Sharp* by Janet Evanovich and Harlan Coben's *Promise Me*. The least-read titles included a science fiction/fantasy novel, *A Feast for Crows* by George R.R. Martin, Kate Mosse's *Labyrinth*, a fiction novel, and a horror novel, *Cell*, by Stephen King. It is interesting to note that while general fiction was the most widely read genre, the general fiction titles from the given list were not the most widely read. Mystery, which was the second most popular genre, happened to have the most widely read titles in the given list. Nearly one-half of the respondents (forty-nine percent) had not read any of the listed titles, and roughly one-third of the respondents (thirty-one percent) had read at least two titles.

Table 10. Books read from the list of 2006 Quills nominees and others

#	Answer		Response	%
1	A Dirty Job by Christopher Moore		9	8.18%
2	Twelve Sharp by Janet Evanovich		30	27.27%
3	Blue Smoke by Nora Roberts		13	11.82%
4	A Breath of Snow & Ashes by Diana Gabaldon		11	10%
5	Cell by Stephen King		8	7.27%
6	A Feast for Crows by George R.R. Martin		1	0.91%
7	Labyrinth by Kate Mosse		7	6.36%
8	Promise Me by Harlan Coben		21	19.09%
9	March by Geraldine Brooks		10	9.09%

Next, respondents were asked about their personal experience with readers' advisory questions. Relevant questions concerned their participation in readers' advisory training, the frequency they receive readers' advisory queries from patrons, and what types of resources they use during readers' advisory transactions.

Respondents were asked if they had participated in any type of readers' advisory training in the past five years, be it classes, staff workshops, conference seminars, or presentations. As Table 11 indicates, most respondents reported they had participated in such training. Respondents were also asked how frequently they receive readers' advisory questions from patrons. Table 12 summarizes the data for this question, and it is important to note that over two-thirds of respondents reported receiving readers' advisory questions at least once a day or more often.

Table 11. Participation in readers' advisory' professional development event within past five years

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		61	62.89%
2	No		36	37.11%

Table 12. Average frequency of readers' advisory questions

#	Answer		Response	%
1	5+ times a day		29	29.59%
2	At least once a day		42	42.86%
3	At least once a week		16	16.33%
4	Less than once a week		11	11.22%

Finally, the survey asked respondents to indicate the three resources they use most frequently, once, for face to face readers' advisory, and again, for behind the scenes, passive readers' advisory. As displayed in Table 13, for face to face readers' advisory queries, the three most frequently selected resources were readers' advisory databases, like *NoveList* and *What Do I Read Next?*, personal reading, and the library catalog. The resources that respondents consult the least frequently for face to face readers' advisory queries were book blogs and other book-related websites, print tools in the collection, and online book vendors, like Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

Table 13. Frequently used tools for face to face readers' advisory transactions

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Print tools in the collection – Genreflecting, book reviews from magazines, etc.		28	7.69%
2	My personal reading		64	17.58%
3	Library catalog		48	13.19%
4	Comments from family and/or friends		35	9.62%
5	Comments from colleagues		40	10.99%
6	Readers' advisory databases – Novelist, What Do I Read Next?		68	18.68%
7	Online book blogs or other book-related websites		9	2.47%
8	Online book vendors – Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc.		32	8.79%
9	Booklists generated by your library or other libraries		40	10.99%

For passive readers' advisory, the three most frequently selected resources were readers' advisory databases, print tools in the collection, and online book vendors. The resources that respondents indicated using the least frequently include personal comments from family, friends, and colleagues, and online book blogs and book-related websites and can be seen in Table 14.

