

To: Faculty Senate

Re: **Library Committee Annual Report**

May 24, 2011

Committee Chair: Kathleen Merrow

Committee Members: Rudy Barton, Richard Beyler, Jack Corbett, Subhash Kochar, Donna Philbrick, Yen-lin Wan (student representative)

Ex Officio: Adriene Lim, Michael Bowman

## **Annual Report:**

This year the committee has been working closely with the library staff to provide faculty input for the task of reimagining the future role of the library and conducting strategic planning for 2012-2014. While budgetary concerns are (and continue to be) a big problem, the need for a vision of the library has a broader base. The University Library is facing changes and challenges faced across the board by other university libraries and, indeed, universities overall due to the changing nature of scholarly communication and information delivery systems. Even to use the language of “information delivery” or “knowledge delivery” indicates this change.

Some view the rapid changes in digital technologies and the ubiquity of networked information as a sign that university libraries will be significantly downsized and will increasingly outsource functions in various ways. (For one example, see: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/09/24/libraries>.) In short, the shrinking of staffing and resources of all kinds is envisioned. We find this a negative way to approach the coming challenges; one driven by budgetary pressures rather than a creative reimagining of the role a strong library can play in the university. We as faculty want to be sure that the university not be seen as a mere information delivery system for outsourced materials, and want to reaffirm the high value of the library in the future, one that adapts to new technologies while retaining the valuable historical role of the library as the heart of the university, as a sharing platform for scholarly information, as a repository, as a teaching partner, and as a preserver of scholarly information.

The discussion during the Faculty Senate meeting of May 2 helped to crystallize the committee’s sense of the challenges of setting priorities given limited funding. The following indicates critical parameters that need to be taken into account in setting priorities and working out what a “good library” means in the context of PSU.

1. The Library Committee members and the faculty strongly support the need for subject librarians who do research.
2. Space is a crucial aspect of the library’s function, particularly for undergraduates. About 99% of the users of the physical space of the library are undergraduates. The library is one of the few places on campus where students can study, providing not just individual study spaces, but group study rooms, presentation rooms, and access to computers. The library shelves are at about 96% capacity (80% is considered full to allow room for shifting and expansion). There is little room for expansion at this point, yet demands upon the physical space of the library continue to increase.

There are other institutional demands upon this space for academic services. It makes sense for this service to be located in the library, yet every such demand takes up space for library stacks, even resulting in the decommission of stacks. The library is at full capacity, raising the question of how future needs can be served. Next year the library committee could take up the question of how student fees are apportioned and what part of this money goes to the library.

3. Both students and faculty at PSU are “customers” of the library’s holdings and services. Faculty want the library to focus upon their research needs as well as their teaching needs, which need to be seen in relationship with each other. It should also be pointed out that the accreditation standards require the library to serve these multiple needs.

We feel it is important to recognize the different ways that the different disciplines use the library. There are significant and radical differences in the pace and the approach disciplines (say engineering and history) take to research and to what constitutes knowledge. We would not want this to be ignored in considerations of the future role of the library in acquisitions, holdings, and access to materials.

One problem here is the gap between the users of library materials and the source of the funding for these same materials in the annual library budget. It is the disciplines that determine the journals and monographs needed, yet the costs of these same materials are increasingly determined by commercial publishers at rates that increase much more than the rate of inflation. There are disciplinary differences in how much journals cost.

A related problem is the gap between the ease of electronic access to materials and the high cost of acquiring these materials and making them available. This tends to make the costs invisible. Copyright costs and the costs for “renting” access to electronic materials are increasing greatly. As more holdings shift to virtual holdings (one way to alleviate pressures on space) the library runs the risk of losing access not just to present materials but the entirety of past materials associated with a particular journal in the event of budget reductions that force cuts in journal holdings. This is more a problem for some disciplines than others, as the Humanities, for example, are more likely to need access not just to recent materials in journals but to the older scholarship. Thus, a careful consideration and study of disciplinary differences could help set the parameters of policy for acquisitions.

