

The economic crisis and its effect on libraries 🛒

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to examine the recent recession in the USA and its impact on libraries. It illustrates how libraries are coping with the fiscal constraints and challenges this economic climate imposes. It seeks to provide timely feedback and best practices from librarians and administrators (mostly academic) regarding measures they are taking and their plans for the future.

Design/methodology/approach

The literature review reveals news regarding library budget cuts and their impact on collections, operations, and personnel. Two online surveys were conducted, one of the library community at large, the other of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) deans and directors.

Findings

A majority of the libraries have experienced flat or reduced budgets and many expect additional budget cuts in the immediate future. Key areas affected include collections/materials, professional development/travel, supplies/equipment, personnel and hours of operation. Survey respondents suggest that library administrators and librarians should examine workflow to increase efficiency, prioritize projects, and adopt creative measures.

Practical implications

This article provides informative and practical suggestions for those managing budgets in difficult economic times.

Originality/value

Data collected provide a snapshot of the financial constraints libraries currently face. It provides practical lessons and suggestions for library administrators and librarians seeking to cope with flat or reduced budgets while maintaining quality services.

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