Table 14. Frequently used resources for passive readers' advisory

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Print tools in the collection – Genreflecting, book reviews from magazines, etc.		54	14.74%
2	My personal reading		30	8.33%
3	Library catalog		52	14.74%
4	Comments from family and/or friends		9	2.56%
5	Comments from colleagues		16	4.49%
6	Readers' advisory databases – Novelist, What Do I Read Next?		89	24.36%
7	Online book blogs or other book-related websites		23	6.41%
8	Online book vendors – Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc.		49	13.46%
9	Booklists generated by your library or other libraries		40	10.9%

A more detailed analysis of the responses indicates that the resources used for readers' advisory might be influenced by other characteristics of the respondents. For instance, as the respondents' age increased, so did their likelihood to use non-electronic resources. For the purposes of this study, electronic resources included readers' advisory databases, book-related websites, online book vendors, and library booklists. Forty-seven percent of the responses from respondents thirty-nine and under designated web-based tools as one of the three they most often consulted. For respondents forty years of age and older, electronic resources constituted thirty-nine percent of the responses. These

numbers become more dramatic when the age brackets are divided even further. Web-based tools constituted only thirty-eight percent of the frequently used resources for respondents above the age of fifty. This percentage slowly increased as the age of the respondents lessened. Electronic readers' advisory tools represented forty percent of the frequently use resources for respondents in their forties, fifty-five percent of the resources for respondents in their thirties, and fifty percent of frequently used resources for respondents in their twenties. Table 15 summaries the frequently used resources for face to face readers' advisory compared to the respondents' ages.

Table 15. Frequently used resources for face to face advisory by respondents' age

	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
Print tools	2	5	6	15
Personal reading	6	12	13	3
Library catalog	1	10	9	28
Comments from family/friends	2	5	9	19
Comments from colleagues	3	8	12	17
RA databases	6	17	14	31
Book-related websites	1	3	1	4
Online book vendors	3	5	9	15
Library booklists	4	8	9	19

A somewhat similar trend emerged when comparing the ages of respondents to the resources to which they frequently refer for passive readers' advisory. When asked to indicate the three resources they use most frequently, two-thirds of the responses from respondents in their twenties were web-based resources; fifty-eight percent of the responses from people in their thirties were web-based, and fifty-nine percent of the

responses from respondents over the age of fifty were electronic. Respondents in their forties were unique in that only forty percent of their most frequently used resources for passive readers' advisory were electronic. As illustrated in Table 16, this was also the only age bracket where print tools from the collection were most popular for passive readers' advisory, claiming twenty-seven percent of the responses. In other age brackets, readers' advisory databases were overwhelmingly the most popular types of tools.

Table 16. Frequently used resources for passive readers' advisory by respondents' age

	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
Print tools	5	9	21	19
Personal reading	2	14	7	7
Library catalog	5	9	12	28
Comments from family/friends	0	0	2	7
Comments from colleagues	0	5	5	7
RA databases	9	26	12	42
Book-related websites	2	7	2	12
Online book vendors	7	9	7	26
Library booklists	5	9	9	16

It is also interesting to compare the resources respondents most frequently consult with whether or not they hold a master's in library science. Table 17 summarizes the data associated with this question. Fifty-two percent of the respondents with an M.L.S. selected more comprehensive tools as resources they frequently use, including print resources in the collection, readers' advisory databases, book-related websites, online book vendors, and library booklists. For respondents without an M.L.S., these tool-based resources comprised forty-five percent of their responses. Differences emerged

concerning print tools from the collection, especially; seventy percent of the respondents who selected print tools as a frequently used resource held an M.L.S. Despite this difference, the three most popular tools among both subgroups were the same, but they are ranked differently. Readers' advisory databases was the most frequently selected option among respondents with an M.L.S., receiving twenty percent of the responses in this subgroup, followed by personal reading, which received seventeen percent of the responses, and the library catalog, which received twelve percent of the responses. Among respondents without an M.L.S., personal reading was the most frequently used resource with eighteen percent of the responses, followed by readers' advisory databases with seventeen percent of the responses, and the library catalog with fourteen percent of the responses.