4. Students are also customers of library services. Here too disciplinary differences seem to play a role. All students have general education requirements for which the library must maintain materials. At the upper levels of undergraduate coursework disciplinary differences come more to the fore. It is also the case that this is the point at which faculty research needs and student research needs overlap, as upper level coursework is driven by faculty research interests. Thus it might be possible to set priorities here focused upon faculty research needs. The library committee could consider studying this issue next year, and try to get a better picture of what student research needs actually are in the different majors, and how this relates to faculty research needs.

5. Student library needs are generally (the above consideration notwithstanding) service needs. Yet the library is understaffed by most comparators in the OUS region. This is another reason for giving close consideration and study of student fees.

Overall the committee has gained much knowledge about the difficult choices that must be made. Our task next year is to continue to work out the issues indicated above with the aim of establishing policy guidelines.

### **Brief report on Library Town Hall Meeting held 5/19/2011:**

In the interests of brevity, this focuses upon key issues that were discussed either in questions and comments or responses to these. The main question that most of the discussion revolved around was “what is a library?” Is it a physical archival collection or a virtual space? What emerged in the discussion were the multiple constituencies that the University Library must serve and the competing demands upon its services and its physical space. The library must serve faculty needs and these are clearly different for different disciplines. Several respondents expressed concern that the increasing shift to electronic access and the need to move materials off-site affected the humanities disproportionately. It is clear that in the humanities it is important to have a physically browsable historical collection. It was further pointed out that students need and use browsing for discovery even when electronic materials are available: they too need both a print and an electronic collection. On the other hand, there are stacks in the library that haven’t been touched in years and sit there gathering dust. The problem is the difficulty of creating and maintaining an historical collection when space is finite and no new, bigger library building is on the horizon. What emerged was the need to think strategically about collections and the use of limited space and take disciplinary differences into account when doing so. It would sense then to move old and unused materials off site in order to improve browsing for materials in demand. The discussion also turned around the importance of the library as a teaching service and whether or not the library should be doing “non-library” things like tutoring. Participants affirmed that teaching is an important component of library services. Here too the focus was on thinking strategically and upon ways to bring together student services that aim at improving student’s information literacy. The library is where students come—to study, to do research, and to learn how to find and use resources. Yet the library is full to capacity (while the student population continues to increase) and cannot grow physically (no new investment in the physical space). Staffing is also limited. One solution appears to be to find ways to develop ways to teach online, even to develop learning modules customized by faculty for specific assignments. In any case, the library must identify which learning outcomes to focus upon. The frame within which all of these needs must be addressed is the budget of the library. The library does not have the budget support necessary to meet everyone’s needs in full. The University Library is not, in fact, positioned or funded to serve as a research library (one commonly accepted measure of this status would be the library's eligibility to join the Association of Research Libraries, for which key criteria are significant institutional investments in acquisitions and resources), yet the Library must try to serve the needs of faculty, students, and administration who want the University as a whole to be a research institution.

**Visioning Work**  
**Portland State Library's Unique Functions for the Next 5 Years**  
**REVISED DRAFT 4/7/11**

**(Source: Visioning work from scenario planning sessions held Winter/Spring Terms 2011)**

The Portland State University Library is the heart of the Portland State community, providing excellence and innovation in research, teaching, and learning support in a rapidly changing information age. Along with its significant collection of information resources, the University Library delivers a superlative instruction program dedicated to improving students' academic success; offers outstanding special collections and archives featuring unique materials of regional and scholarly interest; and provides an extensive array of user-centered information services. Located in an iconic building in the beautiful South Park Blocks, the University Library serves the largest student body in the Oregon University System by providing collaborative study spaces and technology-enabled environments designed to enhance students' learning experiences.