Table 17. Frequently used resources for face to face readers' advisory by respondents' M.L.S. status

	Yes	No
Print tools	19	8
Personal reading	34	28
Library catalog	25	21
Comments from family/friends	16	18
Comments from colleagues	23	17
RA databases	41	27
Book-related websites	7	2
Online book vendors	16	16
Library booklists	23	16

Again, when comparing the resources used by respondents with an M.L.S. to those used by non-M.L.S. respondents for passive readers' advisory, the results are more dramatic. Tool-based options, such as print resources in the collection, readers' advisory databases, book websites, online book vendors, and booklists, constituted two-thirds of the selections from respondents with an M.L.S., as illustrated in Table 18. Interestingly,

these same options constituted seventy-five percent of the responses from paraprofessional respondents. Among respondents with an M.L.S., the most popular options were readers' advisory databases, with twenty-four percent of the responses, the library catalog, with nineteen percent of the responses, followed by print tools in the collection, which received fifteen percent of the responses from this subgroup. Among the paraprofessional respondents, the most popular resources were readers' advisory databases, which received twenty-five percent of the responses, print tools in the library collection and online book vendors, which both received fifteen percent of the total responses from this subgroup.

Table 18. Frequently used resources for passive readers' advisory by respondents' M.L.S. status

	Yes	No
Print tools	30	23
Personal reading	16	14
Library catalog	37	14
Comments from family/friends	5	4
Comments from colleagues	9	7
RA databases	49	39
Book-related websites	9	14
Online book vendors	23	23
Library booklists	20	18

Interestingly, when comparing the types of tools respondents selected to their participation in professional development concerning readers' advisory, no statistical significance emerges. "Tool-based" options include print tools in the collection, readers' advisory databases, book-related websites, online book vendors, and library booklists. The library catalog was omitted from this operational definition because its subject headings are often not conducive to locating similar books. The "tool-based" options constituted fifty percent of the responses selected by those who had attended these events

as their most frequently used resources, whereas among those who had not attended any professional development events for readers' advisory, forty-seven percent of the responses were "tool-based" options. Table 19 indicates the types of tools frequently used by those who have and have not attended professional development readers' advisory events.

Table 19. Frequently used resources for face to face readers' advisory transactions by respondents' attendance at readers' advisory professional development events within the past 5 years

	Yes	No
Print tools	16	11
Personal reading	38	25
Library catalog	28	19
Comments from family/friends	18	17
Comments from colleagues	38	12
RA databases	46	22
Book-related websites	8	1
Online book vendors	19	13
Library booklists	22	17

Similar results were found for the tools selected for passive readers' advisory. Among the responses from those who had attended a professional development event for readers' advisory in the past five years, seventy-one percent of the selections were tool-based. Among those respondents who had not, tool-based options constituted seventy percent of the responses. As illustrated in Table 20, the three most frequently used resources among the respondents who had participated in formal readers' advisory training were readers' advisory databases, online book vendors, and the library catalog. The three most frequently used resources for passive readers' advisory among those respondents who had not participated in professional development activities were readers' advisory databases, print tools in the collection, and online book vendors.

Table 20. Frequently used resources for passive readers' advisory by respondents' attendance at readers' advisory professional development events within the past 5 years

	Yes	No
Print tools	32	21
Personal reading	21	9
Library catalog	32	15
Comments from family/friends	7	2
Comments from colleagues	12	4
RA databases	60	28
Book-related websites	16	7
Online book vendors	35	14
Library booklists	31	19

Another interesting comparison exists between the frequently used resources used in face to face readers' advisory transactions by those who read more books than others. For the purpose of this calculation, "heavy readers" are defined as those who indicated they had read four or more books in the past month, or at least a book a week. "Light readers" are defined as those who indicated they had read three or less books in the past month. Among the heavy readers, forty-nine percent of the responses were tool-based options; among the lighter readers, forty-seven percent of the responses were associated with tool-based options. As Table 21 depicts, the most frequently used resource among heavy readers was personal reading. The most frequently used resource by light readers was readers' advisory databases.