**Core Themes**

**The Library is the campus's main provider and steward of shared, high-quality information resources.**

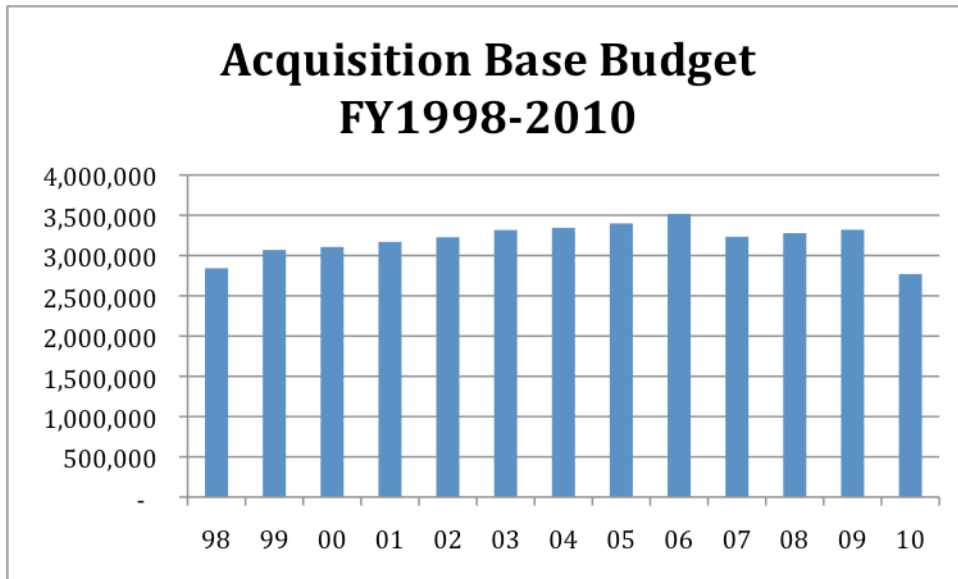
Using an approach informed by discipline-specific needs, the Library continues to act as the main provider, manager, and preserver of shared, high-quality information resources, turning increasingly to electronic, demand-driven, and access-based models, while becoming less reliant on print collections stored on site. This function depends upon the Library's strong collaboration with departmental faculty in order to ensure that diversity in scholarly practice is considered during decision making (e.g., humanities scholars' heavier use of monographic materials published over longer time periods, or scientists' heavier use of current journal articles, etc.). This function also includes a strategic focus on unique materials and data for campus repositories, digital collections, special collections, and archives, with the Library serving as original publisher of scholarly information when appropriate. It depends upon the Library's leadership and extensive partnerships with other institutions, as universities move toward a greater use of regional repositories for access to materials held in common by academic libraries.

**The Library provides the University with valuable information expertise in a rapidly changing information age.** The Library serves as the University's main expert and instructional resource for changing forms of academic information creation, discovery, content, and delivery. In this role, the Library helps the University achieve global excellence by providing leadership in the area of new scholarly communication models, which includes open access initiatives. The Library identifies and performs work related to customized systems, tools, and content which will improve information discovery and access. It acts as an important strategic partner in research collaborations, and contributes to the campus's data management infrastructure, providing such services as research data curation, access, and preservation.

**The Library is the campus's collaborative teaching partner, working to improve students' academic success and enhance educational opportunity.** The Library is a collaborative teaching partner, working with departmental faculty to integrate information literacy into the curricula, and to provide teaching of information literacy skills and research strategies to students in all disciplines. The Library offers a superlative instruction and reference program in a variety of modalities that is reflected in campus-wide learning outcomes. It uses complementary technologies in its instruction program and in its learning spaces that will improve students' academic success.

**The Library is the main provider and manager of shared learning spaces on campus.** The Library provides and manages an expanding array of technology- and resource-rich academic spaces for collaborative and individual learning in a shared academic environment. Library services are more effective when collocated with other academic services; to this end, the Library will continue to work with other campus units to improve academic services within its physical and virtual spaces, extending beyond the brick-and-mortar confines of the Millar building.

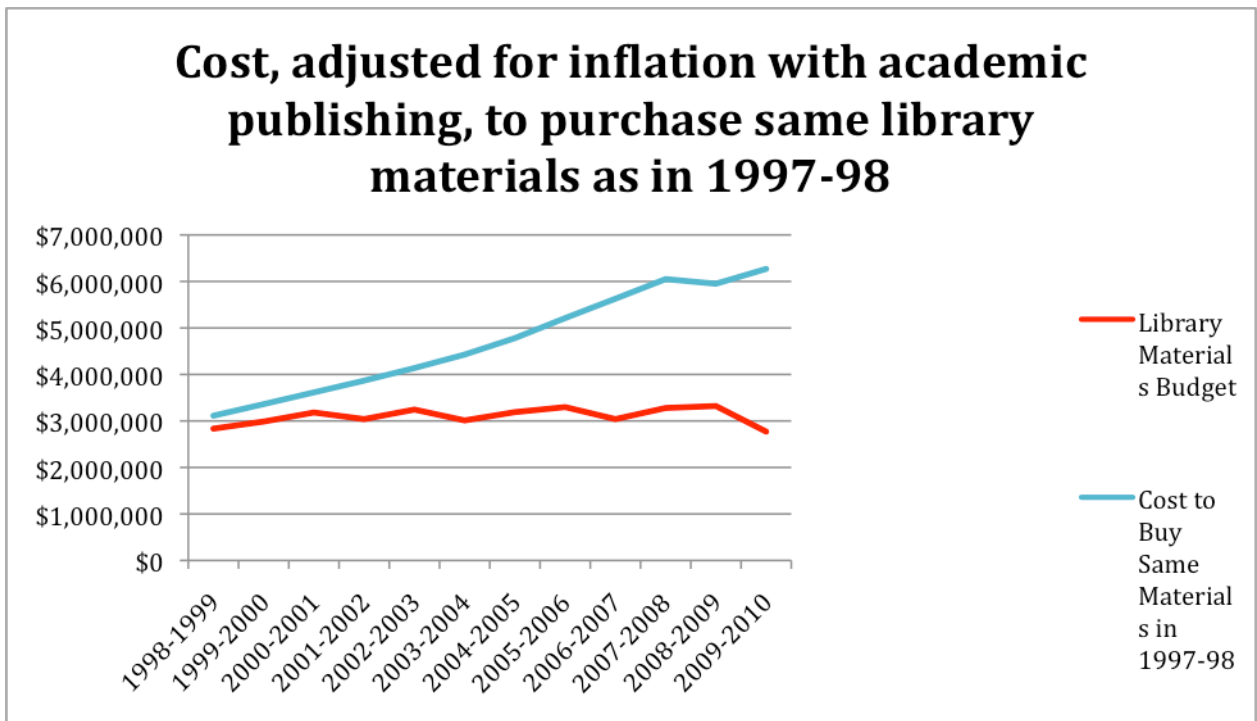
1. Acquisition Base Budget



2. Reinvestment/Budget Cut history

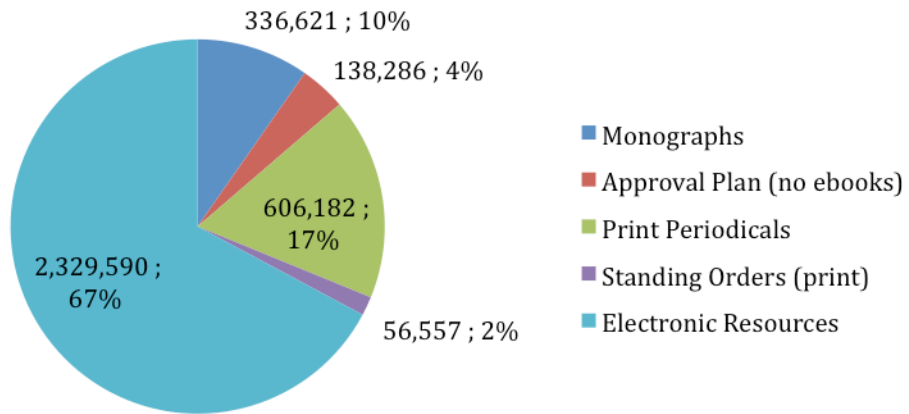
PENDING

3. Inflationary pressures/real dollars

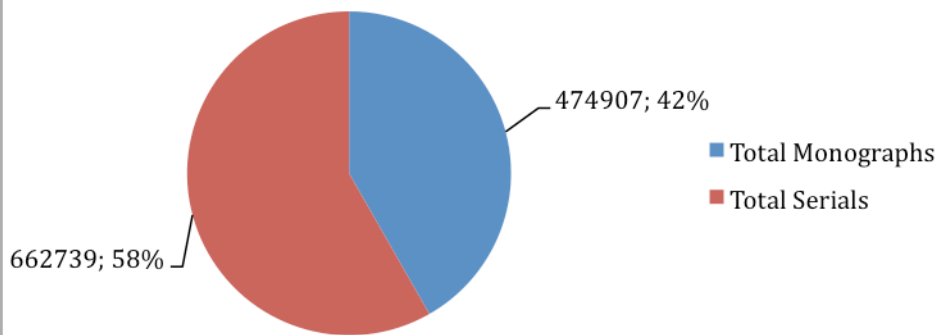