Table 21. Frequently used resources for face to face readers' advisory transactions by light and heavy readers

	Light Readers	Heavy Readers
Print tools	17	11
Personal reading	27	37
Library catalog	29	19
Comments from family/friends	19	16
Comments from colleagues	20	20
RA databases	37	30
Book-related websites	4	5
Online book vendors	15	17
Library booklists	20	19

Strikingly different patterns emerged for the resources different types of readers use for passive readers' advisory. Seventy-two percent of the responses from heavy readers were associated with the tool-based options for passive readers' advisory, compared to sixty-seven percent of the responses from light readers. Table 22 indicates that the top three resources used by heavy readers were readers' advisory databases, online book vendors, and print tools in the library collection. The most frequently used resources among light readers for passive readers' advisory were readers' advisory databases, the library catalog, and again, print tools in the collection.

Table 22. Frequently used resources for passive readers' advisory by light and heavy readers

	Light Readers	Heavy Readers
Print tools	31	23
Personal reading	16	14
Library catalog	33	21
Comments from family/friends	2	7
Comments from colleagues	12	5
RA databases	52	38
Book-related websites	17	7
Online book vendors	16	33
Library booklists	16	21

After examining the chi-square calculations for these variables, no statistical differences emerged from comparing the frequently used resources between respondents who had significant public library experience and those who did not. For the purposes of this comparison, significant public library experience is defined as five or more years. Fifty-one percent of the responses associated with the frequently used resources among those with significant public library experience were tool-based. Among those without significant experience, forty-eight percent of the responses were tool-based. As Table 23 illustrates, the three most frequently used resources among both groups were readers' advisory databases, personal reading, and the library catalog, which again, also holds true for the entire group of respondents.

Table 23. Frequently used resources for face to face readers' advisory by respondents' public library experience

	Less than 5 years	5+ years
Print tools	4	24
Personal reading	9	55
Library catalog	7	41
Comments from family/friends	7	28
Comments from colleagues	5	35
RA databases	9	59
Book-related websites	1	8
Online book vendors	9	23
Library booklists	6	34

Respondents with significant public library experience were much more likely to report using "tool-based" resources for readers' services. From the responses of those who have five years or less in a public library setting, only forty-seven percent of the selected responses are tool-based, compared to the sixty-seven percent of responses from those with five or more years of public library experience. Table 24 summarizes the data from this comparison and illustrates that the three most frequently used resources for

passive readers' advisory with significant public library experience are readers' advisory databases, the library, and print tools in the collection. Among those with five years or less of public library experience, the most frequently used resources for passive readers' advisory were readers' advisory databases, book-related websites, and online book vendors.

Table 24. Frequently used resources for passive readers' advisory by respondents' public library experience

	Less than 5 years	5+ years
Print tools	3	20
Personal reading	1	12
Library catalog	2	21
Comments from family/friends	1	3
Comments from colleagues	0	7
RA databases	8	30
Book-related websites	4	6
Online book vendors	4	17
Library booklists	2	14

Discussion

Comparing the results of this study to a similar study undertaken by Robert Burgin in 1996, it would appear that readers' advisory queries have become more common in public libraries. Two-thirds of the participants in Burgin's study reported receiving readers' advisory queries from patrons at least once a day, whereas in this study, nearly three-fourths (seventy-three percent) of the respondents from public libraries in North Carolina reported receiving readers' advisory queries at least once a day (Burgin 74). This increase is encouraging and suggests that readers' advisory is becoming an even more important part of public services in the library. As libraries continue to highlight this service and librarians hone their readers' advisory skills, it is hoped that patrons will continue to take advantage of readers' services in the public library.

Readers' advisory databases are overwhelmingly the most frequently used tools for readers' services in the public library. This option was the most frequently selected source overall and in many of the most frequently used resources among the subgroups. The popularity of this type of tool can be partially attributed to the widespread availability of EBSCO's *Novelist* through NCLive, a consortium of academic and public libraries across North Carolina that pool their funds and provide participating libraries with access to an array of electronic resources.