4. Acquisition Expenditures

## Acquisitions Expenditures, FY 2009-10

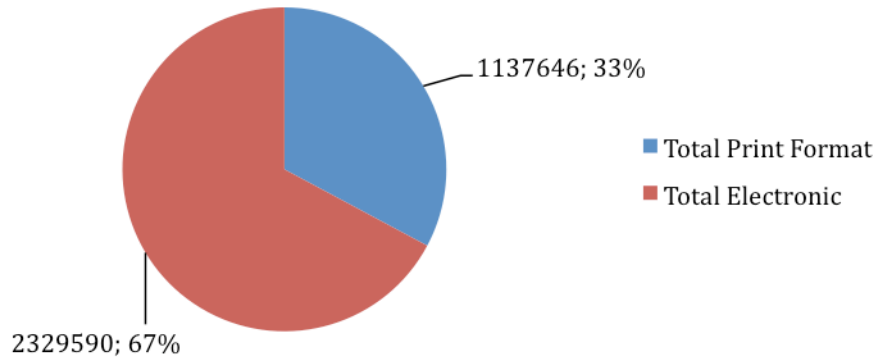


## Print Format Acquisitions Expenditures FY 2009-10

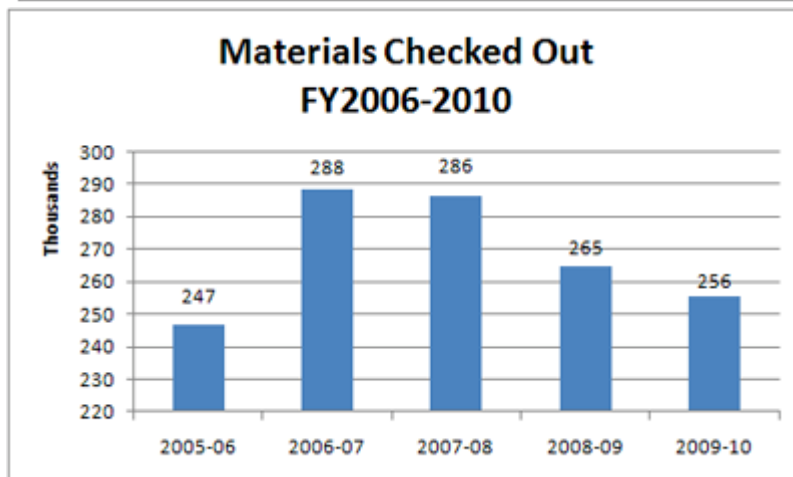
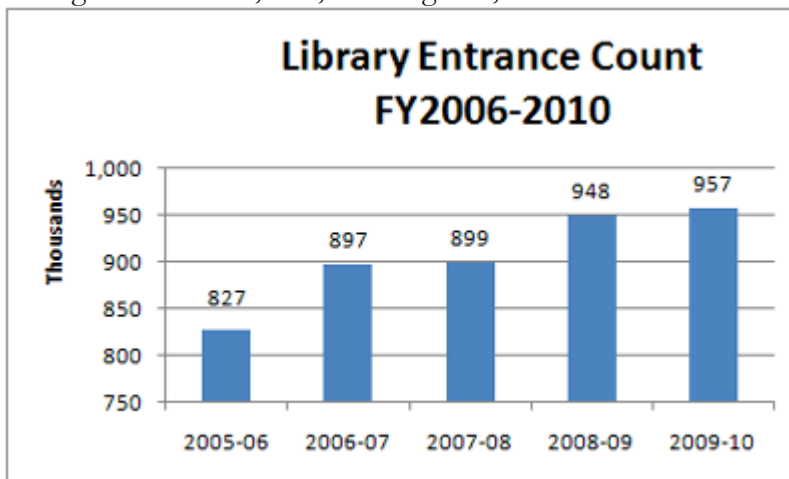