One of the hopes of this study was that librarians and library staff would be using tool-based resources for readers' services more often than reported by Burgin in 1996.

Burgin's study indicated that most librarians and library staff relied on their personal reading to answer readers' advisory questions, and this reliance increased if the respondents were classified as "heavier readers" (77). No librarian would answer reference questions without validating responses from an external resource, and the same standard should be applied to readers' services. The respondents' heavy usage of readers' advisory databases from this survey for both face to face and passive readers' advisory is encouraging, but the results indicate that library staff are still largely reliant on their personal reading histories to provide face to face readers' services.

The results about passive readers' advisory, however, are even more encouraging. Tool-based services are much more frequently consulted for behind the scenes readers' services. Personal reading followed readers' advisory databases, print tools in the collection, and online book vendors as the most frequently used resource. The demotion of personal reading for passive readers' advisory could be ascribed to the fact that library staff are not under as much pressure when constructing lists or displays as they might be when the patron is in front of them expecting an answer. Library staff have more time to peruse different sources and find titles that match a theme in mind, instead of pleasing a patron.

This study corroborated Burgin's findings that library staff who are "heavier readers" rely on their personal reading more so than the "lighter readers" (77). Among the respondents who had read four or more books in the past month, readers' advisory databases did not appear on the list of the three most frequently used resources, whereas among the respondents who had read three or less books, readers' advisory databases was the most frequently selected option.

Moreover, it is interesting that the tools used for face to face readers' advisory did not vary with years of experience in a public library setting. Those who had been in a public library fewer than five years frequently used the same types of tools as those who have more public library experience. In contrast, those who have less public library experience used electronic resources more often for passive readers' advisory. This greater reliance on web-based resources might also be related to the age of the respondents. Those who have less experience are likely to fall into the younger age brackets, which used web-based resources more often than their older peers.

Additionally, it is interesting that respondents with a master's in library science did not indicate using tool-based resources for readers' advisory more often. Respondents with an M.L.S. are the subgroup with the highest percentage of tool-based selections (fifty-one percent), but forty-five percent of the responses from paraprofessional staff were also tool-based, which is not a significant difference. Furthermore, while the results indicate that paraprofessional staff rely more often on their personal reading than on readers' advisory databases, it is important to note that the difference between the two options is less than one percent of the responses. Furthermore, paraprofessional staff were much more likely to rely on tool-based resources for passive readers' advisory. Whereas, seventy-five percent of the paraprofessional respondents indicated tool-based resources as frequently used resource, only two-thirds of respondents indicated tool-based resources as frequently used resources.

Since Burgin's study, the frequency of readers' advisory queries among professional and paraprofessional library staff seems to have equalized. Burgin reported

that thirty-two percent of the paraprofessional respondents received readers' advisory queries five or more times a day, compared to the mere twelve percent of librarians who report receiving the same number of queries (80). Whereas Burgin reported that paraprofessional staff received readers' advisory queries much more often than professional librarians, this results of this study suggests that Burgin's reported gap is closing. In contrast, the gap between the two groups of respondents in this study closed to twenty-eight percent for paraprofessional library staff and thirty-two percent for professional librarians.

Conclusions

This study sought to understand the effects of the popularity of readers' advisory recommendations in library literature and the proliferation of web-based tools on readers' services in public libraries in North Carolina. Respondents were not randomly selected. Public library directors across North Carolina, however, were systematically selected and asked to select the most qualified library staff members to respond to the survey. Many questions were taken from a similar study conducted by Robert Burgin in 1996. Some of these questions were modified and updated to reflect recommendations set forth in library literature.

The library literature contains an abundance of articles from the past ten years or so, encouraging library staff to take advantage of free, web-based resources and also subscription-based electronic resources to aid in readers' advisory. The assumptions held entering the study were that library staff would depend on web-based tools more often than their own personal reading, since the Internet has made these tools more readily available. Also, this reliance on electronic resources was expected to increase as the age of respondents decreased, since younger generations are generally more familiar and comfortable with technology.

The results of the survey indicated that library staff in North Carolina rely largely on readers' advisory databases for both face to face and passive readers' services, with *NoveList* most likely being their database of choice, since it is available through NC Live. For face to face readers' advisory, however, personal reading and the library catalog, two

"traditional" sources of readers' advisory were still favored over web-based resources. Library staff tended to rely more on tool-based resources, however, for passive readers' advisory.

The differences among the different age brackets and their reliance on web-based tools were noticeable but not as dramatic as expected. Readers' advisory databases were the most frequently used resource across all ages, but older library staff tended to use their personal reading and the library catalog more often than their younger peers. Another interesting trend was the relative frequency print tools in the collection are used. It was expected that web-based tools would be far more popular than the print tools from the library collections, but for passive readers' advisory, especially, print tools appeared as a frequently used resource more often than expected.

While the results of this study indicated that library staff were becoming more reliant on tools at their disposal to conduct readers' advisory transactions, a substantial amount of research is left to be done regarding the effectiveness of these transactions. The majority of library literature related to readers' services has highlighted the "best practices" of librarians in readers' advisory and what they can do to improve their services. Little research has investigated the effectiveness of readers' services from a patron's perspective. Granted, it is important to have profession-wide standards to ensure quality service is provided in readers' advisory, but patrons also need to be consulted to understand their expectations as readers.

As libraries become a greater presence in the virtual world, another area of research to be explored is that of virtual readers' advisory. Librarians argue that email-based readers' advisory is an ideal forum for excellent, complete, and personalized

readers' advisory services. Chat-based readers' advisory more closely resembles "face to face" readers' services, but has the potential to become more reliant on web-based tools and the instruction of these tools. Also, this study suggested that readers' advisory queries are asked more frequently in libraries. Further research needs to be conducted to verify if this is a trend across the profession. The prevalence of readers' advisory questions could also be attributed to a possible increase in patron queries altogether.

Finally, readers' advisory is quickly expanding its scope to include nonfiction titles as well. As librarians learn more about suggesting nonfiction titles, research needs to be conducted measuring the effectiveness of the vocabulary the profession has chosen to discuss nonfiction. Also, as readers begin to demand more nonfiction services, it might be productive to research whether librarians' reading habits change as well, or if they will frequently turn to print and web-based tools to answer nonfiction queries.

Readers' services is a core function of the public library that is becoming increasingly important. Despite the rise of technology, library patrons are oftentimes just looking for a good book. As librarians practice readers' advisory, they need to take advantage of the variety of tools available as they guide readers to their next books. By doing so, library staff highlight parts of the collection that would otherwise go unnoticed and increase patron satisfaction with library services. If librarians do not promote their specialized services to their patrons, dissatisfied readers will look for their books elsewhere.

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APPENDIX A.

Email Invitation/Consent Form

19 February 2007

Dear Colleague:

Public librarianship has seen a renewed interest in readers' advisory and readers' services over the past decade. I am interested in discovering how librarians and library staff have assimilated the abundance of readers' advisory tools into their daily tasks and patron interactions. You were systematically selected from the 2006 State Directory of North Carolina. I am asking you to complete this survey or forward it to the staff member(s) who handle(s) the bulk of readers' services. A total of 203 library directors have been contacted regarding participation in this study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

To participate in the study you would simply complete the linked web survey (Link is found at the bottom of the page.). Completing the questionnaire connotes your consent to be a participant in this study. This questionnaire is composed of questions addressing your personal reading habits, the sources you most often consult for readers' services, general information regarding your experience in the field, and demographic questions used to describe survey respondents. The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. Feel free to skip any particular question or discontinue taking the survey at any time.