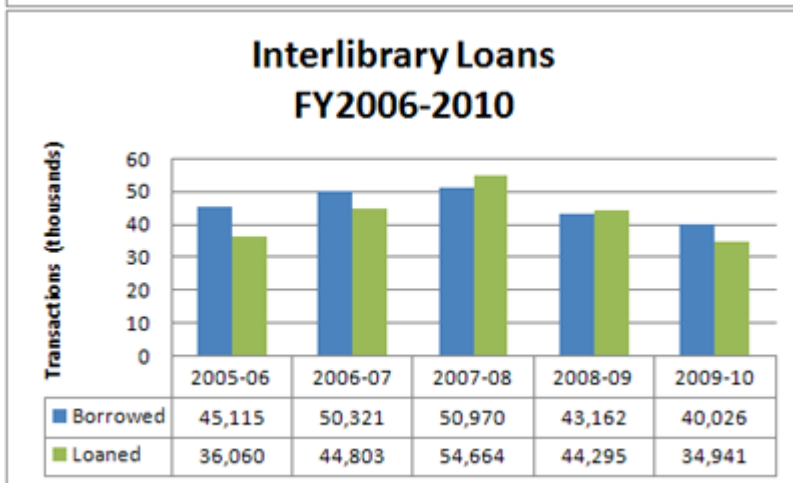
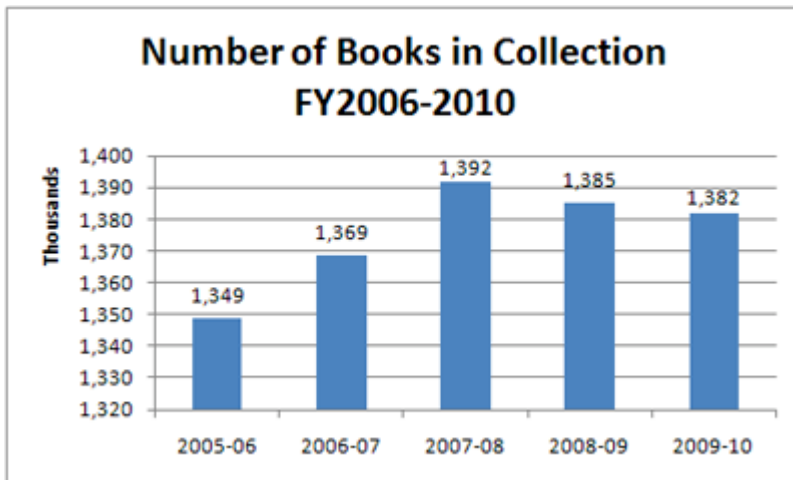
5 Expenditures: Print v. Electronic

## Print v. Electronic Format Expenditures FY 2009-10

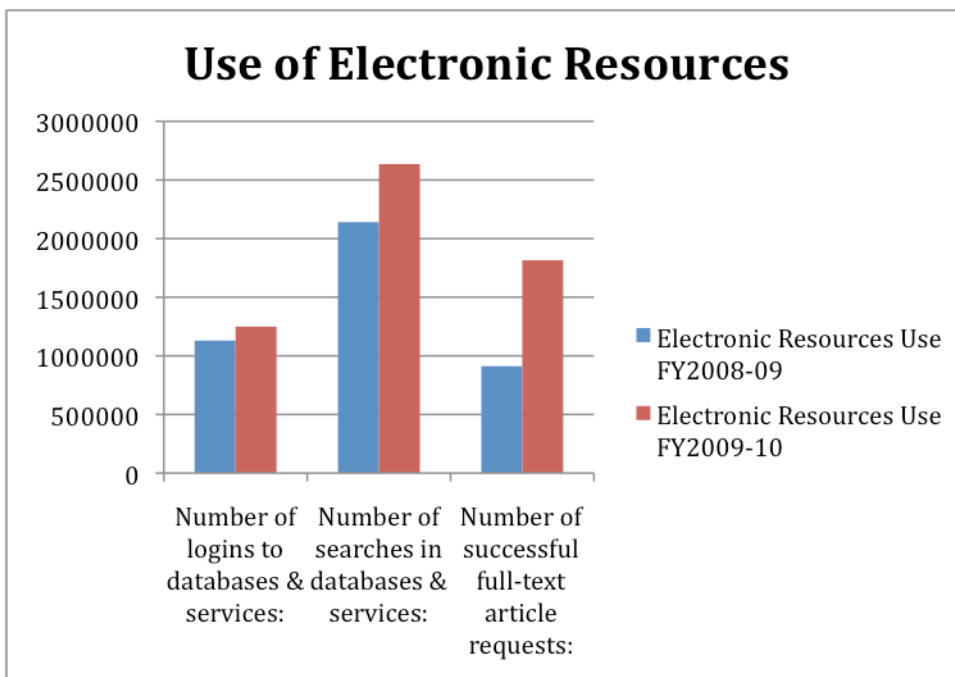


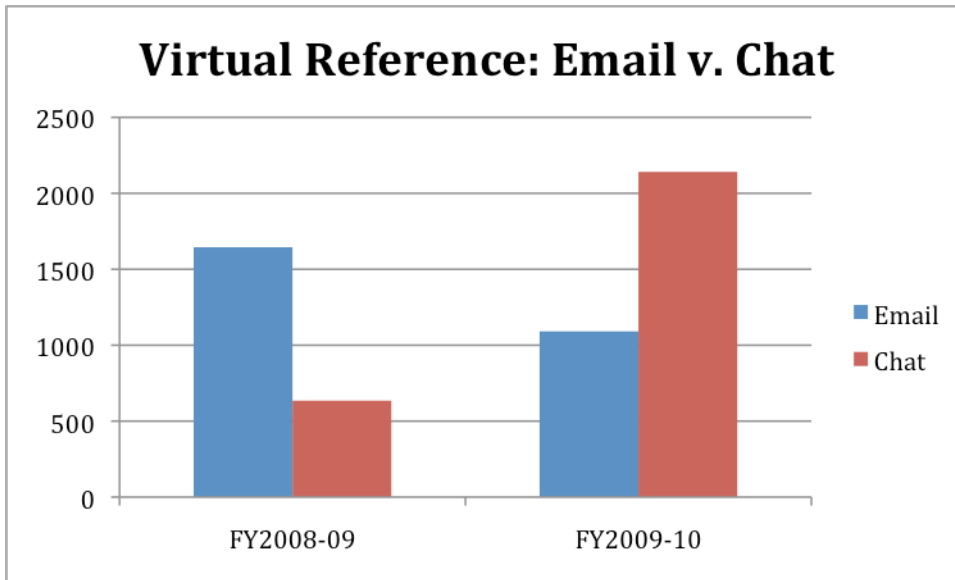
### 6. Usage- Circulation, ILL, Building Use, Collection size





7. Electronic Resources usage FY 2009 and 2010





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[http://library.pdx.edu/assess\\_plan.html](http://library.pdx.edu/assess_plan.html)

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