Your participation is anonymous. There are no questions that could be used to identify you, and all data obtained will be stored securely and reported as aggregate data. No individual can be or will be identified. The results of the data will be published, and my faculty advisor and I will be the only persons with access to the raw data.

The study poses no anticipated risks or benefits, but the profession will benefit from the study's publication. You will not bear any financial costs or derive any financial benefits from your participation. The survey will be available to you for the next 28 days.

Please feel free to contact me via email with any questions you may have at griffma@email.unc.edu.

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. Should you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact the UNC Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email at IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Megan Griffin

The survey can be found at
http://uncodum.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV_3q3io6Ec74NXqmw&SVID=Prod.

APPENDIX B.

Email Reminder

Greetings from UNC! I have enjoyed reviewing the results of my survey thus far and appreciate the time respondents have spent answering the questions. While the response rate has been strong, I'm hoping there are some more librarians willing to take 10-15 minutes from their busy schedules to complete the survey. If you wouldn't mind, would you please forward the survey link to ALL library staff who might receive readers' advisory queries?

If you have already responded to this survey, thank you so much for your time! If not, please take a few minutes to answer these questions. The survey will be available until 19 March 2007.

Thanks again,

Megan Griffin

The survey is available at :
http://uncodum.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV_3q3io6Ec74NXqmw&SVID=Prod

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at griffma@email.unc.edu.

APPENDIX C.

Readers' Advisory Resources Survey

How often do you personally receive readers' advisory questions from patrons?

- 5+ times a day
- At least once a day
- At least once a week
- Less than once a week

Please select the genres in which you have read at least one book for pleasure in the past 6 months. Check as many as apply.

- Fantasy
- General Fiction
- Horror
- Mystery
- Romance
- Science Fiction
- Western
- Inspirational Fiction
- Other

How many books have you read for pleasure in the past month?

- 1
- 2-3
- 4-5
- 6+

Please indicate all the books you have read:

A Dirty Job by Christopher Moore
Twelve Sharp by Janet Evanovich
March by Geraldine Brooks
Blue Smoke by Nora Roberts
A Breath of Snow & Ashes by Diana Gabaldon
Cell by Stephen King
A Feast for Crows by George R.R. Martin
Labyrinth by Kate Mosse
Promise Me by Harlan Coben

Which of these resources do you consult most frequently for "live," face to face readers' advisory? (Select up to 3)

- Print tools in the collection – *Genreflecting*, book reviews from magazines, etc.
- My personal reading
- Library catalog
- Comments from family and/or friends
- Comments from colleagues
- Readers' advisory databases – Novelist, What Do I Read Next?
- Online book blogs or other book-related websites
- Online book vendors – Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc.
- Booklists generated by your library or other libraries

Which of these resources do you consult most often for "behind the scenes" readers' advisory, such as booklists, bookmarks, book displays, etc.? (Select up to 3)

- Print tools in the collection – *Genreflecting*, book reviews from magazines, etc.
- My personal reading
- Library catalog
- Comments from family and/or friends
- Comments from colleagues
- Readers' advisory databases – *Novelist, What Do I Read Next?*
- Online book blogs or other book-related websites
- Online book vendors – Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc.
- Booklists generated by your library or other libraries

Size of your collection:

- 25,000 volumes or less
- 25,001-50,000 volumes
- 50,001-100,000 volumes
- 100,001-200,000 volumes
- 200,000 volumes or more

Select the highest level of education you have obtained:

- Less than high school graduate
- High school graduate
- Some college
- College graduate
- Post-college

Do you hold a master's degree in library science and/or information science?

- Yes
- No

Have you participated in any formal readers' advisory training in the past 5 years? Examples include: classes, workshops, conference seminars or presentations, etc.

- Yes
- No

How many years of public library experience do you have?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-4 years
- 5-9 years
- 10+ years

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age

- Less than 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50+